

EURO Bulletin

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from EURO Past President, Professor Jaap Spronk

Aspects of Applications

Many editors of scientific journals in Management Science and Operational Research complain about the low number of papers on applications, with applications or even mentioning the possibility of applications being submitted. Then, with respect to the application-oriented papers that are being submitted, they complain about the below average quality of these papers: too long, many uninteresting parts, notably too many irrelevant details and often written too loosely.

Of course, there are journals paying specific attention to applications and/or which are problem-oriented (which is not necessarily exactly the same). A good example is, of course, *Interfaces*. Other journals' feature, from time to time, invited contributions devoted to the practice in

some particular field of Management Science and Operational Research. Nevertheless, complaints remain. Not only those of the editors but also many readers call for more attention to 'practice' and 'real-life problems'. This leads us to the question who the readers of these scientific journals actually are. It is not so strange to assume that the readers of these journals are, indeed, scientists. However, many do believe or want to believe that the readership includes a lot of practitioners. I do not believe so, I think that most practitioners are less interested in the broad-scope journals which our Management Science and Operational Research Journals generally are. Practitioners prefer to read material which is both easily accessible and too a large extent relevant within their own working environment. The limited number of practitioners reading Management Science and Operational Research literature are probably of the species of hybrid scientists with a part-time job in practice.

If these hypotheses concerning the readership are sufficiently acceptable to not be rejected, the composition of the readership in itself already explains the low amount of practical contributions: many practitioners are simply not familiar enough with our journals. Furthermore, they have less incentives to publish in scientific journals than the scientists them-

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