

48. Research Agenda with Empirical Results of Using Humour Strategically in Business

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This study aims to create a preliminary theoretical framework of how to use humour strategically in companies with the aim of creating new business opportunities. The present multidisciplinary discussion paper will identify research gaps and combine viewpoints of international business management, international business communication, marketing and education in a novel way. We have found that in earlier literature on humour in business, discussions have been constructed in different ‘silos’ and thus the connections between different research fields have been scarce. Consequently, a more comprehensive understanding of the importance of humour in business innovation is needed. We are proposing a framework and a research agenda for exploring different strategic ways of using humour in companies. In the Hurmos-project we have collected empirical evidence based on the framework. Therefore: the potential, as well as the limits and risks of humour in business have been examined in both internal and external corporate communication. We have also focused on aspects such as corporate storytelling, corporate and employer branding and, at least indirectly, well-being at work. Peer group mentoring has been used as a tool for collecting relevant narratives from companies. Additionally, we have explored innovation communication: how humour can be applied as a strategic tool in new business development both in facilitating creative Research, Development and Innovation (R&D&I) work environments, and in actually incorporating humour into product and service innovation. Our empirical results will provide a much needed more comprehensive view of the role of humour as a strategic tool in corporate communication and business innovation. The results also provides a point of departure for further research. Besides academia, results and generated know-how will be of interest to managers of large corporations as well as start-up companies.

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