

**Dr. Rudi Palmieri (Associate Professor, Strategic Communication, University of Liverpool, UK): *Argumentation, strategic communication and sustainable trust***

Communication and trust influence and determine each other. On the one hand, trust in one's interlocutor (either speaker/writer or hearer/reader) is a vital premise for communicative interactions that are at the same time effective, cooperative and respectful. On the other hand, communication plays a key role in generating and, more in particular, re-generating trust when negative or unexpected episodes undermine it. Corporate/institutional wrongdoings and crisis situations represent typical situations where the trustee-stakeholders (e.g., investors, customers, citizens, employees) question their opinion regarding the trustworthiness of the trustor-organisations, looking for reasons that are able to argumentatively confirm, revise or reject a positive image of trust. Despite (crisis) communication scholars have extensively theorised and studied trust-building and trust-repair strategies, relatively little attention has been given to the argumentative dimension of trust-oriented strategies.

In this talk, I will first explain the central role of argumentation – the exchange of reasons for or against a claim – in the communicative process of negotiating trust. By re-evoking some well-known cases of trust violation in the business, political and sport domains, argumentation-driven persuasion and manipulative persuasion will be compared in their long-term implications. This will lead us to introduce the concept of sustainable trust (i.e., trust beliefs made resilient by their sound argumentative support) as a central element of strategic communication.

In the second part of the talk, I will revisit well-established repertoires of crisis response strategies from an argumentative perspective, suggesting to conceive of these strategies as instances of argumentative designs aimed at effectively communicating reasons that justify trust-related claims. Leveraging on argumentation theory, I will discuss the analysis and evaluation of trust-repair reasons, in a way that keeps together verbal means and substantive measures, the latter understood as actions that signal premises for inferences to trust.

In the final part of the talk, I will sketch a research agenda on trust-oriented argumentation in connection with key trust issues in today's markets and society.



**Rudi Palmieri** (PhD in Communication Sciences, USI Lugano) is Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Strategic Communication at the University of Liverpool (UK). He is the founding director of *MSc Strategic Communication* and co-director for the *Language, Data and Society* research centre.

His main area of expertise is the analysis of argumentation in strategic communication contexts, such as financial communication, crisis communication and entrepreneurial discourse. His work in this field aims at better understanding how the complexity of

communicative situations (e.g., multiple audiences, conflicting goals, intercultural dynamics, and technological constraints) is reflected in the way in which organisational leaders and stakeholders design, convey and exchange reasons to influence opinions and decisions. An

important part of his research is dedicated to developing an understanding of trust-oriented (crisis) communication as an inherently argumentative process.

His research takes an interdisciplinary approach – combining theories and analytic methods from argumentation theory, rhetoric, pragmatic linguistics, semiotics, strategic management and corporate communications research – to identify and examine patterns of argumentative strategies in a variety of genres and activities, such as takeover documents, earnings calls, proxy fights, investor pitching, crowdfunding campaigns, and crisis responses.

On all these topics, he has published extensively on different world-leading journals and has taught several courses at UG, PG and Doctoral levels in the UK, Switzerland and various other European countries.