

Masteroppgavetema: Strategisk kommunikasjon

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1 Sosial kapital og sosiale medier i strategisk kommunikasjon

De aller fleste virksomheter ønsker å bygge gode relasjoner til sine omgivelser, de ønsker å bygge sosial kapital. Denne oppgaven vil bruke kapitalbegrepet til Bourdieu (i en diskusjon av hvordan virksomheter bruker sosiale medier for å styrke sosial kapital. Ettersom Bourdieu ikke diskuterte strategisk kommunikasjon i virksomheter, vil oppgaven bygge videre på Lin (2000) og Ihlen (2005). Her reises det en rekke konkrete spørsmål som kan brukes i empiriske undersøkelser.

Aktuell litteratur

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2 Barriers and Challenges for Application of Public Relations Research

Public relations research has grown into a relatively large field with several academic journals and a body of knowledge that has increased accordingly. Still, there is a paradox at play: While it is often posited that public relations has a huge political, economic and cultural influence (e.g., Heath, 2010; Ihlen, van Ruler, & Fredriksson, 2009), little systematic knowledge has been produced regarding what influence *research* on public relations has.

The hallmark of the applied research on public relations would be adaptation by practitioners, while the non-instrumental research would like to have an impact on for instance public debate about public relations. Some evidence do suggest that the theories of the field are applied, at least by those with an education in public relations (Toth, 2007). The 2011 European Communication Monitor also indicates that practitioners use scientific literature and research to help to prepare decisions. Still, findings from the same survey shows that the practitioners were more inclined to rely on best practices used by similar organizations (Zerfass, Verčič, Verhoeven, Angeles, & Tench, 2012). Indeed, some suggest that there is a disconnection between academia and public relations practice in many countries (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009). Anecdotal evidence indicates that many practitioners are mainly trading on their networks, common sense analysis, and operational experience. Several of the more sophisticated tools and theories receive little attention.

The goal of this project is to identify and discuss the possible barriers and challenges for application of public relations scholarship. The project will discuss both external and internal barriers and challenges. In the first instance, the project will identify the somewhat “traditional” factors that relate to for example lack of time, resources, professionalism and/or support from top management. In addition, however, the project will also challenge public relations research itself, by asking whether the theories of the field are up to the task: Do the research field, produce the theories that the practitioners need?

Literature

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3 Strategisk kommunikasjon på norsk

I litteraturen finnes påstanden om at det finnes et *reflekterende paradigme* og at *refleksjon* er et kjennetegn ved europeisk praksis av strategisk kommunikasjon (Holmström, 2004; van Ruler & Verčič, 2004). Med dette menes at europeiske praktikere nettopp er opptatt av å analysere endrede sosiale krav og verdier i samfunnet for så å justere atferden til sine organisasjoner i tråd med dette. Stemmer beskrivelsen for det arbeidet som norske praktikere utfører?

Det er gjort enkelte forsøk på analyse av kommunikasjonsbransjen som sådan, både utenlands og i Norge (f.eks. Ihlen & Brønn, 2010; Ihlen & Rakkenes, 2009). Det finnes imidlertid få kvantitative studier av bransjen, og vi kjenner lite til hvordan norsk bransje i særdeleshet står seg i forhold til virksomheten i andre land. I denne artikkelen diskuterer vi derfor den overnevnte påstanden opp mot tall fra «the European Communication Monitor» (ECM) (se f.eks. Moreno, Zerfass, Tench, Vercic, & Verhoeven, 2009; Tench, Verhoeven, & Zerfass, 2009; Zerfass, Moreno, Tench, Verčič, & Verhoeven, 2008; Zerfass, Verčič, Verhoeven, Angeles, & Tench, 2012). Her sammenliknes den europeiske og den norske praksisen.

Aktuell litteratur

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4 Rhetoric, trust, relationships and social media

While research repeatedly have shown that social media is often not used to its full potential by organizations (e.g., Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012), studies have also shown how some organizations *have* been able to use social media effectively to establish two way dialogue (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011). If the organization in question is able to adapt a “conversational voice,” this is said to increase trust and satisfaction among publics (Kelleher, 2009). This thesis, applies the rhetorical paradigm (Ihlen, 2010) and how this rhetoric is influenced by the technology and the social media dynamics (Selber, 2010). Social media have some characteristics that set them apart from corporate websites as such (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Briones et al., 2011; Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009; Wigley & Lewis, 2012). Kent (Kent, 2010) has pointed to how they have at least five defining features: moderation, interactivity, interchangeability, propinquity, responsiveness, spontaneity and dialogue.

Still, terms like trust and relationships are really contested terms when related to organizations. What do these terms actually mean, broadly, and what are the substantive difference that social media actually makes to these things. This could link to the construction of meaning about organizations, audiences and society through organizational rhetoric. What kinds of meaning are being constructed through a dehistoricised focus on social media, for example, and how does this affect the 'trust' and 'relationships' that are the target of this communicative work? How does time affect the 'trust' and 'relationships' that organizations think they have with audiences? On whose terms does that trust and relationship exist and how does it communicate value about different institutions, groups and individuals in society?

Literature

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