

Lexicographic Meaning Construction Processes in Corporate Communication

Even in the digital age, specialized lexical items (terms) play an immensely important role in successful corporate communication.

In this light, the purpose of this paper is to explain how what we have called ‘lexicographic meaning construction processes’ (LMCPs) help companies and organization (C&Os) realize their communicative mission and create business value. LMCPs are here seen as being at the heart of all term-related activities of designating, naming, defining, and discussing, when new professional knowledge is constructed and needs to be communicated, shared and understood inside and outside organizations.

Based on a new theory of lexicography and on four selected cases outlining LMCPs in practice in C&Os such as TDC A/S, Zoo Copenhagen, the Danish Association of the Pharmaceutical Industry and Vins de Bourgogne, we demonstrate how meaning construction processes are supported by lexicographical disciplines.

C&Os have a broad array of stakeholders, communicative needs and goals, and therefore they develop communication strategies accordingly. We argue that LMCPs are deeply involved in the construction of corporate communication when C&O and their stakeholders try to make sense and construct the right discourse. In their resolution to continuously legitimize their business and differentiate their value proposition in an even more competitive business environment, C&Os include in their corporate communication an array of strategies based on formats and registers of knowledge communication and language mediation in which LMCPs play a crucial role.

C&Os focus on sales and branding of their image and reputation and to achieve that LMCPs are in play. LMCPs also play an important role in terminology formation. Words and terms are discussed, negotiated, and included in C&Os’ company speak. Others become parts of mission statements and of the in-house vocabulary and lexical assets of the organization. LMCPs thus help C&Os create business value by allowing C&Os and their stakeholders to negotiate the meaning of terminologies that are central to their business and their brand.

Based on our analysis and discussion of the four selected cases we present a LMCP matrix outlining the role of lexicographic meaning construction in corporate communication.

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