

Call for Papers

Special Issue: *Journal of Management Studies*

Strategy as Discourse: Its Significance, Challenges and Future Directions

Submission Deadline 31 October 2009

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Strategic management in organizations is to a significant extent discursive and rhetorical in nature. First, strategic management is a discipline – an institutional discourse – with a particular history. This discipline has developed its own social codes and knowledge that revolve around specific concepts (theories / models). These concepts are discursive constructions that both enable and constrain organizational strategizing and other action. The knowledge of these concepts has also become a symbol of professionalization and competence in organizations, with important implications for organizational power relations and subjectivity construction. Second, strategizing in organizations is based on discursive and rhetorical work. This involves specific vocabularies, rhetorical strategies, storytelling, and metaphors. Also, it is through and within discourses that these two aspects of strategy practice – the macro and the micro – are interlinked. At the macro level, the pervasive discourse of strategy and its status as a symbol of professionalization give it an institutionalized presence. At the micro level, this discourse is enacted, reproduced and modified through the everyday practice of strategic actors. This interplay between macro and micro strategy discourses is not simply a theoretical abstraction but has consequential effects for how strategy work is done.

While the role of language in general, and of discourse and communication in particular, has been acknowledged in previous research in strategic management, this area remains theoretically underdeveloped and empirically under-explored. This special issue argues that it is time to take language seriously in strategy research. Its purpose, therefore, is to publish theoretically enriched and methodologically sound discourse based studies of strategic management that advance the strategic management field as a whole and build upon and extend alternative approaches such as the economic, behavioral and cognitive traditions.

In order to move forward there is a need to build on what we already know to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the true potential of language based studies of strategic activity and provide a solid conceptual foundation for more cumulative knowledge generation in this domain. We invite studies which examine language and its relevance in strategic management from a broad range of perspectives, such as various

forms of frame and sensemaking analysis, content analysis, conversation analysis, rhetorical studies, metaphor analysis, narrative analysis of various forms and critical discourse analysis. In order to be eligible for the special issue, papers must address activity / processes / phenomena / practices that are *strategic*, meaning that they are consequential for the strategic outcomes, directions, survival and competitive advantage of organizations, although those consequences could be emergent rather than part of an intended and formally articulated strategy

We encourage articles which explore, but are not limited to, questions such as:

- How do particular forms of speech and discourse shape the conduct and outcome of strategic conversations?
- How are strategy texts authored, edited, translated, and consumed in organizations?
- How does the discourse of strategy construct organizations and individuals as competent strategic actors; and, what are the implications of the discourse of strategy for organizational and individual behavior?
- How are actors able to draw upon and use the discourse of strategy as a resource?
- How do the discursive practices of strategy forge subjectivity in organizations? How do individuals in different parts of the organization use strategy language to advance their interests? How do the discursive practices of actors enable or constrain participation in strategy work?

This special issue reaches out, and is open, to strategy scholars of any persuasion who see language, discourse and communication as central in their research, but also other scholars in organizing and management conducting research from language based perspectives on issues relevant to strategic management. We are particularly interested in papers that develop discourse or language based perspectives that shift our understanding of topics that have traditionally been approached from, for example, cognitive or knowledge-based perspectives.

Papers should be submitted as e-mail attachments to Julia Balogun (papers should be sent for the attention of Julia Balogun to f.riley@lancaster.ac.uk) by **31st October 2009**. They should conform to the normal guidelines for submission to *JMS* – see www.blackwellpublishing.com/jms. Any enquiries relating to this Special Issue can be directed to any of the editors (j.balogun@lancaster.ac.uk; claus.jacobs@unisg.ch; jarzabpa@aston.ac.uk; saku.mantere@hanken.fi; eero.vaara@hanken.fi).