Integration of research and practice has been a long-standing goal within I-O psychology, as well as within other scientific disciplines. As reported by Silzer, Cober, Erickson, and Robinson (2008), practitioners value staying current in the field and having “access to practitioner knowledge and research findings.” Practitioners also see opportunities for improved use of research articles as a source of professional knowledge and skills. For example, they would like to see increased focus on the practical application of research in articles. Over the past few years, SIOP has introduced several initiatives to address these opportunities, for example: providing SIOP Research Access service to practitioners, creating white paper series (e.g., SHRM-SIOP Science of HR), and initiating the Practitioner Webinar Series.

Still, opportunities remain to further involve practitioners with I-O research. Suggestions include increasing representation of practitioners on editorial boards, encouraging researchers to address the practical implications of their research by including discussions of practical perspectives and implications in articles, increasing joint research efforts between practitioners and scientists, and having practitioner reviewers for articles (e.g., Brannick, 2011; Cascio & Aguinis, 2008; Silzer & Parson, 2012). In line with some of these ideas, the Professional Practice Committee has, over the past several months, been developing a Practitioner Reviewer Database targeted for launch in spring 2015. This tool, which was created with the support and input of various journal reviewers and editors, will be a database that serves as a repository for practitioners who are interested in reviewing. Practitioners will provide relevant background information, and journal editors can access this information to identify those practitioners who have the experience and expertise to review a given article.

As participation in the journal review process is typically a volunteer activity, we thought it was important to provide...
interested practitioners with insight into the benefits, value, and challenges that come along with reviewing for journals. To do so, we recruited several SIOP members with experience as reviewers and asked them several questions related to practitioners’ involvement in the journal review process. Nine people provided responses to the survey questions. This group comprised current practitioners, researchers, and academics, several of whom are current or former editors of I-O journals. All respondents have served on the editorial board of at least one journal. Questions and key themes that emerged from the answers are presented in the table below, followed by a more detailed discussion of the themes, including specific comments (see Table 1).

We began by asking respondents why they felt practitioners were needed as journal reviewers and what unique perspective they would bring. Several themes emerged. Respondents felt that practitioners were uniquely positioned to evaluate the importance, practicality, and relevance of research to organizations. Respondents indicated that practitioners were well suited to provide feedback on the practical implications of the research, how likely a proposed solution will work in an organization, and the consistency of the inferences/conclusions with the context of the workplace. Respondents also suggested practitioners were able to provide a practical perspective on the rationale for hypotheses, research questions, methodology, and findings. By drawing on their knowledge of what is working in organizations and what organizations are actually using, practitioners are able to help ensure research is useful for organizations and fellow practitioners. Respondents further stated that practitioners can provide a well-rounded view of science and practice when reviewing and have the qualifications and abilities to provide effective article reviews. Specifically, respondents felt that practitioners are ahead of researchers in identifying the issues facing organizations and are in a position to leverage knowledge that comes from both the practice (e.g., technical reports; internal white papers) and science areas (e.g., published journal articles) when providing journal reviews. One respondent noted that without practitioner involvement, there is risk that “published literature will not address current issues. Research will be out of touch with practice and our science will face irrelevance.” Finally, multiple respondents recognized that practitioners have the knowledge of research methodology and literature in order to be strong reviewers.

We next asked respondents what potential benefits practitioners receive from reviewing for journals. Several individuals responded that the primary benefit to practitioners is staying up-to-date on current research. By having access to cutting edge research, practitioners can stay abreast of what is going on in their area of expertise. Reviewing also serves as a way to motivate practitioners to remain current and continue to grow their expertise in the midst of competing activities. Respondents also suggested that practitioners should be able to provide better services to clients by providing evidence-based practice using the latest research. Several respondents
Table 1

Overview of Questions and Themes

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<th>Questions</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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| 1. Why are practitioners needed as journal article reviewers? What unique perspectives do practitioners bring? | • Uniquely positioned to evaluate the importance, practicality, and relevance of research to organizations  
• Able to provide a well-rounded view balancing science and practice  
• Have the knowledge and capabilities to be strong reviewers |
| 2. What benefits does reviewing for journals provide for the practitioner? | • Learn and stay up-to-date on current research  
• Provide better services to clients  
• Personal benefits such as general satisfaction with contribution and increased credentials  
• Advance the science and contribute to quality of research |
| 3a. What are some of the challenges or difficulties with practitioners serving as journal reviewers? | • Finding time to do the review  
• No direct reward for reviewing  
• Not feeling qualified or knowledgeable enough to review |
| 3b. How can these challenges or difficulties be overcome? | • Focus on the intangible benefits of giving back to the field  
• Constructively comment on what you can, and don’t comment on the things you aren’t qualified to speak about  
• Effective time management |
| From the perspective of the journal/editor? | • Practitioners may be more likely to decline to review or provide later reviews due to time demands  
• Identifying practitioners who have expertise in a topic area  
• Practitioners focus more on the implementation of the research |
| From the perspective of the practitioner? | • Let practitioners know what you are expecting from them  
• Recognize practitioners’ capabilities and not make assumptions about what a reviewer can provide  
• Embrace the different perspectives that practitioners bring |
| 4. What advice or guidance would you provide to a practitioner interested in reviewing for journals? | • Proactively contact editors to volunteer to review and discuss your interests and capabilities  
• When you get a chance to review: (a) do a good job, (b) be a tough reviewer in terms of quality, but also take a developmental approach, and (c) know the expectations and review within your competence level  
• Increase visibility by being active in professional organizations and by publishing |

Noted that reviewing could provide personal benefits such as general feelings of satisfaction through engaging more directly in the I-O community, knowledge that their reviews are advancing the field, and additional credentials on one’s resumé or vita to help with potential future employment. Finally, respondents commented
that a benefit of reviewing was the ability to influence the publication process. Several respondents stated that, because it can often be difficult for practitioners to publish their work, reviewing the work of others is one way to convey ideas and thus impact the field.

Next, we asked respondents to identify challenges associated with practitioners serving as journal reviewers and how these challenges could be overcome. From the practitioner perspective, the prevailing challenge brought up by the respondents was finding time to review. Reviewing is not an in-role part of the job so it is typically done during one’s free time. Time management was one solution offered, and another respondent stated, “Reviewing as a practitioner ultimately comes down to personal values and the choices we make about where to spend our free time.” Although there is typically no direct reward for reviewing, one individual suggested to “…focus on the intangible benefits of giving back to the field, allowing your voice to be heard, and staying abreast of current research.” A second challenge acknowledged by the respondents was that practitioners may not feel qualified or knowledgeable enough to provide a comprehensive review. Suggestions to address this challenge included publishing in the area, acknowledging one’s limitations and working to overcome them, and focusing the review on aspects of the paper on which one is qualified to comment. As one respondent observed, no reviewer is an expert on everything, and this is why multiple reviewers are recruited to comment on a paper.

Several challenges from the perspective of the journal/editor were also noted. First, some respondents remarked that practitioners may tend to submit their reviews late or may be more likely to decline to review, perhaps due to competing priorities. A second challenge for editors is identifying practitioners who have expertise in a topic area. Often practitioners’ accomplishments and publications (i.e. technical reports and white papers) are not publicly available, making it more difficult for editors to recognize practitioners’ knowledge of the literature, theory, or methodology. Finally, respondents suggested an additional challenge is that practitioners address different aspects of the paper than academics, focusing primarily on implementation. Respondents felt that practitioners tend to concentrate on the applied value of the research, giving reasons why some recommended action will not work and “...jump[ing] to the problems of implementation before challenging the legitimacy of the conclusions.” Respondents also advised that editors should embrace differences in perspective and not base assumptions about reviewers’ capabilities on employment setting. They suggested that editors should let practitioners know what they are hoping to get from them and get to know individual capabilities of the reviewers that are going to be used regularly. Encouragingly, some respondents noted no unique challenges or difficulties using practitioners as reviewers.

Finally, we asked respondents what advice or guidance they could give to a practitioner who was interested in reviewing for journals. Three themes emerged: First,
they suggested the practitioner find a journal that publishes research consistent with his or her expertise and contact the editorial office to volunteer to be an ad-hoc reviewer. Second, when one gets a chance to review, it is important to (a) do a good job; (b) be a tough reviewer in terms of the quality of the content and writing in the article, but also take a developmental approach; (c) review within one’s realm of competence, (d) ask editors for a sample review that can be used as a model; and (e) seek feedback on one’s reviews. Third, respondents suggested that increasing one’s visibility would increase the likelihood of being selected as a reviewer. The best way to do so among journal editors is to publish. Respondents offered several suggestions on this front while noting the challenges for practitioners. First, they suggested publishing as a graduate student, when supports are in place to do so, and publishing one’s dissertation. One respondent stated “if you work for an organization or consulting firm, seek out projects to work on that are likely to result in something that can be published.” Another suggestion was to partner with other practitioners or academics who are already publishing. Besides publishing, a second approach suggested to increase visibility is by being active in professional organizations such as SIOP and Academy of Management.

Summary

Overall, respondents were very encouraging and acknowledged the importance of practitioners being involved in the review process. This sentiment is well summarized in several quotes we received:

- “Applied science works best when it is informed by practice and practice is better when it is based on current scientific evidence.”
- “Practitioners’ concerns about the relevancy of research for practice will have more impact if we take an active role in reviewing papers and providing detailed feedback on our concerns about the recommendations in papers.”
- “If you want the published research to reflect your concerns, you should participate in evaluating the papers submitted for publication.”

Respondents provided guidance to practitioners interested in reviewing, outlining several challenges but also providing ways practitioners can overcome these challenges. Essentially, reviewing is an organizational citizen behavior (OCB) for our science. Respondents recognized several intrinsic rewards for reviewing and provided insight on the importance for practitioners to engage in the review process:

- “Good reviews do not take as much time as many people think, and they give practitioners an opportunity to get beyond the boundaries of their particular organization to think about problems important to SIOP members more generally.”
- “Just do it! You will get a lot more out of the effort than you put in.”

Our hope is that the Practitioner Reviewer Database will help to address some of the challenges associated with practitioners expressing their interests and qualifica-
tions and editors being able to identify and secure capable and motivated practitioner reviewers. Therefore, if this article has piqued your interest in getting involved in the journal review process, we encourage you to sign up for the database once it is introduced. For those who are interested, there are several upcoming events and initiatives that can help prepare you for journal reviewing. First, the 2015 SIOP conference will have a theme track session on improving the peer review process. This session is an excellent opportunity for both practitioners and academics to learn more about the review process. The goal of this session is to provide authors and reviewers with information and tools they can use to improve the quality of published research. The session will include break out discussion groups, with one group aimed specifically at practitioners who are interested in getting more involved in reviewing. In addition, next year, the Professional Practice Committee will look for opportunities to provide mentoring opportunities for less experienced reviewers. Finally, as noted by Jose Cortina in his closing plenary speech at the 2014 Annual Conference and supplemented with his TIP Presidential Column (2014), there may be additional reviewer training and education delivered online and at conferences in the future as part of an overall effort to enhance the quality of the journal review process.

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References


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