What say you?
- *A Rhetorical Analysis of the Discourse of Business Leaders*

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Abstract

Leadership is a broad topic that can be studied from a vast amount of angles and perspectives. The same fact is true for communication. This study combines these two concepts as it directs attention towards discursive analysis of business leaders. With this focus, the purpose is to describe the essence of rhetoric as an essential part of business communication, analyze how business leaders perform leadership through communication and to contribute to further understanding of this subject, by explaining the communication of business leaders through rhetorical analysis.

To reach as far as possible within this research a theoretical framework, that will be the support for the analysis, is established as a basis on which an analysis is possible. This framework reviews the important concepts that are essential for understanding the means of the following rhetorical analysis. To analyze the textual communication of business leaders extracted from real life cases, narratives from situations where leadership is practiced have been selected based on certain criteria.

The findings of this study are in unity with the direction in which this research aims. The way business leaders communicate in situations where leadership is practiced have an immense impact on how they are perceived as leaders. Therefore it is argued that business leaders should put more emphasis on increasing their understanding of how they are perceived by others, based on the way they communicate through verbal communication.

Key words: communication, leadership, rhetoric, verbal, meaning, discursive analysis, business leaders.
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1. INTRODUCTION

“Things alter for the worse spontaneously,
if they be not altered for the better designedly.”

- Francis Bacon

1.1 Research Context

The area of research within leadership is constantly growing and it is easily recognized that findings that assist to shape a picture of leaders and leadership is highly interdisciplinary. It is no longer enough to study organizational theory or social psychology to form a complete picture of the phenomenon known as leadership. Instead it is required to combine perspectives of different disciplines such as sociology, biology, political science, cognitive science and so forth, to construct a complete view of leadership (Bennis, 2007). To attain an inclusive view of any phenomenon it is understandable that each discipline must reach as far as possible to explore and determine how leadership functions within that field. To narrow leadership down towards the topic of this thesis, the linguistic field of leadership consists of more areas than I dare mention, which in a way indicates the insignificance of a single study of business leaders and their ability to communicate. However, and more importantly, these facts prove just how significant it is to go into detail within this topic and examine its roots, in order to contribute to an understanding of a bigger picture.

Leadership by itself is something very difficult to define as each author as well as each leader, or maybe most important, each follower, has a unique view of what leadership entails. It might be even more difficult to provide a definition for successful leadership. Nevertheless, it is recognized by several authors that such leadership is crucial for us as individuals, for our society and in front of all for the wellbeing of our planet (Bennis, 2007; Kellerman, 2004). There are studies that exemplify good and bad leaders and studies
that attempt to list criteria of these two types. Even though many of these criteria can be found in any successful leader as long as there is a willingness to search for them, there is always the factor of context in which the leader acts. This context is what provides meaning to what leaders say or do and would therefore matter in all situations (Cruse, 2004), whereas a certain personality trait or capability might only matter in certain circumstances. This explains why many authors recognize the ability to adapt as a central concept for leadership, as leaders are not required only in some situations but for better or for worse (Ashby and Miles, 2002).

However, in recent studies it is possible to detect a shift of interest in leadership research, as there is more emphasis on personal abilities rather than formal tasks, which have been the aim of managerial studies for a long time. With this new focus it has become possible to identify the significance that effective communication has for business leaders to reach successful leadership, as well as creating and maintaining a successful organization. In fact, Ashby and Miles (2002) distinguish that the ability to communicate is one factor that can either make or break a successful business leader. To clarify, the greatest leader of all, with all imaginable competencies and vast experience and knowledge, would probably not be perceived as a successful leader if that same person were not able to communicate with others. This can be illustrated by the greatest most creative vision, being presented by a business leader who does not know how to deliver a message and therefore makes the business idea sound like a poor concept. In the same way, it is possible for a person who has the ability to communicate successfully to make a rather meager business idea sound like the invention of the decade.

As this thesis steers its course towards communication and in particular the communicative skills of business leaders, it is necessary to first establish the grounds of communication within business settings. At the present time, it is widely recognized that internal as well as external communication is a skill that have such great power that it can make or break the success of organizations. Nicholson (2002), who seeks beyond the organization, further
points out that our entire world is interconnected through relations built on basic communication. It is no difficult task to take this topic to its dramatic edge and argue that communication is what keeps relations between countries stable and helps us bring peace, as poor communication might bring the same countries into war. However, the essence of communication is found everywhere and should not be blown out of proportion as something highly sophisticated. It is as present in political discussions, as any classroom as well as around any breakfast table in the world.

Since communication is present everywhere and at all times it is understandable that research within this area is vast and represented within many fields. Again, in business settings there is increasing evidence that communication plays a large role for the success of organizations (Bennis, 2007; Ashby and Miles, 2002). Simultaneously, there are major changes in communication that have grown during the past decades and are still developing in society today as we have entered an era of technology (Crystal, 2006). This has opened up a free flow of information and made communication easier in many aspects as people and organizations are able to communicate across the world without spending time and money on traveling back and forth. Whereas Nicholson (2002) speaks of the incredible benefits that are connected with this new era, it also implies that the communication is now taking place in different channels than before. Although communication is still present on a personal level, business leaders who are in charge of large organizations do not usually have a personal connection with all employees, customers or consumers. Instead they communicate their vision, progress and sometimes defense through memos, annual reports and media.

The contemporary communication that we experience in society today is shaped by the technological development and messages that are conveyed to the public are often aggressive and loud in order to stand out in a mass. Because of the information society we have entered, where we are constantly overrun by information of all sorts, the way individuals as well as
organizations communicate has changed. We are all the more confined by space and number of words and need to adapt to communicating in a different way through electronic media compared to other semiotic situations (Crystal, 2006). As the personal meeting and conversation is decreasing in frequency and communication is run through other channels such as e-mails, video conferences or to the public through TV, internet, newspapers and radio, there are aspects of communication that might risk getting lost.

It is well known that human beings communicate with more than mere words through our mouth. Since people were able to communicate even before they had learned how to speak we can easily conclude that it is imprinted deep in our DNA that a lot more than words is important in communication (Dowis, 2000). There are numbers that have been consistent over time that depict how much of a message is conveyed through spoken words compared to how much impact the vocal and visual impressions have. While the visual impression accounts for as much as 55 percent of a message, the vocal impression adds up 38 percent of the message. The number that is left in this equation is as small as 7 percent that is the verbal impression for the receiver of a message (Dowis, 2000; Mehrabian, 1972).

However, this shall not be interpreted as if the spoken words are not of high value. The important aspect of these numbers is that verbal and non-verbal communication should be attuned in order to provide a coherent message. This is apparent as the non-verbal and vocal elements are used to provide contextual meaning to the verbal, textual information. Based on this it is easy to understand that the ways to communicate are somewhat different when the message is presented through text, as it can not be influenced by factors such as body language or even vocal instruments.

In certain areas it is possible to make up for lost visual impressions. In marketing it is common to use pictures in newspapers or on the Internet or to use sounds for the radio to boost a message and make a stronger impact on the person who receives it (Godin, 2005). However, business leaders do
not have the opportunity to hide behind visual aids at the point where they are facing an audience through the radio, a newspaper or an annual report. They need to rely on the verbal communication that takes place in the words they speak or write. Therefore it is of essence that they are able to adapt to the newer means of communication where all the information they wish to convey must be condensed to a few well-chosen words. Furthermore, Ashby and Miles (2002) point out that leaders do not only need to adapt to the new means of communication but also to the new generation of young adults who are receiving the messages they send out in media. For these reasons, it is important that leaders have the ability to adapt today, in order to be successful in the future.

1.2 Problem Discussion

The free flow of information that has arrived with the technological development has, as mentioned, affected the channels in which individuals as well as business leaders communicate. Whereas Nicholson (2002) speaks of the incredible benefits that are connected with this new era, Crystal (2006) is describing how this development constrains our ability to communicate at the same level as before. This means that the development has lead to other issues of communication that are rising to the surface. Communication between two parts meeting face to face entail information in the shape of verbal, vocal and non-verbal communication. This results in complete messages that we easily can place within a context and add meaning to (Dowis, 2000). However, business leaders who are required to communicate information to the public and who might only have the written or spoken word without anything else attached to it are facing a more difficult challenge. The words they speak or write must entail the necessary and accurate information to ensure that the intended information reaches the receiver. This might sound a whole lot easier than it will prove to be, since there are endless amounts of disturbances that might hinder the complete piece of information to reach the receiver (Cruse, 2004; Weick, 1995).
To add to this, the way in which business leaders communicate will largely influence how a message is received which in turn will result in different outcomes. When business leaders communicate to the public they do not only speak on their own behalf but mainly on the behalf of the organization. This means that the message that reaches the public will affect the reputation of the entire organization and might lead to new customers. Alternatively, if it is the case that the business leader in question has poor communication skills, the organization might lose customers by a single statement made by that person as a representative. The importance of examining business leaders’ ability to communicate is then evident since the information reaching the public will determine, at least partially, the success of the organization. This dilemma is further increased by the fact that they have to appeal to an audience of all possible ages and separate opinions with only one message. What is even more challenging with this aspect, is that the recipient of this message must be able to make sense out of the information according to their frame of reference (Weick, 1995) if the message should have any chance of making an impact for that individual.

The quote at the beginning of the chapter “Things alter for the worse spontaneously, if they be not altered for the better designedly.” by Francis Bacon is one of many arguments to why business leaders should take this situation seriously. When a situation shaped by development is left to chance the most possible outcome will be that the practiced communication towards the public will deteriorate. If this were to happen, the organization represented by that business leader has a high probability to be associated with a bad reputation, which in turn will harm the business success. Therefore, business leaders should make sure that they actively improve their communication skills, if they wish to keep the organization successful.

However, we should not only scratch on the surface in these communicative settings. It is necessary in this case, to look beneath the surface in order to know what is being conveyed. To examine what purpose individual words have and what unconscious messages might be sent. Many times the search
is ended for a deeper meaning when a direct message is delivered, since there is an underlying naivety in many cases to believe in the provided content. However, all the more reason we have to look further and discover the meaning of messages that bombards the public in society. Despite this, there is a general disbelief among citizens to what is conveyed by politicians, business leaders or through media. This skepticism dates back far in history as it has been the case that those who have the gift or talent to speak in a persuasive way have the ability to influence people into believing their message. For this reason, business leaders should also be careful not to portray a message in a way that makes the public suspect that they are attempting manipulation to make people believe something false or to simply hide the truth about the organization.

Since communication in the form of narratives from business leaders should be examined in a deeper sense it is necessary to have certain criteria for the analysis, which in this case are provided by rhetoric. Today, there is already a great deal of literature on rhetoric and how it is used to one’s advantage when designing a speech or a text to persuade others, or simply to convey a message to an audience. However, whether business leaders consciously use rhetoric to their advantage is not the issue at hand, as it is a matter of discursive analysis through the means of rhetoric. In spite of this, some business leaders tend to speak more eloquently and some tend to sound less intelligent than they actually are. There is literature dealing with rhetorical analyses of politicians, whereas business leaders seem to be able to get off scot-free. Usually, it is the organization they represent that end up taking the blame and the criticism from media and the public, which might make one wonder why business leaders have earned such a sacred position. Naturally, business leaders are not always carefree to walk away from responsibilities but normally it requires more or less a scandal before they become accountable in the eyes of the public. Therefore, it is possible to detect a gap in the field, as the narratives of modern business leaders are not normally found as units of analysis. This provides further reason to map out the discourse of business leaders through rhetoric analysis.
As a last remark it has been argued by several authors that rhetoric is a lost art. These authors believe that the eloquence of speaking has gone lost, as we have embarked on the modern society. However, it depends on how we choose to look at it. Rhetoric is sometimes depicted in literature as a concept that is present only when it is practiced on purpose. I can immediately break down this common misconception and tell you that this is not the case. The point is that it might be considered a lost art because people are not using it in an effective and thoughtful way. However, it is not valid to say that rhetoric is lost, seeing as it is present in every moment of our lives whether we pay attention to it or not. This will be further explained when I take it upon me to define rhetoric.

1.3 Research Question

The research context sets the framework within which this study is conducted and the problem discussion helps to further present the issues that are identified within this field of research. Based on this narrowing context, the research question can be identified where rhetorical analysis will be utilized as a pretext to look into the textual communication of business leaders and how they communicate while practicing leadership, leading to the following research question for this study:

*How do business leaders utilize textual communication as means to practice leadership?*

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe the essence of rhetoric as an essential part of business communication, analyze how business leaders perform leadership through communication and to contribute to further understanding of this subject, by explaining narratives from business leaders through rhetorical analysis.
2. METHODOLOGY

“Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.”
- Aristotle

2.1 The Actors View

To achieve an analysis that will bring this topic further understanding it is important to have an appropriate approach to the research that is made. This includes a view of reality and a perspective towards how society is fundamentally built up. Since the subject of research in this thesis is built on communication and personal realities it is necessary to have an approach that will support such a reality, which is socially constructed and where the contributions of people in our society creates the reality in which we live. This approach also implies that the study is aiming to create knowledge within the current field of research in order to create understanding of the subject at hand. Arbnor and Bjerke (2009) describe the actors view to be an approach where knowledge is created to facilitate understanding, which in this case would mean to come up with interpretations. Further, the actors view identifies the constitution of reality to be built on language, meaning that the reality is socially constructed. Therefore this approach is appropriate to use when conducting this study of narratives that will be interpreted according to rhetorical analysis.

Since reality is considered to be socially constructed from the actors view it further suggests that it is a reality that is undergoing constant changes, since humans are under constant change and development. This development takes place in the interaction of four different processes, which are subjectification, externalization, objectification and internalization (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009). These processes imply that society is seen as an objective reality while humans are a subjective reality. However, both society and humans are considered to be products and results of each other as their
development are linked together. For this study the actors view depicts how significant it is to see the link of the narratives of business leaders with the societal meaning, since they are images of each other and one of them would not exist without the other. Based on the approach of the actors view, the meaning that is extracted from the study will build its own language of meaning to increase the understanding of the phenomena that is being studied. The aim of developing further understanding through development of language and meaning is to emancipate actors from conceptualizations that are framing ideas and impressions and narrowing actors’ perceptions.

2.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

Within the actors view there are further methods that can be used to frame the study and clear up the intent of the conducted research. First of all, as this study is aiming to create knowledge and understanding of a phenomena which requires a deep analysis and interpretations of meaning, a qualitative method is necessary as this research method focuses on how it is possible to make sense of different processes and interpret meaning (Merriam, 2009). Moreover, qualitative research is highly interpretive, emergent and evolving and has its focal point on individuals and their experiences and interpretations (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Based on this, it is clear that to answer the research question, *How do business leaders utilize textual communication as means to practice leadership?*, it is required that a qualitative research method is utilized, which can provide an in-depth answer, open up for interpretations and extend the understanding.

As a qualitative research design is the approach through which the research subject is viewed there is a more detailed method for the research that needs to be added to this. Qualitative content analysis will therefore be utilized as the method that will guide the research in this study. The reason for this choice is that qualitative content analysis is a systematic way to make sense of the extensive material that emerges in qualitative studies (Schreier, 2012). In accordance with the actors view, qualitative content analysis does not
make any assumptions of social reality explicitly. Instead, reality is seen as constructed by language and humans are actors that contribute to the creation of society and reality. The reality depicted by qualitative content analysis is in the form of attitudes and feelings found in people and therefore language is the creator of social reality. In this way, it is possible to determine that this research method is appropriate for this study, as the reality explained by this method can be found in the narratives, which are the units of analysis.

Further, Schreier (2012) explains that qualitative content analysis is a descriptive method meaning that the author simply describes, reformulates and interprets content that is already there. Nothing is added or removed from the material that is used as units of analysis. Instead, meaning is extracted from the words that together shape sentences and full texts. Since reality is constructed by language according to this method, the analysis will provide insight into the reality of how business leaders use communication. As the collected narratives are gathered from situations where business leaders practice leadership, the analysis will also provide information to how these leaders use communication in cases where leadership is displayed.

**2.3 Collection of Narratives**

To provide an analysis that presents a wide understanding and both good and bad examples of textual communication of business leaders, there are certain criteria to follow when the narratives are collected. Supported by these criteria the narratives have been chosen according to selective inclusion, which means that I, as the author of the study, have freedom to steer the collection of narratives in any desired direction (Krippendorff, 2004). Since the approach to the study is the actors view the matter of finding representative units to study is not the case. Rather, the collection of narratives is based on the importance they have for creating knowledge in the research (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009). The criteria presented below are those on which narratives have been evaluated and selected to represent a
cohesive and comprehensive view of communication of business leaders when they practice leadership.

The very first criterion for the narratives is that they are public texts that have been communicated by leaders in situations where leadership is exerted. This means that the narratives are texts available to everyone and have been communicated by business leaders with awareness that anyone can access this information. This criterion is set as a basis since other approaches to collect narratives, which include direct contact with business leaders, might affect the way they choose to communicate in order to appear in a different way than they usually perform. Public information, which has been produced for other reasons than to be part of a study, can therefore provide a more accurate depiction of the textual communication of business leaders.

Further, public media in all shapes also provide a setting that has great impact on the organization and therefore on the leader as well. Since it influences the situation to a high degree, public texts provide a good setting to explore this phenomena within, because the words are meaningful at the moment they are spoken or written and communicated to the public. However, this fact also results in that all the collected data is secondary. Whereas this often creates an issue of trustworthiness the narratives collected for this study are collected in such a manner that they are direct transcripts of what the actor in question intended to say or write. In that way, the units of analysis have not been altered or interpreted by any other actor before being added as narratives in this study.

Secondly, the narratives that are used as units for analysis will have a wide variety in terms of different forms of texts. To capture a complete picture of the textual communication of business leaders to the largest extent possible, it is necessary to include texts of different depths and lengths in the rhetorical analysis. This will be carried out by integrating quotes, public speeches of different magnitudes, shorter statements to the media and
shareholder letters of annual reports written by the CEO, into the analysis. By combining these different sources of narratives it is possible to attain a diverse analysis where the advantages and pitfalls of business leaders’ communication can be identified.

The third criterion, which is used for collecting narratives, is based on the nature of the text itself. Texts that are perceived as percussive in any manner will be chosen to portray specific aspects that the rhetorical analysis will convey. Further, this criterion is essential to conduct an analysis that will bring forth different perspectives of communication where some features might prove to be more successful than others for business leaders who are practicing leadership. Percussive texts will help achieve this balance in the analysis, as they may be strikingly excellent or equally unappealing. As these three criteria are combined in the collection of narratives, the content of the units of analysis provides a broad picture of the communication of business leaders from different perspectives and diverse sources, shaping the strengths and weaknesses of the discourse of business leaders, as they communicate leadership.

2.4 Author Perspective

As this research is conducted by a solitary author, who steers the research in a desired direction by selecting theories, narratives and sources, it is important to consider how this affects the outcome of the study. The analysis, which lays the grounds for the conclusion and outcome of the research, is entirely constructed by analyzing the collected narratives and applying the essence of the theoretical framework. The meaning, which is extracted from the narratives through the analysis, will be my own interpretation of finding the best approach to approximate meanings in order to make them as direct and close to the context as possible (Cruse, 2004).

As a sole author, I will be the creator of business knowledge according to this process, where the knowledge will be generated in order to increase
understanding of the phenomena being studied (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009). This implies that the subjective view of the author will have a large influence on the outcome of the research. As the actors view has the approach that reality is socially constructed this should not be seen as a limiting disadvantage to the study. Rather, it should be considered an asset that the personal experience, frames of references and opinion of the author can be added to the analysis in order to heighten the value of the extracted meaning. Further, scientific validity can be achieved through the author by being open and honest to the reader and presenting and explaining the different steps of the analysis that is conducted.

2.5 Structure

To answer the main research question *How do business leaders utilize textual communication as means to practice leadership?* there are several aspects that need to be identified and explored in different steps within the study. First of all, the importance of communication for leaders to practice leadership must be established for the authenticity of the study. Based on this knowledge it is possible to justify the conduct of the rest of the study. Secondly, the foundation and basic concepts of rhetoric need to be set up as a framework based on which an analysis is possible. As this is the foundation of the research, an extensive overview of the elements of rhetoric is necessary and will be the source of knowledge for this study. Finally, the units of analysis will be presented in the form of narratives that are analyzed from a rhetorical viewpoint in order to examine how leaders use textual communication in the practice of leadership.
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

"We always mean to say something, for it is through speaking that our humanity exists."
- Merleau-Ponty

3.1 Communication in Leadership

In business settings there are many aspects that together carry an organization forward and keeps it running and operating smoothly. It is difficult to say that one aspect is more or less important than another since it is always a combination of factors that are needed for success (Kellerman, 2004). Even though it is not possible to point out only one extraordinary and essential factor that will make or break the success of an organization it has become evident that there are some aspects that are ranked high in importance for successful businesses. Bennis (2007) and Ashby and Miles (2002) argue for the significance of healthy and effective communication for organizations and in front of all for business leaders. This fact might be justified by a simple example, which has been provided earlier in this work. The greatest most creative vision, being presented by a business leader who does not know how to deliver a message and therefore makes the business idea sound like a poor concept. In the same way, it is possible for a person who has the ability to communicate successfully to make a rather meager business idea sound like the invention of the decade.

Often when communication is discussed in leadership it is rather theoretical and there are even models of efficient communication that are meant to explain how organizations can optimize the communication internally and externally. I would like you to forget about these models for the moment and think about leadership in a different way, to be able to make sense out of the messages that are provided in this text. Instead of looking at leadership as a set of characteristics and accomplishments that together create a sufficient
leader, leadership can be viewed as a performance art (Hatch, Kostera and Kozminski, 2005; Bennis and Thomas, 2002). By labeling being a leader a performance art rather than as a job title it immediately reaches towards a new direction. Instead of dealing with a list of tasks, being a leader is then an act of performing to an audience in a way that appeals to the people within that audience and in a way that creates meaning and a sense of direction. When leaders perform in front of an audience communication is the central topic. If a leader cannot perform to the audience, there will be immediate consequences as the audience does not have a clear path or directions to follow. To view leadership as a performance art means that the leader should always have the audience in mind and constantly sell him- or herself to the audience. It is also of essence that leaders are believable and that they act like a leader to be perceived like one (Bennis and Thomas, 2002; Godin, 1996). In fact, based on the example of a person who have the ability to present something mediocre as an amazing invention, it is possible to claim that any person who acts like a leader can become a leader since you are to others, and often to yourself, what you are perceived as.

In the same way, well-formulated and informative communication can accomplish a public opinion of a company that well exceeds its current status. However, when high belief and confidence is instated in that organization, it is also plausible that the organization will improve to meet the public opinion. Moreover, leaders that are good at this performance art also have the ability to conceal specific aspects that are not appealing to the audience. While it might be important for the moment to cover certain parts of a story the truth has its ways of coming out, and more often than not, in a more harmful way than the initial truth would have been. Further, it is important for leaders to not only consider what they are communicating to the audience but mainly how it is carried out. It is evidence enough that the verbal message, the content of the words, only account for 7 percent of the complete message that the audience receives (Dowis, 2000; Mehrabian, 1972).
To add to this, Wiseman and McKeown (2010) explain how leaders will affect the audience to have different feelings depending on how they speak. These authors describe communication as such a powerful tool that it will affect the feelings of individuals, not only towards the leaders but also feelings that affect their own self-perception. This is further reason to why leaders must take the responsibility of communicating in a smart way, since it is the individuals both within and outside an organization that will decide its fate. This can easily be connected to leaders who speak in media and who are not considerate of this fact. Instead of being humble and realizing that it is the people they are speaking to that are customers or employees that will help the organization forward, many leaders enjoy the power trip of being the center of attention (Godin, 1996). In such circumstances the communicated message, even though it is carefully prepared and well adjusted to the audience, is likely not to reach the individuals of the audience since they already have lost confidence in the person who is speaking.

Moreover, leaders should consider the fact that they are not only affecting people when they speak in media but personal encounters and quick conversations matter at least as much, if not more (Kao, 1996). Since the electronic medium came into use communication has been viewed differently and it is easier to contact people and send messages via electronic means. However, still today the simple spoken word and personal encounter remain the most powerful and valuable means of communication. Internally in organizations, it could even be the case that the informal exchange between a leader and the follower has more impact than any formal word (Kao, 1996). One explanation to this might be the personal impact that leaders have on people when they communicate in smart ways. There are studies that show that leaders have such strong influence on followers that they have the power to affect how these persons perceive themselves. If this is carried out in a way that makes people feel smarter and more capable leaders might be called multipliers, whereas leaders who communicate with followers in a way that decreases their confidence are considered to be diminishers (Wiseman and McKeown, 2010).
Nonetheless, since communication sometimes reaches through different media, it has become clear that this kind of communication also can have a deep and strong impact on followers (Crystal, 2006; Godin, 1996). For this reason, leaders need to realize that they influence people that are listening to them. It is no longer good enough to speak to the general public as a distant crowd. Leaders need to involve the people in order to attain their attention in this information crowded society. In addition to this, Dowis (2000) argue that the use of simple words can facilitate the understanding for the listener. While it might be good to avoid highly complex terms it is equally important to address the crowd as a group of children. Instead it is necessary to find a balance where the majority of the public will grasp the message and feel good about their apprehension. In this sense, simplicity can be an aspect that supports leaders to become multipliers, since it reduces the distance between the leader and the follower. Moreover, it has the ability to make followers perceive the leader as being on the same level as them and not coming off as haughty or self-absorbed.

Crystal (2006) develops the meaning of the electronic age further since it has such a large impact on followers. The author describes how we have been confined to smaller spaces in this time and that leaders often are pressured nowadays by adding as much information as possible into as short text or as few words as possible. Therefore it is necessary for leaders to refine their language and avoid empty words that will fill up space but do not contribute to a message. It is arguable that this might be a reason to why one-way communication from leaders to followers through media has flaws. Many leaders are intelligent, well educated and have elaborate arguments to defend their actions and organization. However, it is often detected that leaders speak around the topic and bring up other aspects than the main point. If leaders do not learn to adapt to the changes around them it is plausible that the public will lose confidence in them. This is one of the reasons why adaptation is considered to be one of the strongest qualities for leaders (Ashby and Miles, 2002).
One way to communicate effectively has been discovered to be through storytelling (Godin, 1996). Stories often make people trust in leaders because they inspire people and provide a personal link between them, since it encourages a relation between the leader and the audience. To tell a story instead of plain facts usually comes across as subtle and it provides a strong message to those who are listening. Gardner (1995) supports these facts and explains how leaders can captivate their audience and engage them with storytelling more than speaking in regular terms would. The reason why storytelling becomes such a powerful way of communicating for leaders is because we are all driven by emotions. No matter how rational we might think that we are, and no matter how well we evaluate decisions that we make, we are human and basically run by our emotions. Ekman (2004) explains that emotions can triumph over even our fundamental drives such as hunger and even the will to survive, proving that any decision can be made by emotions rather than the rationality we often would like to think that we possess. In fact, if we try to examine storytelling in an objective way, it would seem to be a poor way of communicating since it usually does not appeal to logic reasoning. The fact that leaders can use storytelling successfully proves yet again that humans are affected by emotions to a large scale (Hatch, Kostera and Kozminski, 2005).

Nevertheless, the story being told can not be made up completely as desired. It needs authenticity and real value to be accepted by a crowd. If there are elements that contradict each other or display values that are not appropriate a story can easily loose that authenticity and the credibility of the leader might come crashing with it. If storytelling is used successfully leaders have an important role in making sure that the story lives on through embodiment (Gardner, 1995). This implies that leaders not only provide a story to the audience but that they also relate and believe in that story themselves and act accordingly with the message it provides. Telling a story is but one way to communicate to an audience. To embody that story is what makes it believable and creates a positive attitude towards that leader.
As the focus so far has been on textual communication, which is not sufficient from a communicative perspective, there is something worth mentioning. Whereas leaders who are not communicating in effective ways have much to learn from studying communication and rhetoric, it is important that they do not think that development should be put on hold when things are running smoothly (Bennis, 2007). As John F. Kennedy once said “The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining.” This quote clearly speaks for itself that it is not enough to be satisfied with the way things are run in times of success. In fact, those are the times where leaders have the opportunity to take an extra good look at the organization as well as themselves to evaluate what improvements could be made. This is many times referred to as having the mindset of Kaizen, which means to constantly improve by small steps and always have the strive to develop into something better (Imai, 1986).

Therefore, it is also important to never have the mindset that “it is too late” or “it has worked fine so far”, because these ways of thinking will put a stop to any possible development that will improve the situation. Leaders should be more concerned about stepping up to the plate and prove through their way to communicate that they deserve the position they have reached. Moreover, they should acknowledge how important followers are to their success, after all the leaders could not practice leadership if they would not have any followers (Bennis, 2007).

Even though leaders know how to communicate well when they are put on the stand to talk to the public through different media they face a different problem. Most of these times, they do not know who their audience is. They do not know who is happening to sit in front of the TV, who is listening to the radio or who is reading the news on the internet. Godin (1996) discusses a way to solve this issue, as leaders can choose to direct their intended message to a certain target group. To aim a message towards a specific group of people might sound like it only could be effective for that crowd. However, it provides rather good opportunities for a positive reputation since
people are likely to talk about subjects that either bothers them or that they feel passionate about. Leaders, who have the opportunity to inspire or appeal strongly to a group of people, will then have a positive reputation spreading through this crowd and onto other people. Then, the only question is how leaders can appeal to a group in such a strong way. There are many ways that have been identified to succeed with this but there is one aspect that is universal for all of them. The leader must make sense to every individual of that group to ensure that the intended message is received.

3.1.1 Sensemaking

As understood, there are many hurdles to overcome for leaders who want to communicate with their followers. First of all, there is external interference that might affect the message on the way to the receiver, which might mean that only parts of a message reaches through or that it loses it context because of incoherence (Cruse, 2004). However, leaders who want to communicate effectively with their followers face an even larger challenge than external noise, since they need to make sense on an internal level to the individual who is receiving the message. The reason why this is a problem or challenge for leaders lies within the different perspectives of each individual and since each individual on this planet is unique it is understandable that everyone will interpret information in different ways. The process that goes on in the brain in an unconscious state of every individual is that we evaluate and interpret information that we are provided with, every day and everywhere.

The explanation to why each individual perceive things differently is because everyone has had different experiences, different lives and therefore different frames of references. These frames of references are what the brain uses to categorize and decode information that is constantly streaming into our heads. This process also explains why people who are looking at the same picture will notice and emphasize different aspects, since our frames of references determine our focal points. Further, the frames of references also
contribute to our understanding by making sure we do not have to interpret the same information over and over again. Once we have extracted meaning out of a situation we will later use that meaning if we encounter the same or a similar situation again. This also means that people are likely to act in the same way in situations that are repeating themselves, unless the frames of references have changed between these situations (Weick, 1995).

Since our frames of references are built up to help us interpret information and generate meaning out of stimuli that is provided to us, leaders have an opportunity to use this to their advantage. The leader can then act like what is called a sensegiver, who provides relevant information to the follower, in this case the sensemaker (Weick, 1995). Leaders who know the frames of references of their audience can direct the appropriate information to the sensemakers in order to facilitate their understanding of the message that the leaders want to transmit. Since it might be rather rare that leaders know the frames of references of the followers, they can also be a sensegiver in the sense that they provide a reality to their followers and in that way affect how the message will be perceived (Smircich and Morgan, 1982). This is a way to avoid the possibilities of counter realities, which means that the same message will be perceived in different ways based on the fact that people live in different realities. The reality of each individual is built up on the frames of references of that person and the general behavior among people is that the generated meaning will reinforce the personal reality because it creates wellbeing and self-affirmation (Kennedy, 2007).

The meaning of all this is to understand that the message sent out by leaders is based on their own frames of references and their own understanding of their environment. This information is encoded in chosen words and expressions when it leaves the leaders and travels through any given media towards the followers (Cruse, 2004). When this encoded message has reached followers, they will decode this message individually according to their own apprehension of reality. Only by understanding this process, leaders can speak with greater impact through messages that are
conveyed to the audience, given that they succeed to appeal to a group of people with frames of references that will generate the meaning that was initially provided by the leader as a sensegiver. As presented earlier, leaders can then improve their reputation and give a strong impression to a target group, which often leads to a spread of that positive attitude.

3.2 The Establishment of Rhetoric

It is well known that linguistic studies and philosophy dates well back before Christ. Likewise, most people are aware that rhetoric is an ancient art that had numerous practitioners and studies made about it. Furthermore, a lot of people connect rhetoric to the great name Aristotle, who has become the face of rhetoric. What more is there to say? Well, as the history of rhetoric dates back to the fifth century B.C. there is an immense amount of history that have shaped rhetoric and how it has been viewed by theoreticians as well as the public (Booth, 2004). To provide some further understanding about the topic in its generality, there are a few important occurrences that have shaped rhetoric into what it is to this day, that I deem necessary to bring up to facilitate understanding for rhetorical analysis.

As Aristotle has become a direct link to rhetoric it is remarkable that previous occurrences have not gained more attention in the public eye. There is for example an Egyptian script, which has been determined to stem from some time before 2 000 B.C. that brings up the topic rhetoric. It was written in the form of a handbook of how to use language, when to speak and when to be quiet, in the context of a trial (Kennedy, 2007). Even though others have written and spoken about rhetoric before, it is the work of Aristotle that triumphs all. While he should not be viewed as a founding father of rhetoric, since it has always been present in our language, he directed attention to how it was possible to categorize, compile and analyze our language. Aristotle’s work has been such a success because he was the first person who took the initiative to map the learning and relationship
between the different disciplines that were part of the numerous arts and sciences.

After the time of the categorization and partitioning of the different branches of rhetoric, schools and students would pay much attention to this topic. In history, rhetoric has been given a vast amount of attention and room to grow, develop and integrate into the human language. Great philosophers, writers, politicians and speakers further contributed to keeping rhetoric alive and expanding the horizons and meaning of the different branches that had been cataloged (Kennedy, 2007). Even though the topic took some downturns in popularity and value, it remained an essential subject to the elite of society well after the time of Christ. Rhetoric was still considered a leading subject around the thirteenth century A.D. as rhetoric became a favorite subject for many students among the seven arts. Even well into the 16th century A.D. students were drilled in school and in society of the importance of the subject rhetoric (Booth, 2004).

Generally it is notable that from this time the development of rhetoric has been standing rather still, in spite of some upturns that have lead to new works in rhetoric, the basics are left untouched. In fact, the work of Aristotle at such an early time in history is applicable still today and there is no need to reshape or rephrase a work that successful (Kennedy, 2007). However, because of this development and strong influence that rhetoric has had it remarkably strange how the strong influence of it suddenly started to fade in importance for the society. In recent times, Booth (2004) has explained this decline in interest by the fact that there has been some miseducation outside the classroom. Even though we have been taught about rhetoric in school in modern society students might not be fully trained to think critically about the language they are met with in society, as the media only uses bad rhetoric and internet is providing slovenly or false information. The art of rhetoric is therefore disappearing all the more, the deeper into the technological society we reach.
3.2.1 Definition of Rhetoric

To understand the aim and meaning of the rhetorical analysis in this study it is further necessary to define rhetoric since the entire analysis of the narratives relies on it. With this very brief historical explanation of rhetoric it is possible to identify some aspects that are the very core of the perception of rhetoric in today’s society. This is important in order to avoid any confusion of what is written and what meaning the word rhetoric has. It is also required, for the analysis to make sense, to clear out if the term rhetoric has any positive or negative charge to it. Today, the word rhetoric is sometimes used quite carelessly since it is used in everyday life even though there is no certainty to what the concept rhetoric actually entails. However, there is a general view of rhetoric among people as well as in theory, which states that it is to persuade and argue for a cause in order to win people over.

To aid the rhetorical analysis presented in this study, I first need to explain that rhetoric can be apprehended in many more ways that what is stated above. Therefore, I here provide my view as the author in order for the reader to understand the basis of the conducted research. To bring up and respond to all different views of rhetoric would probably take a lifetime. Therefore the most common view of rhetoric will be presented and explained before my personal perception and view is introduced. To begin with, my hope is that you as a reader are open to clear your mind from the negativity that rhetoric is often connected with in the general eye. Even though you do not agree with my view of rhetoric, my anticipation is that it will ease the understanding of the theory and analysis, which is presented on this basis. With this said, first thing I wish to do is to tear down any delusions that might exist, based on the most common view of rhetoric.

First of all, there is a very common misconception of rhetoric, which was created in ancient times and is still present in the minds of many. Rhetoric was once used mainly by politicians or philosophers, who had the intention
to persuade people for good or bad. This meant that rhetoric was often a source for manipulation and came to be connected with a negative aspect of how people with large influence could steer others after their will and desire. The English word rhetoric stems from the Greek word réthór. Since this Greek version of the word had the meaning *a speaker*, often in the context of the court of law or public meetings (Kennedy, 2007), it is possible to detect why the general comprehension of today is built on mistrust and deceit. It is simply because we, still today, do not trust politicians. The misconception mentioned above is then not how rhetoric was used at that time, but that it was used only for evil or wrongdoings. Believe it or not, this view from the fifth century B.C. is still present in the minds of many, as it is the belief that politicians and public speakers use it in the same way today. Because of this belief, rhetoric is depicted as a manipulative tool that people use to get their way, which also brings a negative charge to the word.

To respond to this perception I would like to discourage the belief that rhetoric is only found in situations where someone is trying to deliberately persuade another person or the public for that matter. Rhetoric should not be imagined as a tool that people grasp in order to formulate their words into meanings that are aimed to deceive. Surely, rhetoric has been used as such a tool both to help and hinder in good and in bad, but is not necessarily strategically used. In fact, rhetoric is present around us at all times. In every spoken or written word the foundation of rhetoric is present. In everyday conversations as well as in public speeches, rhetoric is present. Even in the very first sentence formulated by a child. The essence of rhetoric is therefore found in formal settings as well as simple daily conversations.

To illustrate the fact that we are surrounded by rhetoric without realizing or taking note of it, I have chosen an example from a beloved TV series, Friends. In this situation the characters and roommates called Joey and Chandler have lost all their furniture in a robbery. Their friend Ross makes the comment “You know, I’ve got an extra futon.” to which Joey answers, “Dude, you don’t have to brag. We’ve got nothing.”. Even though anyone is
capable of understanding this joke, most people do not consider that it is a joke built on rhetoric. With the context provided, rhetoric brings meaning to the words spoken by Ross that he is willing to lend or give his friends the extra futon, by implying that he has one. This illustration brings me to the second point, that rhetoric does not only exist in sophisticated elaborate speeches that are strategically formed, but also in regular conversations.

For this reason, rhetoric should not be regarded as an intimidating or distant topic. Instead, I believe it would do every individual good to understand the magnitude to which rhetoric is present in every day life, to extract meaning out of what others are communicating or are trying to communicate. Further, the view of rhetoric is often limited to speech as this is the most common perception of where rhetoric is used. Nevertheless, it is a broader concept than that. Sure, it is present around us in dialogues that are taking place but also in the shape of written text and even how we use our personality to convey a message. This proves that we are surrounded by it at all times of the day in all situations where we communicate with others.

It is not a matter of wanting to use rhetoric for the common man since you, as well as I, use it all the time, mostly without realizing it. It is in fact a different question to be aware of the fact that rhetoric is present in your actions than to actually use it. It is therefore uncommon that we are aware of the presence of rhetoric and how it is used to our advantage. In order to reach that state, a comprehensive understanding of rhetoric and how its different concepts can be used to one's advantage is needed. In that case it can be used as a preventive tool to make sure that what is communicated is well formulated and eloquent.

However, there is a very important differentiation that I must make for this thesis. So far, rhetoric has been discussed as something that is utilized by man to formulate meaning. Opposite to this, the principle of rhetoric will be used to analyze the narratives of business leaders. It is therefore not to be seen as a tool to create words, sentences or meaning, but an approach to
extract meaning out of words and texts that have already been created. Additionally, rhetoric is far more than the words that we speak. This will hopefully become apparent to you in the next chapter, where rhetoric will be separated into smaller concepts and different ways to analyze the textual communication of business leaders.

3.3 Rhetoric as means for Analysis

As many authors before me have tried to capture the essence of rhetoric and the central concepts, which together form an understanding of what it entails, there is much literature that deals with different aspects, concepts and theories that are all parts of rhetoric. Whereas many authors study rhetoric with a rather theoretical perspective, I hope to provide you with a vivid and explanatory outlook to how it is possible to create meaning out of what is communicated to and around us in our homes, at work, in school or in society at large. Since many authors have explained these elements from different perspectives I have tried to compile the most accurate picture that makes sense to me. This means that I have used my interpretation to present the essence of what the following authors have already discussed:

Shotter (1993), Brooks and Warren (1979), (Booth, 1974) and Caplan (1954).

3.3.1 “Yesterday’s the past, tomorrow’s the future, but today is a gift. That’s why it’s called the present.” - Bill Keane

When rhetoric is used in everyday life it is mostly referred to in future tense, meaning that someone is using rhetoric to persuade people about something that will have an effect on the future in terms of actions of those persons. However, rhetoric covers the past and the present in addition to the future as it is divided into different categories. This division was made already by Aristotle but is as valid and accurate today as it was then. For the sake of analyzing the textual communication of business leaders, based on different
intentions in an equitable manner these three branches of rhetoric are presented below.

**Deliberative** rhetoric is, like mentioned above, the most common view of spoken rhetoric and the most well known among people. Deliberative rhetoric is associated with arguing for something with the intent to persuade in order to bring out some kind of action in a certain direction. Therefore, deliberative rhetoric is directed towards the future. This kind of rhetoric is meant to stir up motion in the audience, to add reasoning to emotion in order to move the will in a desired direction. Because of the nature of deliberative rhetoric it is most commonly detected in public speeches, where there is a clear aim where someone is trying to inform the audience of a matter, in order for them to make a decision, whether it is what party to vote for or which organization they should support. As this is the explanation to the kind of rhetoric most commonly mentioned, it becomes more comprehensible why a negative view of rhetoric has appeared in the sense of being a manipulative instrument for persuasion.

**Judicial** rhetoric is the second most common way of addressing rhetoric in general. This branch of rhetoric deals with the past and is most commonly found in the court of law where the defendant and the prosecutor have the ability to account for past events. Judicial rhetoric is used to examine the facts of the past in terms of what actually happened, why it happened and if those involved have in any way acted faulty. Even though deliberate rhetoric is the most common perception of rhetoric found today, there is a trend in theory that portrays judicial theory to be the most extensive and important one. The reason for this might stem from the focus on rhetoric in ancient times as it was highly connected to the court of law. It was considered, to a larger extent than today, to be practiced by a few gifted and talented people such as the courtroom people and not to the same extent in social contexts.

**Epideictic** rhetoric is then, logically, the branch that deals with the present. As this branch of rhetoric has the purpose to praise or blame others it is
given surprisingly little attention, seeing as this is one of human’s favorite activities in today’s society. As many people in society today, but in front of all in business environments, tend to be reluctant to see faults connected to the own persona or organization, it is very common that attention is directed to examining, scrutinizing or glorifying other people or organizations instead. As epideictic rhetoric has been somewhat neglected in theory it might depend on the fact that the present merely is a gap between the past and the future and it is therefore a mixture of deliberative and judicial rhetoric.

Since these three different branches of rhetoric are striving to accomplish different effects, it is important for the discursive analysis that the initial intent can be identified, of the person who is speaking or writing, to make an informed and fair analysis. Further than that, the tenses that are provided by these branches are a highly general and do not depict a complete view of rhetoric. Therefore, certain purpose and intent can be extracted out of these concepts, while further analysis insists on more and deeper understanding of rhetoric as an entirety.

3.3.2 “Well begun is well done.” - Richard Dowis

In rhetorical analysis it is necessary to fragment texts into smaller pieces where it is possible to interpret meanings and detect rhetorical elements. The first step to identify units in texts is by looking at the structure and arrangement of the text. We are all aware of the structure beginning – middle – end, which was, and still is, used diligently in elementary school. Even though it is a basic way to structure a text it proves that the essence of rhetoric is a constant for us even when we are not aware of its presence. By this simple division it is already possible to identify different meanings that each part entails and different emphasis can be granted to the separate component. However, rhetoric structure and arrangement is somewhat more complicated than these three stepping-stones and is divided into six major categories, which are explained below. This allows a deeper rhetorical analysis in terms of intention and purpose that can be established by examining the structure and arrangement.
**Exordium** is the introduction of a text or speech and is the very first contact that the audience will have with the topic and the writer or speaker. The aim of a well-executed exordium is to tune the audience into a state of mind where the individuals are receptive and attentive. Depending on the content and purpose the exordium might be formulated in many different ways. However, it has been detected by many practical examples that rather humbling tones and contextual explanations are received warmly by audiences. It is pointed out by some of the authors that depending on the audience a direct introduction may be used where the topic is immediately presented. In fact, the only situations where this type of exordium should not be used is in situations where the audience has been swayed towards a different opinion than the speech or text conveys or if the audience tends to be more difficult to capture. Other than this, the exordium can be composed to entail any facts or details that are relevant for the topic but in such a way that the audience is well disposed and that the introduction is not banal.

**Narratio**, usually referred to as narration, provides a setting and a context to the textual message. The most important aspect of this segment is the plausibility as it will be the foundation on which the following facts will build. Although narration by some is regarded as one of the least important structural elements, it can be crucial for the message as it provides understanding and a sense of direction for the audience. Usually, this is not the place to be creative with content and vivid fables but an opportunity to be brief, concise and clear to portray the context and set a rightful scene.

**Divisio**, which reads into division in English, follows the segment narration immediately and provides the setting where the main points will be put on display. Division is a way to show the audience what the coming segment will tackle more in detail but can also be of the nature that it discards the value of discussing certain points and sets up new entries that are to be discussed in the following segments. Regardless of which of these two
purposes it has, it should be opened with points of agreement that creates a commonplace where the writer or speaker and the audience are in harmony. **Probatio**, also called proof, is the part of a text or speech where proof or confirmation is added to what is previously stated. The proof is presented through arguments that clarify and explain the main points that have already been provided. For this segment to be valuable it should plead to logic and corroborating evidence should be put forward to make a solemn case. Aristotle argued in his works that it is not always appropriate to plead to the formal law. As a matter of fact, he explains that it is more powerful and usually more successful to address common sense and the better judgment of humans. This will instill trust and pride into the audience, which means that a higher appeal will be attached to the message itself. The proof segment also offers an opportunity to let the voice of others be heard, which can strengthen the case being made and add evidence to the proof. This should be used wisely, as people with names that have an impact on others because they know their greatness can help to increase the influence of the message on the audience immensely.

**Refutatio** translates to refutation and is used to further strengthen the intended message by negating the strongest arguments against the content. This might be executed in several ways and in many cases this segment is used to discredit opposition. This implies that the refutation in a text or speech might be directed to a competing party or any other actor that query the intended message. The trick to utilizing refutation to the fullest in this regard is to find a character of the opposition’s message that is conveyed and to phrase that character in a less than flattering context. By doing this, the downsides of the opposition are emphasized and the benefits of the intended message are strengthened. By making the different cases seem more like a fight between black and white instead of a scale of different shades of grey, the audience is more easily convinced. However, this way of oppressing the opposite might sometimes be unflattering for the author or speaker as it is to attack the opponent. Instead, it may be appropriate to emphasize major arguments of the opponent and answer to them in such a way that the
audience can not think of ways to question the content. As mentioned, the way these segments are carried out relies on the context.

**Peroratio** is the conclusion of the complete message and provides authors or speakers, in comparison to the previous five concepts, with freedom to use any expression, phraseology or question to sway the audience. Many researchers deem the peroration to be the most influential fragment of the entire structure. Naturally, the previous segments must appeal and make sense to the audience in order for a successful conclusion to take place. However, without a strong finish, the whole effort of conveying content could be a waste. Whereas the strongest intellectual impression can be made by the previous argumentation the audience will have the strongest impact at the end, from an emotional point of view. As Ekman (2004) described, it is proven that emotions have the ability of overrunning the rationality of humans, meaning that the peroration will be the enduring impression that the audience will remember. There are endless ways of affecting the impression that the audience will have and presenting them all would not be possible. However, some fundamental rhetorical elements that can be identified and extracted as having a high influence on the audience and the content will be presented in chapter 3.4.3 where style is presented.

### 3.3.3 “Language itself is the result of purely rhetorical arts.” - Friedrich Nietzsche

Rhetorical concepts that most people at some point have come in contact with are ethos, logos and pathos. There is definitely a reason to why these three pillars have grown to become so famous of all the rhetorical concepts and frameworks. Ethos, logos and pathos are fundamental for all texts and speeches ever delivered and are very often the reason to why certain messages have a much stronger impact than others. In contrast to structure and arrangement, these concepts might very well be spotted at any place of a text or speech and are not bound to certain timing, even though they are more common in some circumstances than others. Instead, ethos, logos and pathos are often interwoven in order to convey the most powerful and influential message to the audience.
**Ethos**

During his days Aristotle was a wise man who knew his rhetoric as he took part in a great step forward in theorizing and cataloguing the subject. Since he can be considered to be a source of knowledge that has been transferred on to our time through writing, it is essential for anyone who conducts research about rhetoric to include some of his thoughts and theories. As ethos is a concept that was frequently used during his time it is worth to look upon what Aristotle once stated, that “Character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion”. Not only does this give support for the fact that ethos should be considered to be of high importance to rhetoric, where the aim is to persuade an audience, because it also proves the very essence of the concept ethos itself.

To frame ethos in a few words it is the projection of the speaker or writer’s character as trustworthy. While this can be accomplished through an endless variation of characteristics there are some ways in which ethos is used to appeal to an audience that are more common. The quote from Aristotle represents the very core of ethos because of the worthiness that is attached to the words because they are uttered by him and nobody else. This proves that there is a certain trust for his words and that the credibility of the content that he conveys through this very short statement is exceptionally high. As a much less credited author, I could continue to write several pages about why character is important for persuasion, with the most ground braking and phenomenal arguments, without having the same effect that a few words from Aristotle have. The simple explanation to this is the strength of his ethos.

The reason to how ethos can become such a powerful means is because it creates a link between the speaker or writer and the audience. It is this very link that will determine how the message is perceived. Though the statement of Aristotle already made a point that ethos is a great source of credibility, there is luckily a way for those who are not world-renowned authors to create a strong ethos towards an audience. In fact, it has been recognized by
several authors that the most influential way to convey a strong ethos is to find common grounds with the audience. This means that the writer or speaker should make sure that the audience has the perception that they are on the same wavelength and have common values, goals and interests. The significance of achieving this is that the audience immediately builds trust and credibility in their minds, which will be translated into the message that is being conveyed to them.

This causality has been delicately formulated by a modern scholar of rhetoric, Kenneth Burke, who said “You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language ... identifying your ways with his” (Leith, 2011, p.49). With this in mind, it is understandable that there is a specific word made up by the Romans to describe the agreeability that stems completely from the character, as the expectations of the audience are met. The word they used was *decorum*, which has been confined as the art of fitting in. Shortly put, the first step to capturing the audience is simply to earn their love.

To add ethos to our modern society and communication in business settings, it is already acknowledged that business leaders have been found to appeal to their audiences by “being one of the people” rather than acting as a superior. A possible pitfall to note in this case is the balance act where the respect for the writer or speaker as business leaders should remain. In cases where the leader have become too familiar and informal with the audience the trust for the leader has in fact increased but as a consequence the credibility for the leaders’ decisiveness decreased.

On a related note, it is certainly vital for the speaker or writer to not only convey a single message in accordance with the view of the audience. If the actions made by the same person are contradictory to the message the credibility will quickly fall into pieces and vanish completely. Just like personal reputation, ethos can require a lot of time and efforts to be perceived in a fruitful way by the audience, while it can fall apart by the utterance of a few faulty words.
**Logos**

In opposite to ethos, logos is not built on character and has its roots in logic. Logos treats the topic of appealing to the audience by intellectual means and can be described as articulating the relationships between ideas. What is being conveyed must make sense to the audience for them to be receptive. There is in fact a common fault that speakers and writers make when they are delivering a message, which is to appeal to their own logic. While the person delivering the message might consider it to be the greatest speech or text ever formulated, it might not make sense to the audience if the logic of the message does not appeal to them. Therefore, the arguments within the message that plead to logic should be made sure that they are appealing to an audience that holds the right values.

Logos is all about sounding reasonable and arguments that do not come off as plausible will therefore immediately throw off the audience. This also means that logical arguments have the power to get the audience in the right state of mind even before a point is made, if they are used thoughtfully. This can be carried out by carefully arranging logic in a way that the audience have the impression that they are reaching a conclusion or state of mind before the message gets to that point. The audience wants to feel smart and good about themselves and therefore they also like to be able to anticipate the point that is being made because it adds to their self-affirmation.

Even though logos becomes a reflection of what is conveyed as logic and reasonable arguments to the audience, logos and logic can not be considered close relatives. In fact, while logic reasoning would never skip a beat or draw hasty conclusions, logos might be seen as deceitful as it moves forward through a steeplechase course with the aim of avoiding as many obstacles as possible. In fact, in disastrous cases logos might completely be out the window because it is revealed that the arguments are not tenable. One way that this might be discovered is through generalizations, which are very commonly represented in logos. Generalizations provide great opportunities to skip steps of research and to appeal to a mindset, which is already
available for the audience to which the message is conveyed. To make powerful generalizations, analogies, similes, syllogisms, enthymemes and to have an appropriate diction (concepts that are described more in detail in the section covering style, 3.4.3) are influential means that are used in logos. This point further reinforces that logos should not be considered as a brother to logic but rather a manipulative distant cousin.

In layman’s terms, logos is considered to be a dry and tedious part of a message that is crucial for content but might leave the audience to desire more. It is not at all the case that logos equals a message that must be dull and grey. To play with commonplaces and opposites are in fact crucial for a well-shaped logos as there is no way that the writer or speaker has full control over all the facts of a topic. Instead, there is room to use subtle tactics to conceal the pieces of evidence that proves that not all arguments stem from logical reasoning, as logos is supposed to persuade the audience.

The harsh truth about logos in business settings is that one single sentence of pure facts can build a whole message of information attached to that single sentence, which all seems true but has no evidence. There are different types of logic reasoning that will have this affect to a message but as there are many ways to accomplish this, the two most prominent ways to reason found in communication in business settings are presented here. First, deductive logic is used through reasoning that begins with a commonplace, something that it agreeable for the writer or speaker and the audience. When this commonplace is set it is applied to a specific case, which in turn will result in a conclusion. An example that Socrates himself used for this correlation to describe it in a simple way was “All men are mortal. Socrates is a man. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.”. This kind of logic reasoning is also known as enthymeme. As this simple example illustrates how deductive logic moves through a commonplace to jump to a conclusion, inductive logic can be considered to do the opposite, as it draws from a case and uses it to directly prove a conclusion.
Pathos

Even though many have deemed ethos to be the most important out of these three pillars and logos has the strong advantage of logically appealing to the audience, pathos is not to be underestimated. As pathos deals with the writers’ or speakers’ task of appealing to the emotions of the individuals in the audience, you have surely already noticed that pathos is somewhat interwoven both in ethos and logos. However, pathos is also a concept strong enough to have its own categorization. Since pathos is visible in part in both ethos and logos it proves just how important it is to appeal to the audience, no matter what the message is.

As mentioned previously in this work, a great source of appealing to emotions of others is to tell stories rather than speaking in frank terms. To evoke emotions is usually thought off as appealing to compassion, but it must not be forgotten that emotions are displayed in all possible different shapes and forms and might just as well be enjoyment or sadness as anger or calmness. No matter what type of emotions that are evoked by a message, it will only be carried out successfully if the person conveying the message has credibility in this concern. It is not advised that someone of a rather serious stature tries to use pathos in a way to make the audience laugh since there are large risks that the message may be perceived differently. Therefore ethos must be considered before pathos is invoking any feelings in the audience.

Once again, the importance of knowing the audience is proved and this time by pathos. It is true that the persona of the writer or speaker should convey a similar attitude and tone as the message itself. However, it might be even more significant to know what the audience will respond to in order for the message to be perceived properly. The values and beliefs that are held in common by the audience is called doxa and this is what is needed to find a commonplace where some common grounds can be established as a setting and context for the remainder of the message.
To stimulate different emotions for the audience is essentially to mould words into meanings that are intrusive or inclusive and that will trigger a response in the individuals in the audience. Whereas anger many times can be the easiest way to provoke the audience, by agitating words and allegations and then turning this anger to strengthen their opinion towards the message, humor is by many authors considered to be the most persuasive of all emotions. It puts the audience in a state of mind that they enjoy and the message will be fully heard. Nevertheless, the persuasiveness often stops at that as the audience is in a state of mind where they are enjoying the moment, which usually translates into a person who is not triggered to certain actions but merely to take pleasure in the situation.

As the three pillars, ethos, logos and pathos, do not have firm rules for where in a text or speech they should appear there are many variations of where these elements will be found in rhetorical analyses. However, what can be identified is that all three of them, as they complement each other, will be found in several places and in several contexts. As pathos is an element with traces in both ethos and logos, where persona and arguments sometimes appeal to emotions, it is clear that it has a major impact on the audience. However, pathos commonly builds up during a text and speech and is not strong from the beginning. Even though exceptions of this are plenty, pathos is more frequently used to build up an ending that will strike the emotions of the audience strongly. The intention of this is to trigger the individuals of the audience to take action and support the provided message.

Concerning business settings there is one example of pathos that outshines all others, which is a reason to why pathos is highly connected to appealing to compassion. An example accompanied by a picture might read: “This girl’s name is Sarah. She may not live to see her fifth birthday”. Even though we are aware of the manipulative nature of it, we fall for it time after time because we consider ourselves as decent humans. This is mostly used by welfare organizations that plead to people’s emotions by showing situations of the less fortunate and presenting how it could be better if you would help.
3.3.4 “Don’t just tell me the facts, tell me a story instead.” - Seth Godin

As rhetorical analysis focuses on textual meanings and disregard contextual meaning in the form of non-verbal communication to a large extent, it is evident that the way words are put together matters a great deal. Not only can it change the way a message is perceived but it can also lead to situations where the content is altered to mean something completely different altogether. This means that there is a question of ambiguity, which you will discover is a good thing to keep in mind as the part of rhetoric called style is presented in this chapter.

To further explain ambiguity, and what significance it has to a rhetorical analysis, I will present some simple examples of how the meaning of a sentence can shift. Depending on the state of mind of the reader, the content of the following sentence will differ. The woman hit the man with a cane. Now, are you picturing a woman who is using her cane to hit a man, or are you picturing a man with a cane who is being hit by a woman. The fact is, that this sentence might mean either of the two and it is the frames of references of the receiver of the message that will determine what the words will mean.

A second example is a headline spotted a few years ago in an American newspaper which read: Milk drinkers are turning to powder. As there are two implied meanings that can be drawn from this sentence, (1) people who drink milk are using powder instead of liquid and (2) people who drink milk are disintegrating into powder, it has the ability to confuse the reader. Naturally, readers logically assume that the second alternative is not possible, leaving only one possible conclusion to what the headline is saying. However, as it is not always the case that one option can be discarded, like the first example, it is crucial to consider two factors. First of all, reflection should be made about whether a proper context is provided that will aid the reader to understand what the intended message is. Secondly, the doxa of the reader should be evaluated to avoid fatal misperceptions. Used wisely, ambiguity can even be an asset, as it has the ability to trick people in a way that can capture the interest of the reader.
As these examples illustrate the significance of composing words in a thoughtful manner and this fundamental understanding is a step in the right direction, assembling words into sentences is far from enough from a rhetoric standpoint. Messages that have a large impact on an audience or a reader often display traces of being rhythmic, dramatic and memorable in the way they are presented, which is the style. Different elements that have the ability to add these values to pieces of texts and that are possible to extract through rhetorical analysis are therefore presented here.

*All good things come in threes.* Whether this is true or not is a debate for a different occasion but what can be said about the threefold is that it definitely seems to have a special power over our minds. In fact, the elaborate use of triads has not come into existence by a coincidence. The human ear has a certain attraction to effects that are presented in three and sends signals to our understanding that these things are superior to alternatives that are for example presented in groups of two or four. This kind of triads is usually identified in the form of repetition or three strong arguments that form the unity of three. In the case of repetition it might be the same word three times or by beginning new sentences or paragraphs with the same word, alternatively a set of words, to emphasize what sentences or paragraphs belong together. The power of triads is that they emphasize the main points but more importantly that they help messages to be memorable in the minds of the receiver of the message, in this case regardless of what commonplaces or values that person holds.

*Anaphora* is related to this type of increasing the dramatic impression of a message by repeating the same word or sets of words to begin new sentences or paragraphs. However, what distinguishes anaphora from the triads is that it in fact can be used as many times as needed. Instead of appealing to the value three it provides a sort of glue that keeps the complete message together. Just consider one of the most heard speeches in the world by Martin Luther King, who repeatedly used the phrase “I have a dream...”, which perfectly frames and emphasizes the most essential points.
Alliteration can be considered to be for words what anaphora is for sentences. This means that also alliteration have a repetitive nature and is based on giving a message stronger impact as it reaches the audience. Although alliteration is mentioned mostly in contexts where a speaker presents a message, alliteration can reinforce the content of a message even if it is presented through text. The reason to the higher frequency of alliteration in connection to a speaker is because it is based on repetitive sounds of syllables that are stressed. Nonetheless, it is an active element for written texts as well since the reader will hear the text coming to life as they read it, even though it is through their own internal voice and not the external voice of the author.

Similes can be described as making comparisons between different things and in many cases something of a completely different category. Instead of telling something literally this is a way of making a figurative comparison. A simile can usually be identified by the use of the word like. As the subject of interest will be said to be like whatever object or phenomena it is compared to. Nevertheless, it is not enough to say that A is like B and believe that a simile is created. The whole reason for using similes is that it triggers response and activity for the receiver of the message. A well formulated simile has also been proven to evoke a mental picture for the reader or listener, which should be relevant and in favor of the subject.

Analogies are closely related to similes and are also a way of comparing the subject to something else to make a stronger impact to the audience. In contrast to similes, analogies are usually comparisons to things that are more obviously like the subject at hand. Instead of only making a subject stronger for the audience analogies are often used to explain difficult matters in terms that are easier to understand and that people easily can relate to. To make the difference clear, an example of a simile is honesty is like being pregnant, either you are or you aren’t, whereas an analogy usually is more explanatory, like picture the human heart as a fuel pump at the gas station.
**Metaphor** is by many authors considered to be the most influential rhetorical element in terms of conveying a message successfully in a way that affects the audience. Metaphors influence even our beliefs and values since it combines cognitive and emotional elements by using language to activate our unconscious emotional associations. Similes, analogies and metaphors are all rather similar by nature and can many times overlap in definition. Still, there are some differences that can be spotted. Metaphors differ from similes and analogies in the way that the object used as a metaphor is described as if it actually were that other object.

Despite the strong impact that good metaphors can have it should be used sparsely and in appropriate contexts. The main reason for this is that in many examples where metaphors are used they are superfluous and loses effect. Classical cases where metaphors are not aiding the message at all are when scientific information has to be communicated. In those situations metaphors are likely to confuse the audience rather than spurring interest or facilitating understanding. One important element for a metaphor is that it should entail an appropriate resemblance to the topic for the audience to grasp the meaning of it. However, it is at least as important that the metaphor has some distant to the topic in order to have a strong effect and be illustrative. Again, it is the context that decides whether it is appropriate or not to use a metaphor.

**Hyperbole** is another figure of speech that proves to deliver more emphasis to a message. It means to use exaggeration to evoke feelings or make a stronger impact but does not mean to simply exaggerate something in order to fool the reader or listener. A hyperbole should be constructed in such a way that the exaggeration is not taken literally. Rather, it should be overstated to the extent that it is obviously a figure of speech and not a faulty overestimation. In the same way, understatements can be used to trigger emotional response and should not be used in a literal way either.
**Antithesis** is similar to what has been discussed as refutation in the structural arrangement. In terms of structure it is in the refutation where antithesis is most commonly identified but can make a strong case in an introduction or conclusion as well. The function it has is to set two opposites against each other in order to highlight how amazing the intended message is and how senseless it would be to support the contrasting ideas. Antithesis can also be used only as an effect in the message to strengthen the words and does not necessarily need to have the dramatic contrast to the two ideas. A famous example where antithesis is found was spoken by John F. Kennedy, who said “Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.”

**Half-truth** is a concept I choose to develop as rhetoric has proven time after time that it is a master of manipulation. With roots in persuasion arts and knowledge to form deceitful messages, it is necessary to address this issue. Especially since the units of analysis are narratives of business leaders, who might not always have the purest of hearts as they communicate to the public. Naturally, as we are compassionate humans and deep inside want to believe in what people say, we are more easily fooled into believing what is communicated to us in an eloquent manner. The trick with half-truths is that there are in fact true elements that are communicated. It might be that this truth has been twisted into other words or simply that a part of the truth has been left out to give a different impression of the message.

Half-truths might be difficult to detect to begin with but rhetoric that pushes on the right places and emphasizes the accurate points assists to make it even more difficult to spot such misleading notions. In fact, practicing a smart utilization of the language and using the right words is the shortest way to deceit according to some authors. However, usual fall through for such cases is that there are flaws in the causality or that there are defects in the logic. Then again, if the audience or reader share the beliefs of the speaker or writer, there is no one to question these flaws.
To be frank, half-truths might be the most deceitful elements that could be found in rhetorical analysis, as it is one of the few things that practically need to be carried out with the knowledge that the full truth is not conveyed. Then again, the brilliance of it is that these half-truths are not even discovered most of the time. To take another twist on the subject, half-truths are sometimes used to the advantage of organizations or leaders. It is common when tragedies or scandals occur that business leaders or a representative for an organization publically provides an apology or excuse for what has taken place. Be careful before you choose to accept and believe this apology to be truthful and heartfelt. Many times, this is more about a power play than an actual apology, as a public appearance will result in a positive impression for the public opinion as the organization is handling the faulty steps that have been taken. With this in regard, there are of course sincere apologies and excuses made as well, maybe just not as many as we hope for or want to believe as concerned citizens.

**Diction**, which is the distinctive vocabulary, is not to be forgotten in the jungle of concepts and theories of rhetoric. As I have progressed with this study, it has become evident that diction many times is overlooked and disregarded as being a valuable share in rhetorical analysis. In contrast to this, I would like to bring forward diction to its fullest and claim that the composition of sentences and messages might be done flawlessly but without the proper vocabulary, the end-result might still be perceived as bland, ill-composed or even senseless. Needless to say, diction is also highly dependant on context and should not be used in the same way for all speeches or texts. Instead it is highly individual how this is used based on the speaker or writer and of course the targeted audience.

Yet, there are indications that have lead me to the observation that there are patterns for conveying a good balance. Naturally, business leaders must be professional when they communicate in settings where they practice leadership. It can be identified that inappropriate words that do not sound professional can drag down the whole message to be less capturing and less
trustworthy. That, in turn, leads to an audience that is not convinced of the intent and if any action was intended to be spurred by the message, that will be lost in the process. Moreover, it has been established that it is useful to keep it simple. Words that are too complex and haughty might come off as arrogant and the speaker or writer will be marked as someone who is trying to be better than the audience. This means that there is an issue with diction that, based on the situation, requires a balance in the use of words. In the same time as it should be simple enough for the audience to feel comfortable with the message it needs to be complex enough to show that the business leader is in control of the situation.

3.3.5 “A delayed game is eventually good, a bad game is bad forever.” - Shigeru Miyamoto

As business leaders set out to practice leadership through communication in any form there are no clear rules to follow for exactly how one should act. Since this performance is highly dependent not only on the context, but also on leaders and followers it is not appropriate to have general rules about how to behave. Nevertheless, much as you would never see a business leader take of the pants and run around the conference room, there are certain formations that are not received well in the shape of words. These pitfalls of rhetoric rely somewhat on common sense but should not be overlooked as the communication of business leaders is under the microscope.

First of all, a common issue that is found in rhetorical analysis is that the writer or speaker is ignorant and believe that they know better than the audience or readers. This leads to a situation where the writer or speaker becomes overconfident and the message itself loses its impact with the audience. The reason to this occurrence is usually connected to the person creating the message, who is overstepping boundaries because of a bad attitude towards the receiver of the message. This will affect the message in such a way that it is perceived as unserious and any faith, attached to whatever truth lies in the message, is fading. This implies that the message needs to be created with an attitude that is humble towards the receiver and where it is understood that honesty will go further than arrogance.
In relation to this, a second pitfall that has been identified that makes the creator of a message look bad, is prejudice. No matter the situation and no matter the subject, prejudices practically always end up hurting the audience or the reputation of the creator of the message. Again, it is important to display humility in the words instead of including elements that might be received as insulting even though they mean no harm. Whereas certain comedians have the ability to use prejudices successfully in combination with irony and even can be praised for such an act, it is not a concept fit for business settings or other serious contexts, since it might be received as hurtful instead.

Yet another pitfall is the use of bad logic, which unfortunately occurs more often than it should. Especially in business settings where people take messages and the speaker seriously, it is way to common that bad logic is used to justify decisions that are not the best ones. Sometimes bad logic is also used to justify decisions that have already been made beforehand and need justification in hindsight. This can be spotted by the fact that one option is heavily highlighted, that assumptions are made that do not have any proof or that conclusions are made rather hefty before any considerations of other options have been made. A common attitude that can be detected in these situations can be illustrated by “this sounds good, let’s take it”, which indicates that the first answer is considered the best, even though no alternatives have been provided.

Other types of bad logic can be comparisons in the shape of analogies, similes or metaphors that are taken too far to exaggeration. Hyperboles are good and can be accredited in many cases, but they should be kept separate from figures of speech in order to avoid unreasonable messages. Another type of bad logic is to have the conclusion basically repeat the same reason as your argument but with different words, alternatively having arguments and a conclusion that are contradictory to each other. In these cases the message will have a weaker impact and contribute to a confused audience.
A last pitfall that I wish to mention might be the simplest of them all. In this case it is most certainly true like the saying goes, *practice makes perfect*. This merely implies that there are many cases where some practice could have resulted in a completely different outcome. As there are many ways to succeed with a message, there are many ways to fail to communicate the intended message. As some are able to communicate without effort, some must practice greatly to be able to communicate with intent and meaning. In rhetorical analysis of narratives of business leaders, it might not be possible to identify this aspect. However, statements made by inexperienced leaders are easier targets, as possible erroneousness is more obvious.
4. DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS

"If you can’t do something smart, do something right.”
- Joss Whedon

4.1 Resignation Letter, Andrew Mason

Writer: Andrew Mason
Title: Founder and former CEO of Groupon
Context: When Mason was fired after a series of scandals, he decided to write a resignation letter to the employees of Groupon.

People of Groupon,

After four and a half intense and wonderful years as CEO of Groupon, I’ve decided that I’d like to spend more time with my family. Just kidding – I was fired today. If you’re wondering why... you haven’t been paying attention. From controversial metrics in our S1 to our material weakness to two quarters of missing our own expectations and a stock price that’s hovering around one quarter of our listing price, the events of the last year and a half speak for themselves. As CEO, I am accountable. You are doing amazing things at Groupon, and you deserve the outside world to give you a second chance. I’m getting in the way of that. A fresh CEO earns you that chance. The board is aligned behind the strategy we’ve shared over the last few months, and I’ve never seen you working together more effectively as a global company – it’s time to give Groupon a relief valve from the public noise.

For those who are concerned about me, please don’t be — I love Groupon, and I’m terribly proud of what we’ve created. I’m OK with having failed at this part of the journey. If Groupon was Battletoads, it would be like I made it all the way to the Terra Tubes without dying on my first ever play through. I am so lucky to have had the opportunity to take the company this far with all of you. I’ll now take some time to decompress (FYI I’m looking for a good fat camp to lose my Groupon 40, if anyone has a suggestion), and then maybe I’ll figure out how to channel this experience into something productive. If there’s one piece of wisdom that this simple pilgrim would like to impart upon you: have the courage to start with the customer. My biggest regrets are the moments that I let a lack of data override my intuition on what’s best for our customers. This leadership change gives you some breathing room to break bad habits and deliver sustainable customer happiness – don’t waste the opportunity!

I will miss you terribly. Love, Andrew

In a situation where the credibility of a leader has decreased or even disappeared completely, many leaders would quietly accept their fate and
leave the organization with a standard letter, explaining why they are leaving and that expresses sorrow but also gratitude towards the people in the organization. While this kind of letter usually is informative and concise, they have one important aspect in common; they are downright boring and an excuse for bland communication. Since this specific resignation letter became something more or less extraordinary in the eyes of the media it quickly spread outside the company. The text is indeed a public text that is available for anyone to read, but the interest for resignation letters is usually meager and they only have a function within the organization in most cases. Then, what is it that makes this letter stand out among so many others?

The very first element that sets this example apart is the use of humor in what could be described as a rather miserable moment, at least for Andrew himself. As stated before, humor might be the most persuasive of all emotions when it is perceived well and provides this letter with such an influential pathos that only this would be enough to provide the people of Groupon with the feeling of a bright future. It might be bold to begin with humor from a structural perspective as it sets the mood for the rest of the message but flows in harmony with the agenda of this letter and is therefore appropriate for the context.

Secondly, the underlying tone, which is a constant throughout the whole message is a familiarity that provides the impression that he is simply writing to his fellow co-workers and not to employees. Earlier I have described that this specific familiarity might be dangerous for leaders as they can loose their credibility as professional leaders if it reaches too far into casualties. But then again, at the writing moment he is no longer their leader, but a humble man at a crossroads, trying to make the best out of the situation. In other cases, it is usually fruitful for business leaders to show some ingredient of their personality but without overstepping boundaries. This is a very important aspect to this leader’s ethos and if he were to continue as a CEO at the same company it could be the case that some people would not have the same opinion of him as a professional business
leader, but perceive him more as a friend on an equal level. I must highlight once again, that it is the context that decides whether this would be fruitful or not. In this situation, as Andrew Mason even dares to go far enough to discuss his weight issues within this letter, the humorous tone set from the beginning of the message is essential. These two components combined have the ability to save the situation of loosing credibility by becoming too intimate.

In the midst of the message it is also possible to identify a playful metaphor to express the journey he has gone through as the creator of the company. As the metaphor plays well together with the humorous aspect it strengthens his message, provided that the people who read his message understands the comparison to the decades old video game. Even though I have already commented on the strong pathos throughout this message, it is also displayed through this metaphor. In fact, as we read into what Andrew is infusing in his message based on how he has written this text there are few other elements than the very strong pathos. Since it is a resignation letter it is rather natural that it also is emotional. However, the fact that he has been fired rather than leaving the company of his own accord makes it rather remarkable to find such humbleness in the words that are conveyed. This is displayed during the entire message by the use of the simple word *we* instead of *I*, which creates an inclusion for the reader. The organization that has been built up is not *his* proud accomplishment but *theirs* in the way he communicates, which translates into a strong message that has the ability to empower each individual of that organization.

Finally, as this message reached out even outside the company it provides a new opening for him personally as a business leader, even though he has not carried out his duties successfully. The display of feelings and personality which is transferred to the reader, whether it is genuine or not, is actually a way for him to establish new opportunities by not disturbing his personal reputation. Because even though he has made many mistakes as a CEO, he still has his personal pride in keep with this letter of resignation.
To everyone,

First I was an athlete. Then a designer. Now a CEO. But I'm still an athlete and a designer. Like everyone, I view the world through the lens of my experiences. And so I'll talk about a few things I've learned along the way and why I am committed to building a more sustainable company and future.

Designers are curious. They scan and observe and notice what is unique rather than what is obvious. Their curiosity often shows an object or process to suffer some deficit - a lack of function or performance or style or relevance - and they are compelled to improve it. Just as often, designers see not a flaw but an opportunity - and they feel compelled to seek solutions.

Innovators are composers. They see connections where others see only dots. It's all about relationships and possibilities. They understand that the elements of invention are not the notes of the song but rather the spaces in between — new technologies, unique behaviors and unusual partnerships. And they have absolutely no fear of failure in exploring these possibilities.

Sports created Nike, but design and innovation made it grow. Our challenge - and our opportunity - is to use all three to help people reach their true potential.

We have always obsessed on performance - make it lighter, faster, tougher, more relevant - all to enhance the experience of sport for all. In the early days our "systems" consisted of only those things that helped us build better shoes and shirts, and ads and events. We are, after all, a consumer products company.

It took us a while, but we finally figured out that we could apply these two core competencies — design and innovation — to bring about environmental, labor and social change. We opened the aperture of our lens and discovered our potential to have a positive influence on waste reduction, climate change, managing natural resources, renewable energy and factory conditions. We saw that doing the right thing was good for business today — and would be an engine for our growth in the near future. With each new discovery and partnership, we willingly gave up old ideas to shift our thinking toward a better, smarter, faster and ultimately more sustainable future — financially, environmentally and socially. …

… This report is published at a tipping point. It's time for the world to shift. All companies face a direct impact from decreasing natural resources, rising populations and disruption from climate change. And what may be a subtle effect now will only become more intense over the next five to ten years. Never has business had a more crucial call to innovate not just for the health and growth opportunities for our companies, but for the good of the world.

Ten years ago, few companies had a corporate responsibility team. Today, we're evolving beyond the words corporate responsibility to a "sustainable business and innovation team." We see sustainability, both social and environmental, as a
powerful path to innovation, and crucial to our growth strategies.

I grew up in design and innovation. I grew up at Nike. And for all the athletic and cultural and financial successes of the company, I believe our work in sustainable business and innovation has equal potential to shape our legacy. For that to happen, we have to focus on the lessons we’ve learned:

- Transparency is an asset, not a risk
- Collaboration enables systemic change
- Every challenge and risk is an opportunity
- Design allows you to prototype the future, rather than retrofit the past
- To make real change, you have to be a catalyst

The challenges we face are huge, but the opportunity is even greater if we act now — new business models, new markets, new services and products — all based on our commitment to innovation.

There is now only one path and it leads to greater sustainability, equity, growth and prosperity.

Thanks,
Mark Parker
President and CEO, NIKE, Inc.

The intention of writing a shareholder letter is mainly to give the shareholders a brief update about the company, which depicts how their business is progressing. To let shareholders in on how the business is doing is vital for their continued engagement and should therefore be considered an important task for business leaders. As this type of letter is commonly received together with an annual report, depicting the company’s business development in more detail, it is many times an opportunity for the CEO to simply share some general thoughts about the organization in general or the achievements of the previous year.

When the CEO of Nike wrote the letter illustrated above, it is clear that he had the intention of proving that Nike does not bother showing off the revenue of last year. Nike is aiming for value and a long-term success, according to Mark Parker. This is displayed through the deepness of the message, which undoubtedly has the focus on the core values of the organization rather than a measureable success rate. By providing a message that is perceived as genuine and heartfelt, the CEO also provides the shareholder with the feeling that they are supporting something, which
is wholesome and good for society. As known by now, the readers like to feel valuable and are likely to continue to support the company based on a case that can be explained by logic reasoning in the shape of an enthymeme.

*Nike contributes to the society,*
*The shareholders support Nike.*
*Therefore, the shareholders contribute to society.*

In relation to this, Mark Parker adds elements to the letter that bring forward a perception of the organization as open and honest towards the reader. This is mainly carried out simply by one sentence that sweeps away all doubts that Mark Parker is trying to depict the organization as something it is not. This sentence can be found in the fifth paragraph: “We are, after all, a consumer products company.”. The strategic placement of this single sentence brings sincerity to the message as he pulls down the message from being visionary to what it in fact is that Nike does. The reason why this single sentence affects the entire message is not that complex. Seeing that openness and honesty is created towards the writer through this phrase, the ethos of the same person is building credibility. As the ethos is a part of rhetoric that influence the entire message, the credibility spreads to each and every word that same person conveys. To cast such a spell on the reader is often a tactical move, but could rather easily be counter spelled by deficient logos.

The focus on the grounds of Nike, *sports – design – innovation*, is a further source that points towards the strong ethos in this message. It displays the passion and vision within the organization and accomplishes this by using the strength of the threefold. By using three core words to describe the organization makes the reader remember them more easily, something that Nike has used to their advantage as the work of the organization is described to be performed *financially, environmentally and socially*. To actually prove that it has an impact to cluster things in triads I urge you to look back to the end of the letter and the sentence “*There is now only one path and it leads to greater sustainability, equity, growth and prosperity.*”. Now, if you are able to remember these four words just as easily as the triads mentioned before,
congratulations! You are one of the few persons who would manage to do this. As for the rest of us, we are able to identify the triads but things that are counted in numbers higher than this easily fades into background noise that brings us little or nothing. Because of this, when it is possible, priorities should focus on three things that are, indeed, the most important aspects. Even in this case, and as an outsider, it is possible to identify words that are not necessary for the message that Mark Parker is trying to provide, as the values he is talking about are highly interwoven.

As ethos has been described as a main element in this text it is also necessary to consider the pathos, which is addressed through values and beliefs throughout the message. Even though this is the main aspect that infuses the message with emotions and a commonplace for the writer and the reader, it is another source of pathos that triumphs over this and that is found close to the end. When the CEO brings up environmental factors in through the words “decreasing natural resources, rising populations and disruption from climate change” he is appealing to everyone who has the least bit concern for the environment. As it has been discussed before, pathos that is escalating and has its strongest point by the end of a message is the most common structural lay out for a successful message through emotions. The important aspect in this case is that it is implied that Nike is a part of working with environmental questions and is helping the environment move towards a greener era.

As the core values of the organization are presented and emphasized to a large extent it becomes increasingly important that the diction is in harmony with the message. In this case, the fresh and wholesome sense of life is well represented in the diction and a healthy attitude to life, which the company represents, is coming to life through the graphic language that is used. By accomplishing this, a unity is created through the commonplace that is the essence of Nike and instills a proud sensation for the shareholders, who feel that they are part of a movement in the right direction.
Dear Shareholders,

It is an honor to write you this year, not only because we have achieved record financial performance but because we have once again done so by living up to the heritage of our company, balancing profits with a social conscience. Our commitment to creating shareholder value through the lens of humanity is truly a cornerstone of Starbucks global strength, especially as we pursue the most ambitious agenda in our company’s history.

Two years ago, we embarked on a strategic plan, the Blueprint for Profitable Growth, in which we would leverage multiple channels of distribution. I am proud to affirm that it is no longer theory but a true growth engine. The measure of our success can be seen in the past year’s performance: Starbucks consolidated global revenues reached a record $13.3 billion, a 14 percent increase, with revenue growth driven by a 7 percent rise in global comparable store sales and a 50 percent rise in revenue from Channel Development. Our operating income was $2 billion, a 16 percent increase, with our consolidated operating margin rising to 15 percent, up 20 basis points from last year. Starbucks record earnings-per-share growth continued, up 10 percent in 2012 to $1.79 from last year’s $1.62. Through share repurchases and dividends, we returned approximately $1.1 billion to shareholders. While we are proud of our achievements, we have learned never to take our success for granted, which is why three primary attributes will continue to drive our every decision and action. First, we will remain committed to our coffee core. Second, we will exercise relevant, timely, and courageous innovation. And third, we will ceaselessly honor our values. I firmly believe that the ability to adhere to these attributes is what defines the most enduring organizations of our time, and as I share them with you in the context of highlights from Starbucks past year, I think you will agree that they are key to our ongoing success.

Scaling the Starbucks Experience. Today, 42 years after opening our first store in Seattle, Starbucks operates in 61 countries, and we recently had our most successful launch ever, in India. I was in Mumbai when our doors opened, and I personally witnessed, with our fantastic business partner in India, Tata Global Beverages, the unabashed affection and demand for Starbucks, a definitive signal that our brand is resonating around the world. In the China and Asia Pacific region in 2012, we once again posted strong annual returns, including 11 consecutive quarters of double-digit comparable store sales growth. This success showcases how—with nearly 3,300 stores, plus hundreds more planned throughout Asia Pacific—we are mastering the transferable ability to scale our brand’s core attributes and expertise, while respecting and reflecting regional customs and cultures so we may be locally relevant. When we strike this delicate balance, we establish trust,
which ensures the company has opportunities for continued growth everywhere we do business. That includes the 36 countries in EMEA, where revenues grew 9 percent last year and where we continue to apply lessons of the past to reconnect with our customers in this economically challenged but important region. As the equity of our brand thrives around the world, we anticipate having 20,000 stores on six continents by 2014. Additionally, over the next five years, we plan to open 3,000 new stores in the Americas region alone. Unlike a period in our past, I assure you that our growth today is highly disciplined.

Strengthening Connections
As always, our 200,000 partners (employees) are working hard, crafting perfect beverages, and fostering the personal relationships with customers that distinguish our brand. As consumer behavior continues to shift, we are further translating our connective spirit beyond the walls of our stores by leveraging a combination of social and digital media, our loyalty and Card program, and mobile technologies. It is hard to overstate the collective power of Starbucks 54 million Facebook fans, 3 million Twitter followers, 14.6 million loyalty program members, and 7 million users of our mobile applications, who pay this way 2 million times each week. We also gave our customers another quick, mobile way to pay by forging a partnership with Square. We will not stop innovating on this front, where our best-in-class digital reach, and more notably the authentic engagement we ignite daily with millions of consumers online, will continue to drive our core business. Coffee and connection will always be the heart of Starbucks, yet our ability to reinvigorate our business around that heritage remains an unmatched competitive advantage.

Innovating with Timely Relevance, Courage, and Conviction
Last year also saw significant product innovation around our coffee core, most notably in the $8 billion premium single-cup category. We reached a true milestone with the launch of the beautiful Verismo® System, a breakthrough technology that heralds the first time customers can make Starbucks® brewed or latte beverages in their homes. This is only the beginning as we embark on a multiyear plan to grow the Verismo brand into the leading platform in the single-cup space, where sales of our other, complementary singleserve offerings are also accelerating. In 2012 Starbucks VIA® Ready Brew sales grew significantly and we shipped nearly 500 million K-Cup® packs, garnering approximately 16 percent of the premium single-cup market. Through creative new products, we are meeting more of our customers’ needs. This summer we introduced Starbucks Refreshers™ beverages, delicious cold energy drinks made with natural green coffee extract, available in cans, as an instant beverage, and handcrafted in our stores. And we continue to delight with seasonal coffee beverages such as Pumpkin Spice and Peppermint Mocha, as well as Starbucks® Blonde roast, which we introduced for the 40-plus percent of U.S. coffee drinkers who prefer a lighter roast.

Meanwhile, three strategic acquisitions are bringing bold upgrades to our food and non-coffee beverage categories. With La Boulange® bakery products, we have begun the transformation of the selection, taste, and quality of the fresh food in our stores. Second, adding Evolution Fresh to our brand portfolio fulfills our commitment to health and wellness, and not just by bringing high-quality premium juices to our customers but by extending the Evolution Fresh brand to an exciting new store concept. With Evolution Fresh™ juice products currently in more than 2,200 Starbucks® stores as well as 1,500 grocery locations, we are on our way toward nationwide distribution. Finally, with the acquisition of the high-end Teavana brand, we’ll apply our competencies in retail operations and hot and cold beverage creation to expand Teavana’s 300-store footprint as we reinvent the tea category, in part by bringing tea bars into Teavana stores and applying learnings from our own Tazo brand. Long term, our intent is to significantly grow Teavana’s global store presence, transforming tea just as we have transformed
coffee. Our pace of innovation and creativity is rapid, and I assure you that every move is highly strategic and thoughtfully executed as we push for relevant, timely, and disciplined reinvention in our stores, in consumer product channels, and beyond.

Honoring Our Culture’s Values and Guiding Principles
More than ever, today’s consumers have an interest in and access to what companies stand for—their values. This is nothing new to Starbucks. We’ve been building a company with a conscience for four decades, and the reservoir of trust we have earned is perhaps our most precious asset. As we continue to execute our Blueprint for Profitable Growth to become a truly performance-driven global organization, we are committed to leading through the lens of humanity, not just when it is convenient or easy. This alone makes our partners incredibly proud. At Starbucks our aspiration is nothing less than to be among the most enduring brands of our time. I am confident we are on that path, and I thank you for joining us on this journey.

Warm regards,
Howard Schultz
Chairman, president and chief executive officer

Before I begin to analyze this example of a shareholder letter, I would like you to direct some attention to the immediate impression that the CEO of Starbucks provides in contrast to the previous example. These two examples provide views that are very different from each other in terms of what shareholder letters should entail. Keep in mind that both of these letters are written by well experienced business leaders who are in charge of large and most importantly successful organizations. What is then the difference between them? How is it possible that they can look this different? I will answer these questions in a moment, but to make a fair case I must first discuss the lingual elements that are prominent in the message above.

The most salient rhetorical element that runs through the whole body of the text is the apparent logos. The focus on the text relies on numbers and achievements that rather frantically are being enumerated and validated. While this information serves its purpose for logic reasoning, the almost sole focus on facts and numbers can also affect the impression in a negative way as it throws of the balance with ethos and pathos. Whereas the vast numbers that are presented are indeed impressive and proves the progress of the organization in general and in particular the last year, it still leaves some question marks concerning what is happening inside the organization
in terms of development. In spite of the focus on logos there are fragments of pathos that help to provide the message with an ending that have some impact on an emotional level.

The last paragraph, which speaks about values and heritage, is an appealing way to tie a knot to this letter. Especially since it connects back to the beginning of the letter where the values where emphasized as well. This provides an impression that the entire message is more cohesive and that the pieces are falling in place by the end. Nevertheless, while pathos most certainly finds its comfort zone in the end of the letter, it would have been even easier for the reader to relate to this matter if pathos, or at least fragments of it, was found in part in the remainder of the message as well.

Again, I must comment on the triads that are used in the message because of its effect on the reader. In the description of what attributes guide every decision and action made within Starbucks, three things are brought up: “First, we will remain committed to our coffee core. Second, we will exercise relevant, timely, and courageous innovation. And third, we will ceaselessly honor our values.” Instead of reading a set of attributes in long and complicated sentences, this way of portioning the information into three parts makes it much more comprehensible and, again, memorable.

Another example of a triad found in the message is “...in our stores, in consumer product channels, and beyond.” What is interesting in this example is that the last and third part does not really bring any actual information to the content. It is more of a word that is used to fill a space and to make a unit of two into a triad. As discussed earlier in this study, business leaders should usually avoid these kinds of words to provide an impression of being more to the point. However, as Howard Schultz manages to spin this in a positive direction, this is an example of how filling words should be used, if necessary. Related to this is the diction, which is highly professional and straight to the point in this message and instantly tells the story that the writer is a qualified and trustworthy business leader. In spite of this positive
aspect, the message lacks a graphic and vivid language for the reader to enjoy.

Now, if we were to look again at the difference between these two examples, and answer the questions that were posed, I am certain that you already have an opinion about which one you prefer. However, do not make rash assumptions that one is right and one is wrong or that one is simply better than the other. Sure, you might even be bored to read it by now but the fact is that it depends completely on the reader. If the CEO of Starbucks knows that their shareholders are interested in facts and do not want to hear stories that show passion and personal values Howard Schultz is doing the exact thing he should. Likewise, if the CEO of Nike in a similar way knows that their shareholders value the essence of the brand and want to know about the core development rather than shallow numbers, also he is communicating the right things through his shareholder letter.

It might seem like it is the values and core belief or competencies of the organization that decides how the shareholder letter looks like and what aspects it should focus on. However, in most cases it seem to be the values and beliefs of what is important to the business leader, in this case the writer, that are included in this letter. This should not be surprising, since the shareholder letter in fact usually is a personal message from the CEO. Even though it is a personal message where the business leaders choose the focus, there is one aspect that should never be disregarded. As I believe it is worth to mention it time after time, and as repetition is the key to remembering and even to understanding, business leaders must know their audience when they communicate in such situations where they practice leadership. Otherwise the intended message has no chance of reaching the further than the eyes of readers, as the letter does not achieve to infuse the message into their minds.
It's an honor to be here today to address HBS's distinguished faculty, proud parents, patient guests, and most important the class of 2012. Today was supposed to be a day of unbridled celebration, and I know that's no longer true. I join all of you in grieving for your classmate... Today still marks a distinct and impressive achievement for this class, so please join me in giving our warmest congratulations to the class...

When Dean Nohria asked me to speak here today, I thought, come talk to a group of people way younger and cooler than I am? I can do that, I do that every day, I like being surrounded by young people except when they say to me, What was it like being in college without the internet, or worse, Sheryl, can you come here, we need to see what old people think of this feature.

When I was a student here 17 years ago, I studied social marketing with professor Kas Ksh Rangan, and one of the many examples Kash used to explain the concept of social marketing was the lack of organ donors in this country, which kills 18 people every single day. Earlier this month, Facebook launched a tool to support organ donations, something that stems directly from Kash’s work. Kash, we are all grateful for your dedication.

So, it wasn’t really that long ago when I was sitting where you are, but the world has changed an awful lot. My section, section B, tried to have HBS's first online class. We had to use an AOL chat room and dial up service (your parents can explain). We had to pass out a list of screen names, because it was unthinkable to put your real name on the internet. And it never worked. It kept crashing...the world wasn’t set up for 90 people to communicate at once on line. But for a few brief moments though, we glimpsed the future, a future where technology would power who we are and connect us to our real colleagues, our real family, our real friends. It used to be that in order to reach more people than you could talk to in a day, you had to be rich and famous and powerful, be a celebrity, a politician, a CEO, but that’s not true today. Now ordinary people have a voice, not just those of us lucky to go to HBS, but anyone with access to Facebook, Twitter, a mobile phone. This is disrupting traditional power structures and leveling traditional hierarchy. Voice and power are shifting from institutions to individuals, from the historically powerful to the historically powerless, and all of this is happening so much faster than I could have imagined when I was sitting where you are today and Mark Zuckerberg was 11 years old.

As the world becomes more connected and less hierarchical, traditional career paths are shifting as well. In 2001, after working in the government, I moved out to Silicon Valley to try finding a job. My timing wasn’t really that good. The bubble had crashed, small companies were closing, big companies were laying people off. One woman CEO looked at me and said, we wouldn’t even think about hiring someone like you. After a while I had a few offers and I had to make a decision, so what did I do? I am MBA trained, so I made a spreadsheet. I listed my jobs in the columns and my criteria in the rows, and compared the companies and the
missions and the roles. One of the jobs on that sheet was to become Google’s first business unit general manager, which sounds good now, but at the time no one thought consumer internet companies could ever make money. I was not sure there was actually a job there at all. Google had no business units, so what was there to generally manage. And the job was several levels lower than jobs I was being offered at other companies. So I sat down with Eric Schmidt, who had just become the CEO, and I showed him the spreadsheet and I said, this job meets none of my criteria. He put his hand on my spreadsheet and he looked at me and said, Don’t be an idiot. Excellent career advice. And then he said, Get on a rocket ship. When companies are growing quickly and they are having a lot of impact, careers take care of themselves. And when companies aren’t growing quickly or their missions don’t matter as much, that’s when stagnation and politics come in. If you’re offered a seat on a rocket ship, don’t ask what seat. Just get on.

About 6 and half years later, when I was leaving Google, I took that advice to heart. I was offered CEO jobs at a bunch of companies, but I went to Facebook as COO. At the time people said, why are you going to work for a 23 year old? The traditional metaphor for careers is a ladder, but I no longer think that metaphor holds. It doesn’t make sense in a less hierarchical world. When I was first at Facebook, a woman named Lori Goler, a 1997 graduate of HBS, was working in marketing at eBay and I knew her kind of socially. And she called me and said, I want to talk with you about coming to work with you at Facebook. So I thought about calling you, she said, and telling you all the things I’m good at and all the things I like to do. But I figured that everyone is doing that. So instead I want to know what’s your biggest problem and how can I solve it. My jaw hit the floor. I’d hired thousands of people up to that point in my career, but no one had ever said anything like that. I had never said anything like that. Job searches are always about the job searcher, but not in Laurie’s case. I said, you’re hired. My biggest problem is recruiting and you can solve it. So Lori changed fields into something she never thought she’d do, went down a level to start in a new field and has since been promoted and runs all of the people operations at Facebook and has done an extraordinary job.

Lori has a great metaphor for careers. She says they’re not a ladder; they’re a jungle gym. As you start your post-HBS career, look for opportunities, look for growth, look for impact, look for mission. Move sideways, move down, move on, move off. Build your skills, not your resume. Evaluate what you can do, not the title they’re going to give you. Do real work. Take a sales quota, a line role, an ops job, don’t plan too much, and don’t expect a direct climb. If I had mapped out my career when I was sitting where you are, I would have missed my career.

You are entering a different business world than I entered. Mine was just starting to get connected. Yours is hyperconnected. Mine was competitive. Yours is way more competitive. Mine moved quickly, yours moves even more quickly. As traditional structures are breaking down, leadership has to evolve as well. From hierarchy to shared responsibility, from command and control to listening and guiding. You’ve been trained by this great institution not just to be part of these trends but to lead. As you lead in this new world, you will not be able to rely on who you are or the degree you hold. You’ll have to rely on what you know. Your strength will not come from your place on some organizational chart, your strength will come from building trust and earning respect. You’re going to need talent, skill, and imagination and vision, but more than anything else, you’re going to need the ability to communicate authentically, to speak so that you inspire the people around you and to listen so that you continue to learn each and every day on the job.
If you watch young children, you’ll immediately notice how honest they are. My friend Betsy in my section a few years after business school was pregnant with her second child and her first child was about 5 and said Mommy, where is the baby. And she said the baby is in my tummy. And he said aren’t the baby’s arms in your arms, and she said, no, the baby’s in my tummy. Are the baby’s legs in your legs? No, the whole baby is in my tummy. And he said, Mommy, then what is growing in your butt?

As adults, we are never this honest, and that’s not a bad thing. I have borne two children, the last thing I needed were those comments. But it’s not always a good thing either. Because all of us, and especially leaders, need to speak and hear the truth. The workplace is an especially difficult place for anyone to tell the truth, because no matter how flat we want our organizations to be, all organizations have some form of hierarchy. What that means is that one person’s performance is assessed by someone else’s perception. This is not a setup for honesty. Think about how people speak in a typical workforce. Rather than say I disagree with our expansion strategy or better yet, this seems truly stupid. They say: I think there are many good reasons why we’re entering this new line of business, and I’m certain the management team has done a thorough ROI analysis, but I’m not sure we fully considered the downstream effects of taking this step forward at this time. As we would say at Facebook on the internet, three letters: WTF.

Truth is better used by using simple language. Last year Mark decided to learn Chinese and as part of studying, he would spend an hour or so each week with some of our employees who were native Chinese speakers. One day, one of them was trying to tell him something about her manager, so she said this long sentence and he said simpler please. And then she said it again and he said, no, I still don’t understand, simpler please…and so on and so on. Finally, in sheer exasperation she burst out, my manager is bad. Simple and clear and very important for him to know. People rarely speak this clearly in the workforce or in life and as you get more senior, not only will people speak less clearly to you but they will overreact to the small things you say.

When I joined Facebook, one of the things I had to do was build the business side of the company, put some systems into place, but I wanted to do it without destroying the culture that made Facebook great. So one of the things I tried to do was encourage people not to do formal PowerPoint presentations for meetings with me, and I would say things like, Don’t do PowerPoint presentations for meetings with me. Why don’t you come in with a list of what you want to discuss, but everyone ignored me, they kept doing their presentations meeting after meeting, month after month. So about 2 years in, I said, OK, I hate rules but I have a rule, no more PowerPoint in my meetings and I mean it. About a month later I was about to speak to our global sales team on a big stage and someone came up to me and said, Before you get on that stage, you really should know everyone’s pretty upset about the no PowerPoint with clients thing…What? So I got on the stage and said, “One, I meant no PowerPoint with me. But two, more importantly, next time you hear something that’s really stupid, don’t adhere to it, fight it or ignore it, even if it’s coming from me or Mark.” A good leader recognizes that most people won’t feel comfortable challenging authority, so it falls upon authority to encourage them to question. It’s easy to say that you’re going to encourage feedback but it’s hard to do, because unfortunately it doesn’t always come in a format we want to hear.

When I first started at Google, I had a team of 4 people and it was really important to me that I interview everyone, being part of my team meant I had to know you. When the team had gotten to 100 people, I realized it was taking longer to schedule my interviews so one day at my meeting of just my direct reports, I said maybe I should stop interviewing, fully expecting them to jump in
and say no, your interviews are a critical part of the process. They applauded. Then they fell over themselves explaining that I was the bottleneck of all time.

I was embarrassed, then I was angry and I spent a few hours just quietly fuming. Why didn’t they tell me I was a bottleneck, why did they let me go on slowing them down? Then I realized that if they hadn’t told me, that was my fault. I hadn’t been open enough to tell them I wanted that feedback and I would have to change that going forward. When you’re the leader, it is really hard to get good and honest feedback, no matter how many times you ask for it. One trick I’ve discovered is that I try to speak really openly about the things I’m bad at, because that gives people permission to agree with me, which is a lot easier than pointing it out in the first place. To take one of many possible examples, when things are unresolved I can get a tad anxious. Really, when anything’s unresolved, I get a lot anxious. I’m quite certain no one has accused me of being too calm. So I speak about it openly and that gives people permission to tell me when it’s happening. But if I never said anything, would anyone who works at Facebook walk up to me and say, hey Cheryl, calm down. You’re driving us all nuts. I don’t think so.

As you graduate today, ask yourself, how will you lead. Will you use simple and clear language? Will you seek out honesty? When you get honesty back, will you react with anger or with gratitude? As we strive to be more authentic in our communication, we should also strive to be more authentic in a broader sense. I talk a lot about bringing your whole self to work—something I believe in deeply. Motivation comes from working on things we care about but it also comes from working with people we care about, and in order to care about someone, you have to know them. You have to know what they love and hate, what they feel, not just what they think. If you want to win hearts and minds, you have to lead with your heart as well as your mind. I don’t believe we have a professional self from Mondays through Fridays and a real self for the rest of the time. That kind of division probably never worked, but in today’s world, with a real voice, an authentic voice, it makes even less sense. I’ve cried at work. I’ve told people I’ve cried at work. And it’s been reported in the press that Sheryl Sandberg cried on Mark Zuckerberg’s shoulder, which is not exactly what happened. I talk about my hopes and fears and ask people about theirs. I try to be myself. Honest about my strengths and weaknesses and I encourage others to do the same. It is all professional and it is all personal, all at the very same time.

I recently started speaking up about the challenges women face in the workforce, something I only had the courage to do in the last few years. Before this, I did my career like everyone else does it. I never told anyone I was a girl. Don’t tell. I left the lights on when I went home to do something for my kids. I locked my office door and pumped milk for my babies while I was on a conference call. People would say, what’s that sound. I would say, what sound. I hear a beep. It’s a fire truck. But the progress we’ve made in the last decade has convinced me we need to start talking about this. I graduated from HBS in 1995 and I thought it was completely clear that by the time someone from my year was invited to speak at this podium, we would have achieved equality in the workforce. But women at the top c-level jobs are stuck at 15 or 16 % and has not moved in a decade. Not even close to 50%. We need to acknowledge openly that gender remains an issue at the highest levels of leadership. The promise of equality is not equality. We need to start talking about this. We need to start talking about how women underestimate their abilities compared to men and for women, but not men, success and likeability are negatively correlated. That means that as a woman is more successful in your workplaces, she will be less liked. This means that women need a different form of management and mentorship, a different form of sponsorship and encouragement, and some protection, in some ways more than men.
There aren’t enough senior women out there to do it, so it falls upon the men who are graduating today just as much or more as the women, not just to talk about gender but to help these women succeed. When they hear a woman is really great at her job but not liked, take a deep breath and ask why. We need to start talking openly about the flexibility all of us need to have both a job and a life. Couple of weeks ago in an interview I said I leave the office at 5 pm to have dinner with my children, and I was shocked at the press coverage. One of my friends says she wasn’t sure I could get more headlines if I had murdered someone with an ax! This showed me this is an unresolved issue for all of us, men and women; otherwise why did everyone write so much about it. And maybe most importantly, we need to start talking about how fewer women than men, even from places like HBS, even in this class, aspire to the very top jobs.

We will not close the leadership gap until we close the professional ambition gap. We need more women not just to sit at the table, but as president Obama said a few weeks ago at Barnard, to take their rightful seats at the head of the table. One of the reasons I was so excited to be here today is that Dean Nohria told me that this is the 50th anniversary of letting women into this school... Your dean is so passionate about getting more women into leadership positions and he told me he wanted me to speak this year for that reason. I met a woman from that first class once. She told me that when they first came in, they took a men’s room and converted it to a women’s room. But they left the urinals in. The urinals are long gone. Let’s make sure that no one ever misses them.

As you and your classmates spread out across the globe and walk across this stage tomorrow, I wish for you four things:

First, keep in touch via Facebook; this is critical to your future success! And since we’re public now, could you click on an ad or two.

Two, that you make the effort to speak as well as seek the truth.

Three, that you remain true to and open about your authentic self.

And four, most deeply, that your generation accomplishes what mine has failed to do. Give us a world where half our homes are run by men and half our institutions are run by women. I’m pretty sure that would be a better world.

I join everyone here in offering my most sincere congratulations to the HBS Class of 2012. Give yourselves a huge round of applause.

What better way to discuss successful communication in leadership than showing this example that in itself explains the points of how important it is for business leaders to communicate with meaning in situations where leadership is practiced. Even though this speech is rather long, the arrangement of the structure is a constant that flows through the message in a way that the audience actually never have a moment to drift off. In fact, it is the transitions between the different structural fragments that contribute to a speech where no part seems to be superfluous.
As this can be described as an invigorating speech the rhetorical elements can be said to be of the same character. The ethos that is spread over the entire speech is prominent through the way Sheryl Sandberg uses her own experiences as well as that of other business leaders with whom she has worked. This reinforces both the credibility of the ethos but also the logos, as her arguments are justified by some of the greatest leaders known today. Further, she uses the same language as her audience and can relate strongly to the changing world that they are a part of and that they have to embark on as they now have graduated. This, and the fact that she is recognizing the difference from her year of graduation to the audience’s, brings her message further credibility through authenticity. Naturally, to address honesty and make a strong case of how important it is to her personally, adds to this factor as well.

Sheryl Sandberg also uses metaphors. The difference between how these metaphors are used in this case compared to most other speeches or texts is that she subtly explains them within the content. Usually metaphors are in their element when they speak for themselves. Nevertheless, both the rocket ship and the jungle gym are strengthened by her elaboration of the topic and become more clear to the audience. Yet again, which seems to be the most commonly reoccurring rhetorical element is the triad. There are many examples in this speech of the threefold, but I choose to provide one: “to our real colleagues, our real family, our real friends.”, which clearly emphasizes the important parts of a message as it improves the overall impression of the message and makes the individual words more memorable.

As we all know, nobody is perfect. I would like to claim the same thing about business leaders, as they also are humans. Therefore, neither their textual communication can be perfect. However, in cases like this speech when the message is well prepared, I think it is justified to say that leaders who have the ability to communicate in a well perceived manner at least can come very close to perfect. To communicate in such a way that motivates, inspires and empowers other human beings, is therefore essential to business leaders.
Class of 2009! First I’d like you to get up, wave and cheer to your supportive family and friends! Show your love!

It is a great honor for me to be here today. Now wait a second. I know: that’s such a cliché. You’re thinking: every graduation speaker says that – It’s a great honor. But, in my case, it really is so deeply true – being here is more special and more personal for me than most of you know. I’d like to tell you why.

A long time ago, in the cold September of 1962, there was a Steven’s co-op at this very university. That co-op had a kitchen with a ceiling that had been cleaned by student volunteers every decade or so. Picture a college girl named Gloria, climbing up high on a ladder, struggling to clean that filthy ceiling. Standing on the floor, a young boarder named Carl was admiring the view. And that’s how they met. They were my parents, so I suppose you could say I’m a direct result of that kitchen chemistry experiment, right here at Michigan. My Mom is here with us today, and we should probably go find the spot and put a plaque up on the ceiling that says: “Thanks Mom and Dad!”

Everyone in my family went to school here at Michigan: me, my brother, my Mom and Dad – all of us. My Dad actually got the quantity discount: all three and a half of his degrees are from here. His Ph.D. was in Communication Science because they thought Computers were just a passing fad. He earned it 44 years ago. He and Mom made a big sacrifice for that. They argued at times over pennies, while raising my newborn brother. Mom typed my Dad’s dissertation by hand. This velvet hood I’m wearing, this was my Dad’s. And this diploma, just like the one you are about to get, that was my Dad’s. And my underwear, that was… never mind.

My father’s father worked in the Chevy plant in Flint, Michigan. He was an assembly line worker. He drove his two children here to Ann Arbor, and told them: That is where you’re going to go to college. Both his kids did graduate from Michigan. That was the American dream. His daughter, Beverly, is with us today. My Grandpa used to carry an “Alley Oop” hammer – a heavy iron pipe with a hunk of lead melted on the end. The workers made them during the sit-down strikes to protect themselves. When I was growing up, we used that hammer whenever we needed to pound a stake or something into the ground. It is wonderful that most people don’t need to carry a heavy blunt object for protection anymore. But just in case, I have it here.

My Dad became a professor at… Michigan State… and I was an incredibly lucky boy. A professor’s life is pretty flexible, and he was able to spend oodles of time raising me. Could there be a better upbringing than a university brat? What I’m trying to tell you is that this is WAY more than just a homecoming for me. It’s not easy for me to express how proud I am to be here, with my Mom, my brother and my wife Lucy, and with all of you, at this amazing institution that is responsible for my very existence. I am thrilled for all of you, and I’m thrilled for your families.
and friends, as all of us join the great, big Michigan family I feel I've been a part of all of my life. What I'm also trying to tell you is that I know exactly what it feels like to be sitting in your seat, listening to some old gasbag give a long-winded commencement speech. Don't worry. I'll be brief.

I have a story about following dreams. Or maybe more accurately, it's a story about finding a path to make those dreams real. You know what it's like to wake up in the middle of the night with a vivid dream? And you know how, if you don't have a pencil and pad by the bed to write it down, it will be completely gone the next morning?

Well, I had one of those dreams when I was 23. When I suddenly woke up, I was thinking: what if we could download the whole web, and just keep the links and… I grabbed a pen and started writing! Sometimes it is important to wake up and stop dreaming. I spent the middle of that night scribbling out the details and convincing myself it would work. Soon after, I told my advisor, Terry Winograd, it would take a couple of weeks to download the web – he nodded knowingly, fully aware it would take much longer but wise enough to not tell me. The optimism of youth is often underrated! Amazingly, I had no thought of building a search engine. The idea wasn't even on the radar. But, much later we happened upon a better way of ranking webpages to make a really great search engine, and Google was born. When a really great dream shows up, grab it!

When I was here at Michigan, I had actually been taught how to make dreams real! I know it sounds funny, but that is what I learned in a summer camp converted into a training program called Leadershape. Their slogan is to have a “healthy disregard for the impossible”. That program encouraged me to pursue a crazy idea at the time: I wanted to build a personal rapid transit system on campus to replace the buses. It was a futuristic way of solving our transportation problem. I still think a lot about transportation – you never loose a dream, it just incubates as a hobby. Many things that people labor hard to do now, like cooking, cleaning, and driving will require much less human time in the future. That is, if we "have a healthy disregard for the impossible" and actually build new solutions.

I think it is often easier to make progress on mega-ambitious dreams. I know that sounds completely nuts. But, since no one else is crazy enough to do it, you have little competition. There are so few people this crazy that I feel like I know them all by first name. They all travel as if they are pack dogs and stick to each other like glue. The best people want to work with the big challenges. That is what happened with Google. Our mission is to organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful. How can that not get you excited? But we almost didn’t start Google because my co-founder Sergey and I were too worried about dropping out of our Ph.D. program. You are probably on the right track if you feel like a sidewalk worm during a rainstorm! That is about how we felt after we maxed out three credit cards buying hard disks off the back of a truck. That was the first hardware for Google. Parents and friends: more credit cards always help. What is the one sentence summary of how you change the world? Always work hard on something uncomfortably exciting!

As a Ph.D. student, I actually had three projects I wanted to work on. Thank goodness my advisor said, "why don't you work on the web for a while". He gave me some seriously good advice because the web was really growing with people and activity, even in 1995! Technology and especially the internet can really help you be lazy. Lazy? What I mean is a group of three people can write software that millions can use and enjoy. Can three people answer the phone a million times a day? Find the leverage in the world, so you can be more lazy! Overall, I know it seems like the world is crumbling out there, but it is actually a great time in your life to get a little crazy, follow your curiosity, and be ambitious about it. Don’t give up on your dreams. The world needs you all!
So here’s my final story:
On a day like today, you might feel exhilarated — like you’ve just been shot out of a cannon at the circus — and even invincible. Don’t ever forget that incredible feeling. But also: always remember that the moments we have with friends and family, the chances we have to do things that might make a big difference in the world, or even to make a small difference to someone you love — all those wonderful chances that life gives us, life also takes away. It can happen fast, and a whole lot sooner than you think.

In late March 1996, soon after I had moved to Stanford for grad school, my Dad had difficulty breathing and drove to the hospital. Two months later, he died. And that was it. I was completely devastated. Many years later, after a startup, after falling in love, and after so many of life’s adventures, I found myself thinking about my Dad. Lucy and I were far away in a steaming hot village walking through narrow streets. There were wonderful friendly people everywhere, but it was a desperately poor place — people used the bathroom inside and it flowed out into the open gutter and straight into the river. We touched a boy with a limp leg, the result of paralysis from polio. Lucy and I were in rural India — one of the few places where Polio still exists. Polio is transmitted fecal to oral, usually through filthy water. Well, my Dad had Polio. He went on a trip to Tennessee in the first grade and caught it. He was hospitalized for two months and had to be transported by military DC-3 back home — his first flight.

My Dad wrote, “Then, I had to stay in bed for over a year, before I started back to school”. That is actually a quote from his fifth grade autobiography. My Dad had difficulty breathing his whole life, and the complications of Polio are what took him from us too soon. He would have been very upset that Polio still persists even though we have a vaccine. He would have been equally upset that back in India we had polio virus on our shoes from walking through the contaminated gutters that spread the disease. We were spreading the virus with every footstep, right under beautiful kids playing everywhere. The world is on the verge of eliminating polio, with 328 people infected so far this year. Let’s get it done soon. Perhaps one of you will do that.

My Dad was valedictorian of Flint Mandeville High School 1956 class of about 90 kids. I happened across his graduating speech recently, and it blew me away. 53 years ago at his graduation my Dad said: “...we are entering a changing world, one of automation and employment change where education is an economic necessity. We will have increased periods of time to do as we wish, as our workweek and retirement age continue to decline. ... We shall take part in, or witness, developments in science, medicine, and industry that we can not dream of today. ... It is said that the future of any nation can be determined by the care and preparation given to its youth. If all the youths of America were as fortunate in securing an education as we have been, then the future of the United States would be even more bright than it is today.”

If my Dad was alive today, the thing I think he would be most happy about is that Lucy and I have a baby in the hopper. I think he would have been annoyed that I hadn’t gotten my Ph.D. yet (thanks, Michigan!). Dad was so full of insights, of excitement about new things, that to this day, I often wonder what he would think about some new development. If he were here today — well, it would be one of the best days of his life. He’d be like a kid in a candy store. For a day, he’d be young again.

Many of us are fortunate enough to be here with family. Some of us have dear friends and family to go home to. And who knows, perhaps some of you, like Lucy and I, are dreaming about future families of your own. Just like me, your families brought you here, and you brought them here. Please keep them close and remember: they are what really matter in life.

Thanks Mom, thanks Lucy, and thank you all, very much.
As logos is not the main concern in a motivational and encouraging speech like this there is clearly a different focus. The emotional elements that are provided through this message are many and remain a constant throughout the speech. In fact, pathos is not only identified towards the end but leaves traces everywhere to be found. Furthermore, this speech is hardly focusing on pleading to a specific emotion within the audience. There are ingredients of sadness, joy, laughter, despair, gratitude and many more, which in fact has the effect that the audience is kept attentive and responsive.

It might even be lucky that all of these emotions become the focus as the structure and logic reasoning is not keeping the same standard. As the stories are making a great case for his message emotionally, the impression of the logic is that it should be a chronological story. Since these expectations are not met there is a chance that the logic reasoning could confuse the audience. In spite of this, the stories stand their ground in this case because of the context where they are presented, since it is an emotional day where also the emotional fragments of the speech will be highlighted rather than the content.

A further comment to the structure that is worth to bring up is the exordium, the introduction. Instead of actually beginning the speech with a cliché, Larry Page chooses to begin with a cliché that he calls out for what it is and turns the attitude of the audience. Instead of getting the feeling that "here comes yet another graduation speech of the same kind" he manages to put the audience in a mood where they will increase their interest and expect anything else but a “one of a crowd”-kind of speech. The important aspect for the following message however, is that it must then live up to the expectations that are created through the exceptional beginning. Another structural fraction that can be identified is that he prepares the audience by telling them that he will tell a story. While this usually is perceived very well and facilitates the understanding of what is coming, he also gives away the punch line of the story as he states: “...it’s a story about finding a path to make those dreams real.”. By doing this, there are two possible ways in
which it can affect the audience. Either, explaining the essence of that story will help to facilitate the understanding of the story, or it might decrease the suspense and therefore contribute to that the audience looses attention.

In terms of the diction that is used, it is coinciding with the ethos and the stories that are told by acting like he is just like the audience as he once sat in the seats that they are in. Larry Page is focusing a great deal on his persona through ethos by dedicating more than half of the speech to developing his story and explaining to the audience who he is. There is a particularly strong emphasis on this in the first third of the speech. The issue with providing this much space to develop the ethos is, first, that a less amount of space is left to focus on why he is speaking and, second, that the spotlight is put on himself rather than the audience, which might lead to a declining interest in the remainder of the message.

As the overall impression is evidence to an emotional ride it is important what kind of emotions that are conveyed. It is also significant to take note of the emotional setting of the context, which is in fact a celebration. Therefore, it is rather risky to include emotions of despair and even an event of death that spreads a gloomy feeling of sadness. The concern with this change of emotion is that the content in which it lies, does not bring something unique to the story, which could not have been described in a different setting. As it is essential to stick to the story and not sway out and get off topic, it is vital to consider this, especially since it opposites the attitude in the rest of the speech. Actually, as implied by the theory, there are two paths for business leaders to choose from in these situations. One is to keep the same attitude throughout the text in the same range. In that way the audience have a constant to follow that makes them feel safe and they can feel where the message is heading. The other way is to use contrasting attitudes on purpose to keep the audience awake or make them react to a certain parts of the text. As this speech does not display enough contrast in this manner, it would create a more stable impression for the audience if the attitude remained the same throughout the speech.
4.6 Statements and Quotes, Various Business Leaders

Writer: David Dinkins
Title: New York City Mayor
Source: http://www.definitelynotbusiness.com/StupidQuotes01.htm
Context: Answers to accusations that he failed to pay his taxes.

“I haven’t committed a crime.
What I did was fail to comply with the law.”

When leaders make statements to the media, they are well aware of the fact that this piece of information that they supply will travel to the ears of many and be available for anyone who wishes to know what is being stated. Therefore it is rather surprising that leaders of high caliber make statements that obviously will be received in a bad way and that might hurt leaders as well as organizations. This very short quote from a prominent leader proves very well how judicial rhetoric can be drawn to its worst limits.

Whereas rhetoric analysis can pick up on subtle hints and extract meaning out of them, this statement speaks for itself through the lack of functioning logos. As the statement is opened up by establishing that no crime is committed, the following section basically have one aim, which is to back this statement up with proof. The issue in this case is then clear, as the argument following this statement indisputably contradicts the initial message. Every individual has a mental imprint from a young age that rules are rules and they should be followed. In this simple logic, not complying with the law is then evidently to commit a crime. Even though this bad logic puts David Dinkins in a bad light, I can not neglect the brilliance in this short defense. Believe it or not, some people are likely to feel compassion for this man as he states these words. Instead of being perceived as a felon, his passive words imply that he might have misunderstood the law, as there was something he had done that was not sufficient for the regulations. In this way, the law becomes the big bad wolf, while he is simply a harmless victim, trying to understand what he did wrong, proving the strength of diction.
In many cases, statements consist of two sentences or two phrases. You might see this more clearly by looking at this and the other examples of statements and quotes presented in this analysis. Through rhetorical analysis it is possible to identify why this usually is the most successful way to utter statements. It keeps it precise, concise and provides a chance to argue for what is stated. Usually, it is built up by an announcement and an explanation that has the purpose of strengthening that announcement. You will find this to be the case in most of the statements that are considered to be successful.

However, like this example spoken by Brook Shields, being precise, concise and argue for the cause is not always enough. What is stated must be logically verifiable for anyone to believe it or have a first impression of a logic that seems legitimate. In this case, since there is a serious matter involved as it is a non-smoking campaign that aims to send out a very important message to people, it is even more fatal to use bad logic. As you surely notice the logic falls apart in the second phrase of this example, as every individual knows that life is completely lost when we are killed and not only partially. The issue with this example is that the serious topic on the agenda becomes a laughing stock. Therefore, this example proves how important it is for leaders to find the right diction and even the right attitude depending on the topic, because without this the likelihood that a message is received in the intended way is strictly limited. Further, it emphasizes why logos should never be underestimated if the impression of a message should have any chance of lasting longer than a second.
In these two quotes it is possible to identify similar elements as they both entail comparisons. What separates them is that the first example is a simile and the second quote is a metaphor. In the first case, Jeff Bezos is actually describing a business brand strategy but involves the readers by addressing them on a level that they understand, because we all know how reputation works. This facilitates the understanding for a wide audience and also points to the fact that both he and the organization values being “down to earth”.

Further, these short but appealing statements implies that Amazon itself is such an organization that tries to accomplish difficult things well, without saying it straightforward. This attaches some appealing humbleness to the message and as the readers believe that they draw the conclusion that this company is of the sort that tries hard, there is a bigger chance that they will consent with this idea and consequently have a more positive attitude towards the organization. In this way, Jeff Bezos’ quotes are examples of the fact that it often is a smart move for business leaders to leave room for the reader to make their own interpretations. However, if too much space is left for this there is a danger of grave misinterpretations, which will contradict the intention and provide an impression of uncertainty.

As a final remark to this, these quotes exude faith that the readers will attach to the organization. This is carried out by the strong focus that is put on the people who are customers, proving that the organization is there for them and not he other way around.
“I have zero tolerance for people who don’t come completely prepared. I expect contribution, I expect attendance, and I expect directors to take trips and visit the company’s program.”

As this rather stern and accusing statement was made, Anne Mulcahy displayed clear examples of rhetorical elements that help make this message influential and believable. In fact, it is the combination of the threefold and anaphora that leaves such a standing impression and will make the statement memorable. It is the use of the words “I expect” that creates the repetition, which becomes emphasized and therefore immediately creates a stronger impact than it would make if she only had used the triad. In that case it would read “I expect contribution, attendance and directors to...”. This second part of the statement might appeal to a large crowd as it displays an ethos that is proving traits of professionalism and a good manner of conducting business. However, because it is following a sentence that is less appealing it might not have such a strong impact.

Then, why do I claim that the first sentence of this statement is damaging the complete message? As the harsh words are intended to prove the standpoint of this business leader, which they definitely achieve, the diction gives it the impression that this person is aggressive. As much as this might be a coincidence, an instant feeling because of an agitation or a personality trait, it will become a part of her ethos for the reader. Because of the accusing nature of these words and the emphasizing words zero and completely, which strongly contribute to making the sentence seem stern, the reader is likely to get the feeling that this person is not approachable. Business leaders, who distance themselves from employees or other leaders in this kind of accusing manner, might risk to loose alliances and business partners. The basis to this is the fact that a negative attitude is transferred from the leader onto the organization and other business leaders might keep their distance to avoid that this attitude is transferred onto them.
“You don’t learn to walk by following rules.
You learn by doing, and falling over.”

This is yet another powerful comparison, but this time in the shape of an analogy, which illustrates a matter by pointing towards an experience that every single individual has gone through, to learn how to walk. As the meaning of this statement depicts a business situation where the people within the organization learn from mistakes that are made, the statement provides an image and a reputation for the organization that is fruitful and developing. Further, it is possible to identify a strong pathos in the message, which is pleading to emotions to a specific target group. Everyone who is a parent will relate on a personal level to this statement by making links to the time that their own children were in the process of learning how to walk. This will add to the positive image towards the organization as it displays values such as being nurturing and compassionate. The trick in this case is that the next time the same person, who had these feelings evoked by the statement, will come in contact with the organization or hear its name the that person will unconsciously stir up the same feelings again, provided that they made a strong impact the first time.

Yet another aspect that gives this statement more impact is the structure. This statement could have been formulated as “You learn to walk by doing, and by falling over. Not by following rules” and would have the same meaning as the real statement. However it does not have the same impact on the reader. What is then the reason for this? When the statement begins with breaking a pattern and making the audience wait in suspense for the continuation of what is said, it will appeal more strongly to the reader simply on its own accord. To begin the statement with “you don’t learn to walk by following rules” it immediately initiates a thought process for the reader who is intrigued and wants to hear the reason why this is suggested.
5. CONCLUSION

"A candle loses nothing of its light when lighting another.”
- Kahlil Gibran

As many before, this study has argued for the importance of communication in situations where business leaders practice leadership. It has become evident through this rhetorical analysis that it does not only matter what business leaders communicate but also how they communicate information to others, since their success as leaders could depend on it. Another significant aspect that has been repeated time after time throughout this research is that different approaches to communication are required depending on what message needs to be conveyed and, in front of all, to whom.

This study has in fact made it possible to detect that the way business leaders communicate in situations where they practice leadership does influence the situation. As it has been shown through this rhetorical analysis, it is not only a matter of reputation concerning leaders and organizations but it also affects immediate actions that may or may not be taken by people who receive the intended message. Since it has been stated that the way business leaders communicate can make or break their success, and since examples have been shown to illustrate the influence of the way business leaders communicate in reality, I can conclude that the foundation of success of business leaders might very well have its root in communication, even though it is not the only cause.

Within this study, it has proven to be more difficult to find examples of poor communication in contexts where business leaders have time to evaluate the situation and carefully consider their words. When business leaders have this time to reflect on what information they want to convey it seems that
they are communicating leadership to their employees as well as the customers. However, the issue in modern days seems to lie more within the communication that takes place “on foot” where leaders have to deliberate and answer quickly, for example when they need to discharge situations where they are “under attack”. Of course, it is natural human behavior to get nervous or provide answers with flaws in pressured situations, but should business leaders of this caliber experience the same problems? Should they not have better communication skills than anyone in order to be able to manage the organization and employees that they are head of?

Based on the analysis, it is possible to identify moments of weakness in the narratives of business leaders. With this information I am not intending to generalize and claim that all business leaders have poor performances when they are required to think on their feet, because this is not at all the case. Many leaders show brilliance in their way of addressing issues that are unexpected or abrupt, which surely is an aspect that contributes to their success. It is merely a wake up call, based on a few examples, for future leaders to make sure that they are able to achieve better skills to communicate to avoid looking like a fool or repeating their own or others’ mistakes.

Even though there are situations where business leaders are able to communicate well, there seem to be a lack of originality from several of them. Then again, some business leaders dare to take risks and go beyond clichés and classic metaphors and in cases where they can master the language this is an infinite source of influential communication that works wonders. However, there seems to be limitations in the language that many business leaders dare to use, which also hinders the free communication. Whereas I have argued that some limitations are good for business leaders in terms of professionalism, it must not be a restraining jacket that pulls them in on a narrow path, where they are confined to use the same standards over and over and over again.
Then, why is it that business leaders who prove nothing but poor communication skills are still in charge? Why are there no or little consequences for leaders that can not communicate with neither their employees nor the customers? I believe that the understanding, among the public, in terms of the importance of communication in these business settings is misled. There is a lack of interest towards the way we communicate as the information society has narrowed our views to focus on the what that is being communicated. Therefore I suggest that we have reached a milestone in our society, where we need to take a stand towards what is important to us. I, for one, consider it highly imperative that we spread the word and create awareness of what it could mean for our society if we were to put emphasis on how we communicate with each other. This understanding itself would, hopefully, make every individual realize what difference this could make. Not only for business leaders, organizations and the society but also for every individual out there, who interact with other people every day.

Seeing as these findings show that there are certain aspects where the majority of business leaders lack skills to communicate verbally in a way that is perceived well, there are openings for further research in these regions. As a limited amount of narratives have been analyzed in this study, I also see opportunities to go further with research that focuses on a specific type of narrative, to be able to go further in the discursive analysis. Another option to this, is to find a deeper focus in the theory of rhetoric to attain a deeper analysis of a certain phenomena, whereas this study has taken on a more broad view in terms of including an overall rhetoric framework.

Before you turn the final page of this study and reflect upon what has been said, there is one last thing that I, and hopefully you, will bear in mind as the journey, that our lives are, continues. The way we communicate matters in every situation we encounter in life, so make sure to keep it simple and communicate with meaning, because life is simply too short for bad rhetoric.
6. REFERENCES


Narratives


Linnaeus University – a firm focus on quality and competence

On 1 January 2010 Växjö University and the University of Kalmar merged to form Linnaeus University. This new university is the product of a will to improve the quality, enhance the appeal and boost the development potential of teaching and research, at the same time as it plays a prominent role in working closely together with local society. Linnaeus University offers an attractive knowledge environment characterised by high quality and a competitive portfolio of skills.

Linnaeus University is a modern, international university with the emphasis on the desire for knowledge, creative thinking and practical innovations. For us, the focus is on proximity to our students, but also on the world around us and the future ahead.

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