



**2011 John A. Howard/AMA Doctoral Dissertation Competition**  
***Recognizing Excellent Marketing Dissertations for Over 50 Years***  
**Award Winner and Honorable Mentions**

The John A. Howard AMA Doctoral Dissertation Endowment was established in 1992 with the initial gift from Dr. Jagdish Sheth of Emory University in honor of his advisor, John Howard. The purpose of the endowment is to both assure the continuity of the program and to further promote the importance of the dissertation process.

This year, 38 submissions were submitted for review. The competition was chaired by Sandy Jap, Dean's Term Chair and Professor of Marketing, Goizueta Business School at Emory University.

The three judges who selected the award-winning submission were:

Eric T. Anderson  
Hartmarx Professor of Marketing  
Director of the Center for Global Marketing Practices  
Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University

Chris A. Janiszewski  
JCPenney Professor of Marketing, Warrington College of Business Administration  
University of Florida

Baohung Sun  
Carnegie Bosch Professor of Marketing  
Tepper School of Business, Carnegie Mellon University

**The winner of the 2011 John A. Howard AMA Doctoral Dissertation Competition is:**

***Matthew Selove***, Assistant Professor of Marketing, USC Marshall School of Business  
Degree Granting Institution: MIT Sloan School of Management  
Dissertation Chair: Birger Wernerfelt  
Title of the Dissertation: How Do Firms Become Different? A Dynamic Model

A short abstract of the winning dissertation appears at the bottom of the announcement.

**The judges also recommended Honorable Mentions for two dissertations, which are:**

***Elisabeth Honka***, Assistant Professor of Marketing, University of Texas at Dallas  
Degree Granting Institution: University of Chicago Booth School of Business  
Dissertation Chair: Pradeep Chintagunta

Title of the Dissertation: Quantifying Search and Switching Costs in the U.S. Auto Insurance Industry

**Rom Schrift**, Assistant Professor of Marketing, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania  
Degree Granting Institution: Columbia Business School, Columbia University  
Dissertation Chairs: Oded Netzer and Ran Kivetz  
Title of the Dissertation: Complicating Choice

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**How Do Firms Become Different? A Dynamic Model**  
**Winning Dissertation Abstract**  
**Matthew Selove**

This paper presents a dynamic investment game in which firms that are initially identical develop assets which are specialized to different market segments. The model assumes there are increasing returns to investment in a segment, for example, due to word-of-mouth or learning curve effects. In equilibrium, firms that are only slightly different focus all of their investment in different segments, causing small random differences to expand into large differences. I derive conditions that guarantee these differences persist forever. However, I also show that if firms are sufficiently patient or if sufficiently large random shocks are possible, then there is always an equilibrium in which the firm focused on the smaller segment changes its strategy, attacking its rival until it drives the rival out of the larger segment.