John Carruthers, Eureka Strategy P/L

Abstract: Persuasive communication is critical to the effectiveness of leadership and organisational change. Within an Aristotelian concept of persuasion that centres on the credibility of the speaker, emotional arousal and engaging logic, this thesis explores the idea that figurative language plays an important role in the persuasiveness of management communication. Figurative language is language that uses figures of speech such as alliterations, antitheses, rhetorical questions and metaphors. The research also examines a postulated ascending order in the persuasiveness of figures of speech based on their complexity and deviation from literal language—i.e., from simple schemes (alliterations), to complex schemes (antitheses), to simple tropes (rhetorical questions), to complex tropes (metaphors). In addition, it explores the role that the thinking orientation of the listener might play in the perceived persuasiveness of figurative language. These propositions are explored within an Internet-based experiment that assessed the relative persuasiveness of differing types of speeches, each containing an equivalent message but incorporating a different category of figurative expression.

Presenter: John Carruthers is the Managing Director of his own consulting company, Eureka Strategy P/L. He has been a successful analyst, strategist and manager with over three decades experience developing and implementing change and working at a strategic level with Government Ministers, Boards and Chief Executives to deliver breakthrough initiatives and improvements. This has included terms as a Company Director, a Chief of Staff to a senior Minister in the WA Government, and a long-serving executive and Director with a number of government agencies.

John’s professional career has centred on the development and communication of ideas. This has led to a lifelong interest in effective communication and, in particular, the art of persuasion. Oratory, words and the power of arguments have preoccupied much of his professional life. John holds two Masters Degrees and three Diplomas, and is currently finalising a Doctorate in Business Administration at the University of Western Australia.

Date: Friday 28 February 2014
Time: 12:00-1:00pm followed by Sandwich Reception
Venue: BUSN 142 Sir Rod Eddington Case Study Room
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