Chapter 6
A Myth and Media Management: The Facade Rhetoric and Business Objectives

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ABSTRACT

Considering various perspectives and interpretations, a myth has been present in the operation of numerous organizations. Management and entrepreneurship undergo the process of mythologization as well as organizations, with their foundation myths and mythological heroes. Myths refer to the results of the operations run by organizations and their capabilities – such questions have been considered in expert literature on management. The problem of myths has been scarcely researched in the studies on operations performed by media organizations. In media environment, the myth has been following traditional media in their capabilities which refer to their functioning as the Fourth Estate. In the time of digital media, convergence of media, IT, and telecommunication sectors, all the “new media” have been mythologized. Myths have been accompanying the activities of particular organizations and their heroes – leaders; the potential of media organizations has also been mythologized in the context of solving social problems as well as in the context of achieving business objectives.

INTRODUCTION

The mythical dimension of social media organisations is constantly maintained by their users, and at the same time the mystery of algorithms (e.g. Facebook and Google), mythologisation of efficiency related to the achievement of marketing objectives and involvement of new media corporations into the research on artificial intelligence allow us to mythologise the whole digital universe of new media.

The chapter focuses on new issues in the analysis of the role played by myths in management on the example of social media organisations. The analysis includes an aspect which is referred to as myth monetisation. It consists in mythologisation of the role performed by such organisations as Facebook and Google through description of their market targets, with the use of community rhetoric where a language characteristic for the description of social relations is applied.

BACKGROUND

Myths. Scientific interpretation has them as tales referring to the experience of a downturn, passing, rituals and extremities. In a very commonly experienced version, they are fantastical tales of unknown sources, which can be traced in various folklore stories. According to a definition assumed in the chapter, myths are tales which have been detached from their context, and they have become unrelated to “the roots of their epoch” which are of universal nature (Kostera, 2008a). These are stories which refer to extremities (things we have not experienced, a parallel reality, desired behaviour and shared values) (Armstrong, 2004). Myths are characterised by objective falsehood and a subjective belief about their genuineness, and they depend on changing demand for their existence.

Myths justify social structures and the place of individuals in such structures. We use myths to assign some meaning to various aspects of human life (Magala, 2009); they do not explain but they assign meaning, they describe various stages of human life assigning different responsibilities to them. As Joseph Campbell states, the social function of myths becomes
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