

Department of Marketing



Research Seminars Series

Valentyna Melnyk, University of New South Wales (AU)

December 5, 2024 | 12:00 - 14:00 | AD.0.114 Sitzungssaal 1

How does business leaders' language drive public reactions in direct "live" online forums? The Role of Warmth and Competence

Abstract: This research investigates the effect of the written language of business leaders on public reactions in direct "live" online forum communication. In particular, we examine how business leaders' competent and warm written language cues drive their visibility and word-of-mouth (WOM) valence on social media. The empirical investigation employs automated text analyses using a unique dataset of 16,000+ posts from "live" two-way communications between business leaders and the public on Reddit. Results demonstrate that competent and warm language cues affect visibility (the net effects of up and down votes) and WOM valence differently. Both types of cues enhance WOM valence. However, counter to prevailing wisdom, warm language cues decrease business leaders' visibility, whereas competent language cues do not affect visibility overall. We further investigate how the effects of competent and warm language cues are moderated by business leaders' popularity and their company popularity. Finally, we offer guidelines for business leaders to improve the desired outcomes of their written public communications.