



Editor's Correction: The article titled "When Mandatory Mentorship Outperforms Voluntary Participation" was linking to the wrong publication. It should be linking to <https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/10.1287/mnsc.2024.07524>. Please find the update below. Thank you!



Dear Spartans and friends,

Through the ***Broad Research Review***, we are pleased to showcase the contributions Broad College faculty are making to the knowledge base of business research. This issue brings together studies that address a diverse set of questions, from how organizations recruit and support employees to how they navigate relationships with investors and suppliers. Our faculty also examine the factors that shape movie sequel success, employee responses to human trafficking, and the effects of financial constraints across supply chains.

The research featured in this issue spans disciplines and industries, reflecting the breadth of scholarship taking place across Broad College. Together, these studies offer new insights into organizations, markets, and the people and relationships that shape them. We invite you to explore the latest findings from Broad faculty and the ways their work contributes to research, practice, and our understanding of organizations.

If a friend shared this issue with you, be sure to [subscribe](#) to receive future editions directly to your inbox.

Warm regards,

John R. Hollenbeck
Associate Dean for Research and
Doctoral Programs

Natalie Bretschneider
Research and Program
Administrator



How Small Accounting Firms Compete for New Talent

Plante Moran Faculty Fellow and Associate Professor of Accounting **Ken Bills** and his co-authors explore how small accounting firms compete for college recruits when larger firms often have greater name recognition and resources. Through interviews with people involved in recruiting, the researchers find that small firms work to become more familiar to students and build a positive image as potential employers. Their recruiting decisions also reflect a tension between following practices used by other accounting firms and finding ways to stand apart. Participants' accounts in the study highlight the challenges small firms face throughout the recruiting process and challenge the common assumption that bigger accounting firms are inherently more attractive employers. The findings offer small firms insight into how they can approach university recruiting while competing for talent with larger, better-known organizations.

Bills, KL; Hayne, C; Stein, SE. (2026). Competing for Talent: Addressing the Biggest is Best Assumptions Through Small Accounting Firms' Recruiting Practices. *THE ACCOUNTING REVIEW*, 101(4), 57-85.

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How Franchise Characteristics Shape Movie Sequel Success

Professor of International Business and Marketing **Ahmet Kirca**, with his co-authors, examines how brand consistency influences movie sequel success and how that influence changes across franchises. Using 466 movie sequels, the study measures consistency through key contributors such as the lead actor, director, screenwriter, and producer. The researchers find that brand consistency can signal quality to audiences and is associated with higher opening-weekend box office revenue. However, its effect depends on a franchise's length, age, and origin. Consistency becomes more valuable as a franchise adds sequels, less influential as a franchise ages, and more beneficial for franchises adapted from sources such as books, plays, or video games than for those originating as movies. These findings can help studios determine when investing in consistency is most likely to improve box office performance, and the authors explain how these results may generalize to other industries.

Holle, BZ; **Kirca, AH**; Shamsie, J; Chaffin, D. (2026). Signaling sequel success: How franchise characteristics shape the influence of brand consistency on movie sequel performance. *JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY OF MARKETING SCIENCE*, 54(3), 684-704.

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When Mandatory Mentorship Outperforms Voluntary Participation

Professor of Accounting **Richard Saouma** and his co-authors use a field experiment at a U.S. sales organization to test whether mentorship is more effective when participation is required or left up to employees. The researchers find that a mandatory 4-week mentorship program reduced attrition, significantly increased new employees' sales during the program--and over the subsequent six months (when the study ended). The same 4-week mentorship program did nothing when it was framed as voluntary. Analysis found that the employees who could most benefit from mentorship were the least likely to sign-up; whereas the employees who sought out a mentor—would have been successful with or without one. Research and practice have largely examined what type of HR development support to offer, but this study is the first to corroborate the importance of whether said support should be voluntary or mandatory. The findings have also drawn attention from [The Wall Street Journal](#) and [Harvard Business Review](#).

Sandvik, J; **Saouma, R**; Seegert, N; Stanton, C. (2026). Should Human Capital Development Programs be Mandatory or Voluntary? Evidence from a Field Experiment on Mentorship. *MANAGEMENT SCIENCE*, 72(6), 4569-5489.

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How Training and Workplace Support Shape Anti-Trafficking Responses

Professor of Hospitality Business **Lu Zhang** and her co-authors study how anti-human trafficking training can better prepare hospitality employees to help potential victims. The researchers find that when it comes to immersing employees in the story, training that presents a trafficking situation from a third-person perspective and employs emotional messaging is more effective than fact-based messages, which tend to be ineffective regardless of delivery. In turn, greater engagement increases empathy and employees' likelihood of helping victims. The study also finds that employees' actions after training are shaped by barriers and supports at the individual, organizational, and societal level. The findings suggest that hospitality organizations should consider both how anti-human trafficking training is presented and the support employees receive afterward, rather than relying on training alone to encourage intervention.

Wu, AL; Wei, W; **Zhang, L.** (2026). Breaking barriers and forging facilitators: A mixed-method, multi-level framework for anti-human trafficking interventions in hospitality. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT*, 138(2026), 104710.

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When Investor Values Influence Company Decisions

Assistant Professor of Finance **Jan Schneemeier** and co-author Hui Chen study how responsible investors, who consider environmental or social factors alongside financial returns, can influence companies' reporting and investment decisions. Their model shows that these investors are more willing to hold companies pursuing "green" projects, which can make market trading more informative and provide companies with useful feedback for investment decisions. However, this preference can also give managers an incentive to portray a "brown" project as green to attract responsible investors. This type of manipulation, or greenwashing, can discourage investors from gathering information, weakening the information available through the market and potentially reducing the company's value. The findings highlight a tension in responsible investing: investor preferences can improve the information companies receive from the stock market, but misleading disclosures can backfire.

Chen, H; **Schneemeier, J.** (2026). Responsible Investors and Stock Market Feedback. *ACCOUNTING REVIEW*, 101(1), 137-168.

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When Changes in Suppliers Help or Hurt Innovation

Assistant Professor of Supply Chain Management **Jordan Barker** and his co-authors examine how different types of structural changes in a company's supplier network affect innovation. These changes include growth, or a net increase in the number of suppliers; contraction, or a net decrease in the number of suppliers; and turnover, which occurs when existing suppliers are replaced by new ones. Although growth and contraction represent opposite directions of change, the researchers examine them separately to assess whether changes in network size influence innovation asymmetrically depending on whether new suppliers are added or existing suppliers are lost.

The researchers find that each type of change affects innovation differently. Growth improves innovation performance, measured by the number of patents a company receives, while contraction has no significant effect. Turnover can improve innovation at first, but its benefits diminish and eventually become negative at high levels. These findings challenge the assumption that changes in supplier relationships are generally undesirable. Adding or replacing suppliers can create a revolving door of new supplier-held knowledge that supports innovation. The findings therefore suggest that businesses should view some supplier changes as potential opportunities for innovation, while recognizing that excessive turnover can become disruptive.

Barker, JM; Falcone, EC; Yang-Sun, YS; Yan, TT. (2026). Ch-Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes: The Impact of Supply Base Growth, Contraction, and Turnover on Firm Innovation. *JOURNAL OF OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT*, 72(4), 606-626.

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The Ripple Effects of Financial Constraints

Assistant Professor of Finance **Morad Zekhnini** and his co-authors study how a company's difficulty accessing money to fund investments can affect other businesses in its supply chain. Their analysis includes information from the syndicated loan market, where groups of banks and other lenders jointly provide large loans to companies. The researchers find that when one company faces financial constraints and cuts investment, the effects can spread to its customers and suppliers, accounting for about half of the overall decline in investment associated with those constraints. These effects are stronger when businesses rely on specialized inputs or have few alternative partners. Companies can help limit these disruptions by supporting financially constrained partners through trade credit or equity investments.

Grieser, W; Spyridopoulos, I; **Zekhnini, M.** (2026). The epidemiology of financial constraints and corporate investment. *JOURNAL OF FINANCIAL AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS*, 61(1), 281-314.

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