

Tales of trust: The process of legitimation through narrative ethics

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Abstract

Narrative ethics involves a process where a storyteller performs their narratives about moral issues in interaction with other partners. In marketing, organisations employ narrative ethics to engage stakeholders and establish legitimacy through narrative practices. Effective legitimation requires incorporating alternative narratives and facilitating stakeholders' sensemaking processes.

The concept of narrative ethics is yet to be fully explored in marketing science. Drawing on insights from other disciplines, this paper identifies five dimensions of the process of legitimation through narrative ethics. The dimensions; content, practices, structure, alternative narratives and sensemaking, take place in an organisational sphere and a stakeholder sphere, leading to organisational legitimacy. This framework offers marketers practical tools to address challenges of organisational legitimacy and moral accountability.

Keywords: *Narrative ethics, Legitimation, Narratives*

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