



Diversity and Inclusion in Organizational Communication

Pre-conference - ETMAAL 2024 – Rotterdam

Jointly organized by the NeFCA divisions Organizational Communication (OrgComm) and Intercultural Communication and Diversity (IC&D)

Date: February 8th, 2024, 9:15 – 11:30

Location: De Doelen, Schouwburgplein 50, Rotterdam

Organizers: Dr. Joep Hofhuis (NeFCA IC&D); Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
Dr. Joost Verhoeven (NeFCA OrgComm); Tilburg University
Dr. An-Sofie Claeys (NeFCA OrgComm); Ghent University

RSVP: Interested in attending? Please send a message to j.hofhuis@hva.nl, and we will make sure to reserve a spot for you.

Diversity and Inclusion in Organizational Communication

Management of workplace diversity is considered to be increasingly important for modern organizations (Galinsky et al., 2015; Plaut, 2010). Previous research shows that successful workplace inclusion of individuals with different cultural backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, etc. can have a profound impact on equality in society, and can simultaneously provide benefits for organizational productivity (Homan, 2019).

Most of us have seen organizations express their commitment to workplace diversity, equality and inclusion on, for example, company websites, social media posts, and in periodicals such as annual reports. Such communication can be an important resource for social change (Christensen et al., 2013). However, a major issue with diversity communication is that it is often met with skepticism by the public. Any organization can say it wants to fight discrimination and reap the benefits of diversity, but do they actually deliver on these promises? An inauthentic approach to diversity communication may have a detrimental effect on an organization's reputation, as well as the overall effectiveness of existing or future diversity interventions (Ginder et al., 2021; Schoeneborn et al., 2020). As such, we urgently need to study the reasons why organizations communicate about diversity, and the different motivations and rationales that are used. This way, we can gain a better understanding of the role of diversity in strategic communication, and how this impacts different stakeholder groups.

The aim of this preconference is to present some of the most recent advances in this field of study, by scholars from the Netherlands-Flanders region. We also aim to build a bridge between research and practice, and discuss the possibilities of applying our work to tackling urgent societal challenges around diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Program:

9:15 – 9:30: **Walk-in with coffee and tea**

9:30 – 9:40: **Welcome and introduction by the organizers**

9:40 – 10:00: **The effects of LGBTQIA+ related corporate social advocacy on organizational legitimacy**

Dr. Anna Berbers is an assistant professor Corporate Communication at the University of Amsterdam. Her current research is on diversity and inclusion and how organizations shape these topics as political actors. She will present mixed-method experimental research on corporate social advocacy (CSA) of organizations on LGBTQIA+ related topics and how CSA-communication is received in light of perceptions of pinkwashing, authenticity and organizational legitimacy.

10:00 – 10:20: **Examining strategic diversity communication using automated coding**

Dr. Pytrik Schafraad (Assistant Professor, Tilburg University) and Dr. Joep Hofhuis (Associate Professor, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences) have developed a set of digital tools for that use state-of-the-art computational methods to reliably analyze the prevalence of different types of strategic diversity communication by organizations, for example in annual reports and on social media. They will present a brief overview of their recent work, and share some of their latest findings.

10:20 – 10:30 **Coffee Break**

10:30 – 10:50 **How to do it right? Tell-tale story about the struggles of organizations regarding inclusive communication**

Wendy Broersen is the CEO/founder of the Superpeople Company, which helps companies to attract, retain and develop their diverse workforce, worldwide. She is also the program manager and guest lecturer of the DEI Master Program at the University of Amsterdam, author and international speaker. She also developed the revolutionary inclusion model AIM, which she wrote the book 'NOT for HR' about and was published in two languages already.

10:50 – 11:15 **Roundtable discussion with speakers and participants**

11:15 – 11:30 **Plenary wrap-up**