

Storytelling in Corporate Discourse – A Critical Introduction

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Everybody loves a good story. Stories are ubiquitous in our daily lives, and play key roles in all areas of human endeavour and activity. Credited with being fundamental in sense-making – “help[ing] us to make sense of what we are, where we come from, and what we want to be” (Soin/Scheytt 2006: 55) – stories are implicated in processes of personal as well as collective identity construction and display. They are also widely used to convey knowledge and values, and can be exploited as powerful framing devices to invoke audience alignment and foster persuasion – or to signal disalignment, resistance, and subversion.

Given the ubiquity, versatility, and multi-functionality of storytelling, it comes as no surprise that it has raised wide-ranging scholarly interest. Since the so-called ‘narrative turn’ originating in the humanities in the last decade of the past century (Smith 1981; Bruner 1987, 1991; Hyvärinen 1994, 1998; Labov/Waletzky 1997; Ryan 2005; Meretoja 2014), narrative inquiry has been used across a variety of disciplines, ranging from anthropology to psychiatry, politics, and healthcare, where storytelling has been both an object and a method of research.....