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Research Publishing Talk by:

Prof. Amit S. Mukherjee, President, Ishan Advisors, LLC & Professor, Hult International Business School

Publishing in Harvard Business Review (HBR) and Sloan Management Review (SMR)

As part of his one-day visit to IIM Ahmedabad, hosted by the Ashank Desai Centre for Leadership and Organisational Development (ADCLOD), Prof. Amit S. Mukherjee led an insightful session with academics on how to publish in leading practitioner-focused journals such as *Harvard Business Review* (HBR) and *MIT Sloan Management Review* (SMR). Drawing on his own publishing experience and the work of colleagues such as Dr. Michael Watkins (IMD), Prof. Mukherjee demystified what makes an article stand out in such journals. The talk was based on personal experience of publishing in such journals.

At the heart of his talk was the “Aha–So What–Now What” framework that guides impactful publishing. The “Aha” moment captures the counterintuitive insight that challenges conventional wisdom or reframes a familiar problem in a fresh way for example, “showing why quiet, systematic CEOs may outperform charismatic visionaries”. It can also involve naming a phenomenon readers instantly recognize, connecting disparate dots to reveal hidden patterns, or presenting paradoxes that demand resolution. The “So What” stage delivers the intellectual substance: frameworks that simplify complexity without being simplistic, research backed insights that combine academic rigor with practical relevance, and memorable principles that help readers engage in organizational conversations. Finally, the “Now What” is about practical payoff, and here most submissions fail. Articles must pass what Prof. Mukherjee called the “Monday morning test” offering diagnostic tools, stage-appropriate guidance, examples of implementation, and small, testable steps that readers can apply immediately.

Prof. Mukherjee stressed that the best HBR and SMR articles are those that address enduring challenges rather than fleeting trends, transform mental models rather than simply transmit information, and respect the reader’s intelligence while acknowledging their time constraints. Such articles balance aspiration

with pragmatism, speak to both the analytical and emotional aspects of leadership, and become tools for organizational dialogue rather than just individual insight.

He also shared practical advice on the publishing process. Editors receive many submissions, making rejections common even for well-written pieces. Targeting to publish an online version first can improve the chances of acceptance. He also noted that the authors must be willing to accept significant editorial revisions.

References:

1. Harvard Business Review. (n.d.). *Submission Guidelines*. <https://hbr.org/guidelines-for-authors>
2. MIT Sloan Management Review. (n.d.). [Information for Authors](https://sloanreview.mit.edu/for-authors/). <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/for-authors/>
3. Watkins, M. (2013). *The First 90 Days: Proven Strategies for Getting Up to Speed Faster and Smarter*. Harvard Business Review Press. <https://hbr.org/books/watkins>