

# Institutional Identity as Discourse: Explaining What We Are Made of

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## Abstract

*This conceptual paper explains how institutions can communicate desired images, and how analysts may analyse them, by proposing a distinct system for instantiating identity-driven discourse. The paper specifically illustrates how human values serve as contextual imperatives in an organisational identification process and thus facilitate the construction of narratives about institutional character in an effort to build credibility, strong reputation, legitimacy, and trust. The paper offers a detailed rhetorical model which allows organisational identity to be shaped into discrete forms of values discourse. The model takes inspiration from different approaches to identity and discourse from across research traditions to arrive at a blend of dimensions helpful in operationalising how organisations may verbalise what they are both made of and strive to achieve. In its current form, the model is a refinement of previous versions that were applied to a series of empirical studies to analyse and exemplify the real-life identity discourse of organisations from different sectors and genres.*

## Keywords

operational model, identity discourse, values, ethos, organisational identification