

Service logic – the key to strategic listening: introducing the framework of strategic listening for value creation

Anette Svingstedt

Department of Service Studies, Lund University, Lund, Sweden, and

Mats Heide

Department of Communication, Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Abstract

Purpose – Listening is often ignored and not understood as an organizational strategic resource. In this conceptual article, we explain why listening is downplayed by combining the two research fields, namely service management and strategic communication. We propose that organizations embrace service logic as a perspective of managing organizations. Service logic has a stakeholder-centric approach to value creation, which provides excellent prerequisites for two-way communication and listening. Further, we introduce the framework of strategic listening (FSL) to analyze, implement, develop and evaluate listening from a strategic perspective.

Design/methodology/approach – The article is conceptual and based on research in strategic communication, service management and listening in an organizational context.

Findings – Previous research has offered valuable insights into an organization-wide approach to strategic listening despite being limited in scope. However, it has not sufficiently highlighted the significance of service logic as a management philosophy and a novel perspective on value creation, which are crucial for fostering a listening organization. This theoretical framework expands on earlier studies by offering a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of strategic listening.

Research limitations/implications – Future research is needed on organizational listening in general. Important questions to be answered empirically are as follows: Why do organizations not listen to stakeholders? How do stakeholders experience organizations' listening? Finally, there is a need to empirically investigate FSL in different types of organizations to see the model's results in practice.

Originality/value – By integrating research from strategic communication and service management, this article provides new opportunities to explore the complex and holistic dynamics of organizational communication and listening.

Keywords Service marketing, Relationship marketing, Strategic communication, Communication management

Paper type Conceptual paper

By listening, organizations can achieve positive outcomes, such as improved trust and relationships, increased engagement and psychological safety, lower absenteeism, higher productivity, stakeholder focus, and many more (Pery *et al.*, 2020; Ruck, 2021). Although 75 years have passed since Schramm (1948) noted that listening is a powerful tool, it is still downplayed and not understood as a strategic resource for organizations (Neill and Bowen, 2021b). Even if listening is espoused in normative theories on strategic communication and public relations, communication professionals often ignore practicing two-way, symmetrical communication (Macnamara, 2017, 2021). Instead, over 80% of organizational communication comprises speaking and broadcasting information (Macnamara, 2016). This implies that many organizations act, implicitly or explicitly, from a sender perspective by



informing and disseminating messages (Barbour, 2017; Lund and Refshauge, 2024; Zerfass and Sherzada, 2015). Organizations favor convincing target groups that they are right rather than listening to stakeholders' problems and needs (Browne and Nuttall, 2013). Although when organizations offer deliberative spaces to interact with stakeholders, they mainly inform rather than deliberate (Etter *et al.*, 2011; Fieseler and Fleck, 2013). Furthermore, also organizations that use social media tend to be sending rather than listening (cf. Kent and Taylor, 2016; Macnamara, 2023). The significant focus on broadcasting is strange given the knowledge of how essential listening is for organizational success and that information *per se* rarely leads to increased sales, better relationships, or increased trust (cf. Adamson, 2022; Kluger and Itzhakov, 2022). Macnamara (2016) underlines: "communication is more than 'telling and selling'" (p. 249). Communication is both a means to reach out with information and "a valuable resource for listening and learning from the environment" (Zerfass and Viertmann, 2017, p. 72). Thus, communication is both about speaking *and* listening, but listening is the ignored and underused part of communication (Jonsdottir and Fridriksdottir, 2020). Even though there is increasing interest in organizations' listening, this field is undertheorized and needs to be developed (Place, 2022, 2023a; Sahay, 2023).

In this conceptual article, we offer a new understanding of why organizational listening too often is not understood as a strategic issue to organizations by combining the two research fields: service management and strategic communication. Aligning with research in service management, we propose a paradigm shift in strategic communication research and practice from goods logic, which still permeates many organizations, to service logic. Both these logics can be understood as both a research field and a way to manage organizations, a management philosophy guiding thinking and acting in organizations. However, these logics have entirely different views of value and how value is created. Goods logic assumes that value is created internally in organizations and embedded in the service or product. In contrast, service logic understands value as created externally when stakeholders use a service or product. We argue that the goods logic as a management philosophy explains why organizations do not take listening seriously and see it as a strategic management issue. To help researchers and practitioners understand the complex phenomenon of organizational listening, we introduce the framework of strategic listening (FSL), which can be used to analyze, implement, develop, and evaluate listening from a strategic perspective.

We start with an overview of the two logics and their relation to communication by comparing them in a table. In the next section, we present previous research on listening and organizations' listening and propose a definition of strategic listening. Finally, we present and discuss the FSL.

Two logics on value creation

There has historically been a considerable interest in value creation, particularly in marketing and service management research. However, there is also a clear link between value creation and communication (de Beer, 2014). Intellectual and intangible resources, i.e. relations, networks, competencies, and trust, require good communication skills, structures, and a climate promoting openness, dialog, and listening. Through dialog, talking, and listening, mutual meaning and understanding evolve (Deetz, 1995).

Traditionally, strategic communication has been defined as studies of organizations' purposeful use of communication to obtain goals and missions (Frandsen and Johansen, 2017; Hallahan *et al.*, 2007). This is a functionalistic understanding that over-values the importance of managers' and communication professionals' communication. Put simply, strategic communication becomes merely a matter of implementing a linear communication plan, rather than something that contributes to shaping and sustaining organizations (Winkler and Schoeneborn, 2022). The value of communication is too often taken for granted in research on strategic communication (Heide *et al.*, 2018). Hence, there is a general lack of an overall understanding of value creation in strategic communication (Zerfass and Link, 2022; Zerfass

and Viertmann, 2017). Organizations' communication is not only a mission for communication departments. The value of strategic communication builds on everyday practices as comments, talking and listening by coworkers (Heide and Simonsson, 2011; Zerfass and Link, 2022). Today, there is a growing understanding that all organizational members act as communicators and add communicative value (Heide *et al.*, 2019; Zerfass and Viertmann, 2017). In other words, strategic communication is an organization-wide activity conducted by *all organizational members* but managed by communication professionals (de Beer, 2014; Falkheimer and Heide, 2022, 2023).

In the sections below, we will present and discuss the two logics, goods logic and service logic, and how they relate to different communication practices.

Goods logic

Goods logic, originating from the manufacturing industry, takes a rational and positivistic view of how people in organizations work, interact, and communicate and, thus, how value is created. Even if goods logic has a simplistic rationalistic understanding, it is still dominant in management both in private and public organizations (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008, 2017, 2019). There exist several terms of this logic, such as "the economics research tradition" (Hunt, 2000), "the manufacturing logic" (Normann, 2001), and "the old enterprise logic" (Zuboff and Maxmin, 2002). We prefer goods logic, which perceives value as embedded in products or services and produced internally, prepacked in and predetermined by the organization (Grönroos, 2023; Skälén, 2018; Vargo *et al.*, 2006). Hence, value is understood as something inherent, objective, and a tangible output. Consequently, stakeholders' experience becomes nearly irrelevant as the product or service is assumed to have embedded and objective values. Goods logic has an overall inside-out approach, and it is presumed that "the organization knows best what the stakeholder wants" and what kind of value their products or services create. A logical consequence is that there is little interest in learning from and listening to stakeholders' stories, perceptions, feelings, wants, experiences, etc (Grönroos, 2023; Vargo *et al.*, 2006).

An evident communication tradition related to goods logic is the transmission view (cf. Carey, 2009) or the conduit metaphor (Reddy, 1993). The transmission view of communication is standard in positivistic research, where it is believed that an objective reality exists "out there" and can be described objectively by language. Hence, language is understood as a tool mirroring reality, and words contain fixed meanings that we all agree on (Gergen, 1998; Potter and Wetherell, 1987). From a goods logic perspective, it is believed that a given value can be delivered to the stakeholders through information. With goods logic, organizations communicate *to* stakeholders (Ballantyne and Varey, 2006). Although managers generally understand the value of dialog and listening in organizations, most communication is devoted to disseminating information (cf. Heide *et al.*, 2019). The premise is that communication should contribute to profit maximization (cf. Crane and Glozer, 2016; Simonsson and Heide, 2021). It could also be added that when organizations are interested in stakeholders' opinions, they still have a from-within focus rather than genuinely being interested in listening and understanding others' points of view to learn and develop the organization. Hence, this practice can also be described as the two-way asymmetrical model in public relations research, where the organization is interested in feedback from stakeholders to convince more efficiently but not in changing the mind, standpoints or the service proposition (Dozier *et al.*, 1995). The main goal of two-way asymmetrical communication is, in other words, *not* to understand others' perspectives, which characterizes listening, but to "persuade publics to accept the organization's point of view and to act in a way that supports the organization" (Grunig and Hunt, 1984, p. 22). Consequently, two-way asymmetrical communication is in practice only a matter of hearing.

Service logic

Service logic research was initiated in response to the dominating goods logic perspective in marketing (Skälén, 2018). The start of this approach is often related to a seminal article by

Shostack (1977), who argues that there was a need for new marketing research to develop marketing theories suitable for services and service based organizations. Another significant article, by Levitt's (1981), claims that all products are intangible, while potential customers cannot experience all aspects of a product before consumption. Yet an essential text is Berry's (1983) paper, where he emphasizes that marketing traditionally has a "new customer only" approach rather than retaining customers and creating good relationships with them. Berry (2002) argues for the need for relationship marketing where coworkers get a more prominent role in building and maintaining relationships with customers (cf. Carlzon, 1989; Grönroos, 1981).

Relationship marketing and service management development have been robust in the Nordic school (e.g. Grönroos, 1979; Gummesson, 1978; Normann, 1984). This tradition argues that relationship marketing, as a tactical tool, is not enough to understand services and service organizations; there is also a need for a *management perspective* on marketing. This is because marketing is not only something marketers do (Gummesson, 1991). Many other organizational members, such as salespersons who talk with potential stakeholders, telephone operators who answer calls from citizens, experts in meeting with other experts, administrators supporting internal colleagues, or managers who journalists interview, are part-time marketers. The conclusion is that marketing occurs everywhere in the organization and is, therefore, a management issue (Gummesson and Grönroos, 2012). Then, using the concept of service management becomes more accurate in research.

Vargo and Lusch (2004) published a groundbreaking article that boosted service logic research. In the article, they argue that service-dominant logic should be seen as the point of departure for all service research. Since then, different concepts have developed, such as service logic, customer dominant logic, and public service logic, although all of them are based on the same notion that the one who creates value is the stakeholder and that value is created in use (Skälén, 2018, 2022). The value-in-use concept is essential in service logic to describe the value-creation process (Grönroos, 2024; Virtanen and Jalonén, 2023). Although value is also co-created in direct interactions between stakeholders and members of the organization or other organizations. Additionally, the stakeholder may also create value for the organization by providing it with feedback that can be used to improve the organization's service proposition. Service logic embraces an outside-in perspective meaning that stakeholders' experiences become central to the organization and is important for strategic decisions (Grönroos, 1990; Grönroos and Ravald, 2011). Focusing on the stakeholder experience requires organizations to actively engaging with and listening to their stakeholders to understand what, why, where, and how they create value. It could also be added that service logic is based on a bottom-up rather than a traditional strategic management or stakeholder management perspective that is top-down (Kernstock and Brexendorf, 2009). While service logic is directed at creating, sustaining, and improving relations, dialog and listening become vital. Put simply, goods logic is about extracting value, and service logic is about creating value.

At the same time, communication also becomes less a question of "giving" information to stakeholders and more of being interested in understanding and knowing them by asking or listening to them. In service logic, communication is understood as constitutive of the social reality (cf. Varey, 2000). Thayer (1987) explains: "We are the way we are because we communicate the way we do" (p. 124). This sensemaking view of communication (cf. Weick, 1969) has a social constructionist ontology, meaning that reality is perceived as socially constructed through communication (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 1985). Carey defines communication from a sensemaking view as "a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed" (p. 23). Thus, the sensemaking perspective of communication is closely related to service logic, when organizations, managers, coworkers, and stakeholders jointly co-create meaning and sense through communication (cf. Carey, 2009, 1988; Weick, 1995). The communication practice of service logic can also be described as an ambition to communicate according to the principles of the two-way symmetrical model (Grunig and Hunt, 1984), where managers and coworkers are interested in

reflecting upon their assumptions and fundamental ideas. In a recent article by Grunig and colleagues ([Tam et al., 2020](#)), they explain that two-way communication aims “to provide publics a voice” (p. 5) through several types of communication activities such as listening. In another article, [Grunig \(2006\)](#) emphasizes that organizations should listen to stakeholders and adjust their ideas (i.e. genuine listening) rather than trying to control others’ thinking and behavior.

Summing up

Above, we have presented and discussed two forms of logic on value creation – goods logic and service logic. The two logics are perspectives on managing in organizations, i.e. management philosophies. [Table 1](#) below summarizes the differences between the logics. Tables like this represent ideal types (cf. [Weber, 2011](#)) that emphasize specific characteristics but are not intended to match every detail of any single instance. Ideal types serve as a simplification of reality to bring structure and clarity to complexity in social reality.

Listening and strategic listening

In the following section, we will review previous research and approaches to listening and organizations’ listening.

On listening

Listening has been discussed in research since the beginning of the last century. For example, [Dewey \(1916/2004\)](#) develops his thoughts on listening in *Democracy and Education*. [Carnegie \(1936\)](#) concludes that listening is the best way to build good relationships. Listening is a field of study with researchers from many disciplines, such as interpersonal communication, linguistics, management and leadership, media studies, pedagogy, philosophy, and psychology ([Worthington and Bodie, 2020](#)). Thus, the field is characterized by multidisciplinary research and multiple overlapping areas, which constantly results in new knowledge.

Often, listening is an unreflected activity and a cognitive process at a superficial level, i.e. hearing ([Burleson, 2011](#)). While hearing is unintentional, involuntary, and effortless, listening is intentional, voluntary, and focused and demands more energy to be performed. Listening starts with paying attention and selecting some auditory or hearing stimuli while ignoring others ([Burleson, 2011](#); [Hurley and Walczak, 2020](#)). [Worthington and Bodie \(2023, p. 16\)](#) point out that good listening skills require “awareness and attention, recognition, understanding, supportiveness, and responding”. Responsiveness is an important part of listening – the ability to perceive what is happening in a conversation ([Salisbury and Chen,](#)

Table 1. Differences of goods logic and service logic

	Good logic	Service logic
Ontology	Positivism	Social constructionism
Function of language	Mirror reality	Constituting reality
Value creation	Prepacked and predetermined	Created in-use by stakeholders
Management perspective	Inside-out	Outside-in
Communication goal	Attention and persuasion	Building relation and trust
Communication direction	Top-down	Bottom-up
Dominating communication practice	Giving answers – informing	Asking questions
Feedback	Hearing	Listening
PR-model	Two-way asymmetrical	Two-way symmetrical
Source(s): Created by authors		

2007). [Cooper \(1997\)](#) suggests that ineffective listening occurs when the listener does not follow directions or suggestions, not responding, talking to another or failing to remember the message. [Rogers and Farson \(1957\)](#) introduced the concept of active listening – giving the speaker free and undivided attention. The listener’s goal is to understand what is being said based on the *speaker’s perspective*. When we engage in active listening, we aim to understand better the other person’s situation and perception, not necessarily to agree with the person. This is what happens during a therapeutic session. With active listening, we are more likely to learn something new that may overturn our old beliefs ([Rogers, 1961](#)). But active listening is not only a matter of getting information and learning; it is also a matter of being present for the other in the conversation and giving space for the speaker to develop his or her thoughts ([Buber, 1923/1994](#); [Gordon, 2011](#)). One of the most significant contemporary philosophers, [Buber \(1923/1994\)](#), declare that the main thing in human life is authentic conversations and that humans can create relationships with others by talking and listening. It is often assumed that good listening means that the listener should confirm that she is active and alert by giving feedback to what is told ([Itzchakov et al., 2018](#)). However, previous research has ignored the speaker’s perception of the listening quality ([Kriz et al., 2021](#)). Humans feel listened to when the listener also does according to the speaker’s intention. This means that when the speaker does not give any responses, interrupts, or signals the end of the conversation, they perceive it as bad listening. The reciprocal relationship between feedback and trust; constructive and thoughtful feedback supports the development and maintenance of trust, and with trust, there are more significant possibilities that feedback will be given ([Sias, 2014](#)). In the literature, there exists much advice on how to listen. For example, [Macnamara \(2024\)](#) identifies seven canons, or steps, of listening discussed in interpersonal and organizational communication, sociocultural, and democratic political studies.

In sum, previous research shows that genuine listening creates trust, confidence and increases motivation, which are essential prerequisites for relationship building in a stakeholder-focused business according to the service logic to improve an organization’s strategic listening.

On organizations’ listening

Even if it has been more than 75 years since the first publication on the importance of organizations’ listening, all too little focus, resources, or energy has been put into developing or conducting listening in organizations. Research on listening in an organizational context is still rare and undertheorized ([Macnamara, 2017, 2019](#); [Sahay, 2023](#)). A reason for the lack of research could be that it is a taken-for-granted activity and, thereby, not explicitly recognized. Another reason is that listening is not seen as a strategically important phenomenon ([Lewis, 2020](#)) and important value creating practice ([Heide and Svingstedt, 2024](#)). Examples of early publications on listening in organizational contexts are “Barriers and Gateways to Communication” ([Rogers and Roethlisberger, 1952](#)) and “Listening to People” ([Nichols and Stevens, 1957](#)). However, only a few publications exist on listening in organizational contexts between the 1960s and 1980s, for example, [Bostrom \(1970\)](#) who focused on the relationship between group listening and perceived leadership or member satisfaction. However, at the beginning of the 1980s, organizational listening got considerable attention with the best-selling management book *In Search of Excellence* ([Peters and Waterman, 1982](#)). The authors claimed that the most excellent organizations put stakeholders in the limelight and listen to them. Yet another example of early focus on listening in an organizational context is [Cooper \(1997\)](#), who suggests a model for training listening competency. Research by [Johnson and Bechler \(1988\)](#) confirms that those perceived as good listeners also emerge as leaders in groups.

Within the field of strategic communication and related fields, listening is often implicitly part of studied concepts such as dialog, two-way communication, and relationship ([Carroll, 2015](#); [Grunig, 2001](#); [Kent, 2022](#); [Kent and Taylor, 2016](#); [Qin and Men, 2022](#)). Nevertheless,

we can now witness a slightly increasing interest in organizations' listening *per se* (Lewis, 2022; Macnamara, 2024; Place, 2023b; Pounsford *et al.*, 2024). Several different topics have been researched on listening in an organizational context. For example, listening effectively improves organizational performance, commitment, and creativity (Pery *et al.*, 2020), listening as a resource for the development of communication strategies (Borner and Zeffass, 2018), a dyadic phenomenon that strengthens togetherness and relationships (Kluger and Itzchakov, 2022), positively related to coworkers' psychological needs (Qin and Men, 2022), a vital recruitment criterion (Kuo *et al.*, 2022), essential for successful organizational change (Sahay, 2023), and to improve user's feeling of being listened to by an AI-listener (Men *et al.* (2022). Other research claims for enhanced listening there is a need to allocate staff and resources (Neill and Bowen, 2021a; Place, 2022), develop policies and technology (Macnamara, 2024), communication competencies (Kang and Moon, 2023), listening leadership and a coworker listening climate (Pounsford *et al.*, 2024). At the same time Claro (2022) pinpoints that: "listening is far from being given a relevant place within management and administration" (p. 235). Another critical part of the research focuses on listening to ensure democracy and ethical issues (Macnamara, 2024; Ruck, 2022). Canel *et al.* (2022) show in their study that listening is integral to enhancing citizen engagement. Place and Flamme (2023) emphasize the value of ethical listening, which can be described as engaging in the listening process to strengthen relationships and cultivate a sense of community. Also, a study by Taiminen (2024) confirms that listening can be used as a tool and process to enable citizen-centric well-being service.

Previous research has focused on certain parts of listening, such as interpersonal listening, internal listening, listening leadership, listening for democracy, resources and listening, et cetera. This research is valuable but tends to focus on tactical aspects of listening. However, a general call is also for a holistic approach to organizations' listening. Still, as far as we know, only Macnamara (2016, 2024) and Lewis (2020) offer a holistic and more strategic perspective. Macnamara (2024) presents an architecture of listening that includes eight key elements to consider when building a listening organization. Lewis (2020) presents three general areas for creating and maintaining a strategic listening organization: culture, infrastructure, routines, and practices. Both contribute to the request for a more comprehensive approach but do not address the importance of a cohesive management philosophy and explore the concept of value and how it is created.

On defining strategic listening

There are only a few definitions of strategic listening. Most of these originate from the field of pedagogy and can, for example, focus on how students can develop their listening skills by formulating sharper questions. Lewis (2020, p. xvi) suggests one of the leading definitions of strategic listening:

[a] set of methods and structures designed and used to ensure that an organization's attention is focused on critical information and inputs to enable learning, questioning key assumptions, making better decisions, and ensuring self-critical analysis.

The most prominent problem, according to Lewis, is not the willingness of organizations to listen. Instead, the problem is that organizations need to see *the strategic value of listening* or have the processes to act on the received information or even be prepared to change their standpoint. In practice, all too many organizations are not listening strategically but rather are only engaged in pseudo-listening, where listening is primarily a ritual (Heide and Svingsedt, 2024). Lewis emphasizes that strategic listening aims to detect what is not known so far, question the taken-for-granted values and ideas, and challenge dominating norms and beliefs.

In this article, we advocate service logic to improve an organization's strategic listening, and we propose the following definition of strategic listening:

Strategic listening is an organization's relationship-oriented, goal-oriented, and systematized listening with an outside-in perspective, creating the prerequisites for enhanced value creation, successful operations, and long-term survival.

This definition is based on an *explicit* service logic perspective, emphasizing the strategic importance of an outside-in and relationship perspective that concerns everyone in the organization.

The framework of strategic listening (FSL)

The starting point of the FSL is that service logic is a prerequisite for strategic listening. Listening is, we argue, a means of materializing and implementing this logic. Hence, there is a mutually dependent relationship between service logic and listening. As the service logic approach has a processual perspective and understands value creation as something that is created in a process when a product or service is used, the experience of coworkers and stakeholders in the outside-in approach is essential to strategic decisions and trust and relationship building. It is difficult to successfully implement or improve an organization's listening if it is not understood as a strategic issue (cf. [Lewis, 2020](#)) and if the goods logic with an inside-out perspective dominates management. Such traditional logic will cement a transmission view of communication focusing on delivering information to various target groups, both internally and externally, and only conduct hearing.

FSL takes a holistic perspective on strategic listening by embracing five key elements of an organization: (1) structure and governing system, (2) organizational culture, (3) leadership, (3) coworker strategies, (4) stakeholder strategy, and (5) servicescape. The framework builds and is elaborated on research from the Nordic School of Service Management, emphasizing these as essential for a stakeholder-focused management logic (e.g. [Grönroos, 1978](#); [Gummesson, 1978, 2002](#); [Normann, 1984](#)). The Nordic School of Service Management was established in the late 1970s by the Swedish Business Administration professor, Richard Normann, together with the Finnish marketing professor, Christian Grönroos, and the Swedish marketing professor, Evert Gummesson. This school emphasizes a need for a coherent management view to deliver high-quality services from a customer-centric perspective. As this theoretical tradition is based on marketing, it uses the concept of customer, but we prefer the more comprehensive concept of stakeholder. [Normann \(1984\)](#) highlights some key organizational components that produce and reproduce good quality from the customers' perspective, such as culture, structure and control, marketing, and the delivery system (staff, customer, and servicescape). [Grönroos \(2015\)](#) emphasizes similar aspects – leadership, culture, structure, financial management, servicescape, customers, and marketing. Also, [Gummesson \(2002\)](#) emphasizes relationships with coworkers and customers, organizational culture, and governance/control. [Grönroos \(2024\)](#) has recently called to implement a service-centric business model and the need for organizations to become service-focused (see [Figure 1](#)).

FSL clarifies how strategic listening can ensure a stakeholder focus and increased value creation. The holistic management approach is necessary to understand the different mutually dependent elements of the framework. In general, a framework like this is admittedly a simplification of reality, but it is needed to make reality more understandable and manageable.

The overarching fundament of FSL is service logic, and strategic listening is a form of communication that manifests service logic and facilitates value creation in the organizational system. As mentioned in the introduction, service logic puts stakeholder experiences in the limelight, and to achieve that, organizations need to listen to stakeholders and secure long-term relationships.

Below, we present and discuss each element of the framework.

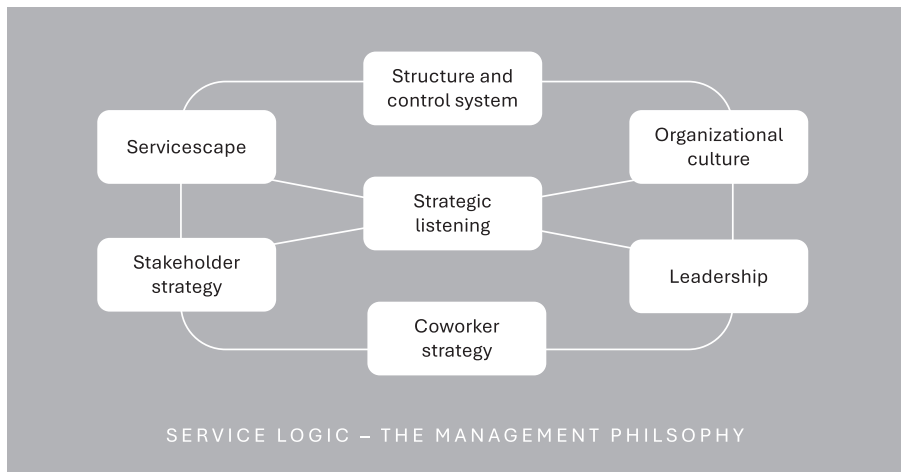


Figure 1. The framework of strategic listening (FSL). Source: [Heide and Svingstedt \(2024\)](#)

Structure and governing system

Organizational structures and governing systems can both support and hinder value creation and strategic listening. This understanding has been known for a long time but has yet to be acted on. Over 35 years ago, the former CEO of Scandinavian Airlines, [Carlzon \(1989\)](#), stressed the importance of flatter organizational structures to improve stakeholder relationships in the internationally best-selling book *Moments of Truth*. Carlzon emphasizes that the most essential value is produced in the interaction between coworkers and stakeholders. Also, previous research in service logic asserts that a stakeholder orientation demands a flattened organizational structure with fewer hierarchical levels aiming at decentralizing decision-making and empowering coworkers to increase their motivation and possibilities to act in the interest of stakeholders ([Grönroos, 2015](#); [Mukhtar et al., 2023](#)). Coworkers, specifically those on the frontline, have the best knowledge and understanding of stakeholders while interacting and listening to them daily. There is also a need for internal infrastructure and processes to ensure that management listens to the ones who have essential knowledge and experience of what stakeholders like or not and complain about. Hence, coworkers are the ones who contribute significantly to value creation ([Skälén, 2018](#)). A decentralized and flat organization can also allow for more cross-border collaboration, including listening to colleagues in other departments to solve stakeholders' problems ([Grönroos, 2015](#)).

Many organizations have an overly traditional and instrumental view regarding the economic governing systems, like budgets and financial goals, initially developed for the manufacturing industry to control, monitor, and measure the production of goods ([Gummesson, 2014](#)). Consequently, these systems focus too much on quantitative rather than qualitative evaluations and measurements, which is problematic in stakeholder-focused service organizations since they need as much qualitative information as they can get when listening to how stakeholder use and experience the service (cf. [Ridgway, 1956](#)). Qualitative stakeholder and employee surveys, which usually include a high degree of genuine listening, are information-rich and typically provide a more in-depth understanding of how both stakeholders and coworkers perceive and understand reality, providing the organization with rich material, a basis for future measurement and evaluation ([Macnamara, 2016](#)). Hence, qualitative assessments must be part of the governing system ([Grönroos and Ojasalo, 2015](#)) and in particular, we would like to advocate greater emphasis on assessing managers and coworkers listening competences and practices.

Organizational culture

Organizational culture influences meaning creation and coworkers' understanding of the organization and their work (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2016). Organizational culture is a significant research tradition without any generally accepted definition. Often, organizational culture is described as basic assumptions, dominant thoughts, and ideas that underlie and guide the behavior of managers and coworkers (Smircich, 1983). Consequently, organizational culture can both facilitate and hinder listening (Parcham and Ghasemizad, 2017). Previous research on listening in organizations points out the organizational culture as one of the most essential elements for listening in organizations (e.g. Lewis, 2020; Macnamara, 2024). Three critical elements of organizational culture create the conditions for a strategic listening organization. The first is to develop an organizational culture that welcomes and accepts the values, goals, and identity that accompany authentic, ethical, and goal-driven listening (Kakkar and Tangirala, 2018). This can be developed by a listening bottom-up strategy involving the coworkers in the work with formulating values and goals.

The second is that improved listening creates trust and confidence among managers and coworkers, and an listening organizational culture where coworkers do not feel anxious or afraid to make their voices heard and to express criticism or dissenting views (Edmondson, 2023; Parcham and Ghasemizad, 2017). Managers' listening leadership practice, discussed below, is critical. Brown (2018) claims managers should not focus on delivering the correct answers (i.e. a goods logic) but on asking the right questions. Leaders who show vulnerability by not always having ready-made answers create a trustful atmosphere through more listening.

The third is to pay attention to the political dimension of listening – who the organization chooses to listen to or not (Macnamara, 2024). This element also includes ensuring that the organization listens to marginalized internal and external groups (Taiminen, 2024; Waymer and Heath, 2007). Addressing inter-political issues of listening increases the possibility of ensuring an open culture.

Leadership

Leadership is also substantial for the practice of strategic listening, as mentioned in the literature review. But leadership is a vast, messy field with many definitions, perspectives, and theories (Pery *et al.*, 2020), and it is challenging to explain (Einola and Alvesson, 2021). The basic understanding of leadership is that a leader influences coworkers or others to act in a certain way (Yukl, 2011). A comprehensive knowledge of leadership rejects the heroization and strong individualization of the leader (Ospina and Uhl-Bien, 2012). Instead, it differs between the leader and leadership as a process of communicative actions (Simonsson, 2018; Tourish, 2019).

There are four critical aspects that leadership needs to focus on to facilitate strategic listening better. The first is to adopt a management philosophy according to the service logic perspective, and then implement strategic listening as critical strategic issues to operationalize a stakeholder-centric perspective. The second aspect is to develop a communicative leadership where leaders have communicative knowledge and skills to engage coworkers in dialog and involvement (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014; Johansson, 2020). A communicative leadership is also a listening leadership, where listening creates space for others to speak up (Edmondson, 2003, 2019). Research shows that managers who conduct listening develop internal trust which is fundamentally essential for organizations to stimulate coworkers to listen to colleagues and other stakeholders (cf. Lewis, 2022; Varey, 2000). Further, leaders who actively listen become role models through their actions, while coworkers constantly look at their manager's practice to understand how to behave and react (cf. Mintzberg, 2011). A third aspect is creating forums for conversations where speaking time is distributed evenly between managers and coworkers. It is possible to restrict managers' speaking time and ensure that they are in a listening mode. In this type of forum, there are great opportunities for managers to listen to all coworkers (Ballantyne, 2004). The fourth aspect is to promote and support

managers' personal development, e.g. coaching, which can help develop their empathy, reduce self-focus, and improve their listening competence (Worthington and Allison, 2018).

Coworker strategy

If you want to hear the voice of your stakeholders – listen to your employees (cf. Warner, 2018). In other words, a prerequisite of strategic listening is that coworkers feel “seen and heard” by managers and other coworkers (Kriz *et al.*, 2021). According to service logic, it is fundamentally essential to listen to coworkers while they are central to value creation, as pointed out earlier. Many coworkers have a critical and decisive role in interacting with stakeholders and having updated knowledge of their preferences (Karlsson, 2018; Le *et al.*, 2022; Reed *et al.*, 2016). When coworkers listen to stakeholders, they get access to an unfiltered view of how stakeholders experience of organizations service propositions (Ballantyne, 2003; Ramsey and Sohi, 1997; Tjan, 2012). However, coworkers at the frontline rarely have internal channels to communicate their knowledge about stakeholders upwards (Lewis, 2020). A coworker strategy is to design support and incentives for improved listening, such as management encouragement and continuous feedback. To involve coworkers in different internal processes that focus on organizational development and innovation is a way to listen to them and internalize their stakeholders' knowledge and thereby improving the organization's value proposition (Grönroos, 2021). Coworkers, who are listened to and receive feedback, are also more motivated to listen to others (Kluger and Itzchakov, 2022). Another way is to set requirements for good listening skills and competencies already in the recruitment process (Macnamara, 2024). Finally, a coworker strategy focuses on supporting and developing strategic internal communication emphasizing listening (Dahlman and Heide, 2021; Ruck, 2015, 2021). Communication specialists can be assigned a role that includes directing, facilitating and designing the strategic listening in the organization.

Stakeholder strategy

Three areas are critical in stakeholder strategies to develop strategic listening to ensure stakeholder focus and improved value creation. The first is strengthening and actively inviting stakeholder dialogs in the different communication channels, but also ensuring that the organization is prepared to receive and give feedback (cf. Kent, 2022; Kent and Taylor, 2021). A second strategy is to develop stakeholder surveys, which today seem to be the standard. There is a need for more qualitative studies, including listening to stakeholders through interviews, focus groups, or dialog forums, to gain knowledge of their understanding and experiences (Macnamara, 2016). Currently, there is an overflow of quantitative studies, and organizations have “data graveyards” that are often neither analyzed nor used for development. The problem is both the pure amount of data and the fact that organizations are not listening to the answers aiming to develop the organization (Macnamara, 2024). The third is organizations' low ability to deal with stakeholders' critical views (Jaakkola *et al.*, 2022). Listening, in general, is complex, and listening to critical views is particularly difficult. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance the organization's competence in managing complaints and criticism, as this serves as an operational approach to improve value creation (Stauss and Seidel, 2012). In addition, encouraging stakeholders to share their critical views on services is essential, as they often refrain from voicing criticism in general due to past experiences of feeling unheard when raising complaints.

Servicescape

The servicescape refers to the physical, digital, and social environment where service interactions and value creation occur, significantly impacting stakeholders' quality of experiences (Berceanu *et al.*, 2023; Bitner, 1992; Lagioia *et al.*, 2022). The design of a “listening” servicescape should focus on supporting stakeholders' value-creation processes.

The first step is to make an inventory of the resources that exist and are used in the existing servicescape and reflect on whether these hinder or support genuine listening. The second step is to add a technical support system, for example, technical analysis tools, to create understanding and meaning of qualitative information coming from the stakeholders in different communication channels (Macnamara, 2016, 2024; Men *et al.*, 2022).

Conclusions and future directions

Although many calls have been made for a holistic perspective on strategic listening, only a few researchers have taken up the challenge. Our literature review shows two important contributors to a holistic approach (Lewis, 2020; Macnamara, 2016, 2024). While these provide valuable understandings of an organization-wide approach to strategic listening, they do not emphasize the importance of management philosophy and value creation, which we believe enhances the possibilities to develop a listening organization. This article contributes to a fine-grained understanding of strategic listening by combining two theoretical areas – service management and strategic communication. Our theoretical framework contributes to previous research by offering a more integrative and comprehensive understanding of strategic listening. It bridges service management research with strategic communication research, opening up new avenues for exploring the complex dynamics of organizational communication. Service management research focuses on stakeholders' experiences and the process of value creation, whereas strategic communication research adopts a holistic perspective on organizational communication but rarely addresses value creation.

In the article, we integrate knowledge from the two research fields by explaining the two forms of logic – goods and service logic – and how they relate to different strategic communication practices. The all-too-dominant goods logic, based on a from-within perspective on value creation, preserves a traditional sender and transmission-oriented communication that still dominates much of research and practice of strategic communication, and that does not give proper prerequisites for genuine listening. We propose organizations to embrace service logic, which emphasizes an outside-in perspective on value creation, that understands the value of sensemaking by communication and provides prerequisites for two-way communication and listening. Even if it exists research in strategic communication that advocates dialog and relationship building (e.g. Kent and Taylor, 2016), this research does not discuss the underlying management philosophy. The dominating management logic in an organization is also closely related to the general understanding of value creation. If the management logic advocates that value is created when a service or product is used, and sometimes this value is co-created in interactions between coworkers and stakeholders, managers will be much more interested in building relationships by communicating and listening. This means further that listening is the responsibility of both managers and coworkers, which is in line with a contemporary understanding of strategic communication – all coworkers have communicative tasks and responsibilities (Falkheimer and Heide, 2022), and service management – that all coworkers have an essential role as part-time marketers (Gummesson, 2014) and value co-creators (Skålén, 2018). We understand service logic as a key to strategic listening.

The article provides the FSL, which takes a holistic perspective on an organization and shows critical organizational elements in which strategic listening needs to be analyzed and implemented. As a management philosophy, the service logic acts as a cohesive glue, linking the key elements of FSL into a systematized and coherent whole. Previous holistic approaches to listening in organizations do not discuss such a unifying philosophy. We also argue why each element is important to strategic listening and give examples of how organizations can work with them. Also, this article offers some further key elements and organizational areas essential to develop a strategically listening organization.

Since this is a conceptual article, the practical implications of FSL, need more research. However, we believe that FSL can be used as a thinking tool to analyze and identify

organizational areas that require development in terms of listening. While strategic listening is complex, it must be decomposed, as demonstrated in FSL, into several distinct elements within an organization and with practical approaches for addressing each of them.

Future research is needed on organizational listening in general and predominantly qualitative studies with interviews and observations. Essential questions to be answered empirically are: Why do organizations not listen to coworkers and stakeholders? How do stakeholders experience organizations' listening? Finally, there is a need to empirically investigate FSL in different types of organizations to assess the model's practical use and value the model's results in practice.

References

- Adamson, B. (2022), "Traditional B2B sales and marketing are becoming obsolete", *Harvard Business Review*, available at: <https://hbr.org/2022/02/traditional-b2b-sales-and-marketing-are-becoming-obsolete>
- Alvesson, M. and Sveningsson, S. (2016), *Changing Organizational Culture: Cultural Change Work in Progress*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Ballantyne, D. (2003), "A relationship-mediated theory of internal marketing", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 37 No. 9, pp. 1242-1260, doi: [10.1108/03090560310486979](https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560310486979).
- Ballantyne, D. (2004), "Dialogue and its role in the development of relationship specific knowledge", *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 114-123, doi: [10.1108/08858620410523990](https://doi.org/10.1108/08858620410523990).
- Ballantyne, D. and Varey, R.J. (2006), "Creating value-in-use through marketing interaction: the exchange logic of relating, communicating and knowing", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 335-348, doi: [10.1177/1470593106066795](https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593106066795).
- Barbour, J.B. (2017), "Listening and organizing", in Scott, C.R. and Lewis, L. (Eds), *The International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, NY, pp. 1-5.
- Berceanu, D.C.-A., Pănișoară, G., Popovici, A.-F. and Ghiță, C.M. (2023), "Quality of life and the digital service landscape: the moderating role of customer complaining effort", *Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 13 No. 5, pp. 375-397, doi: [10.3390/bs13050375](https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13050375).
- Berger, P.L. and Luckmann, T. (1966), *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Doubleday, New York.
- Berry, L.L. (1983), "Relationship marketing", in Berry, L.L., Shostack, G.L. and Upah, G.D. (Eds), *Emerging Perspectives of Services Marketing*, American Marketing Association, Chicago, IL, p. 28.
- Berry, L.L. (2002), "Relationship marketing of services – perspectives from 1983 and 2000", *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 59-77, doi: [10.1300/J366v01n01_05](https://doi.org/10.1300/J366v01n01_05).
- Bitner, M.J. (1992), "Servicescapes: the impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 56 No. 2, pp. 57-71, doi: [10.1177/002224299205600205](https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299205600205).
- Borner, M. and Zerfass, A. (2018), "The power of listening in corporate communications: theoretical foundations of corporate listening as a strategic mode of communication", in Bowman, S., Crookes, A. and Ihlen, Ø. (Eds), *Public Relations and the Power of Creativity*, Emerald, Leeds, pp. 3-22, doi: [10.1108/S2398-391420180000003001](https://doi.org/10.1108/S2398-391420180000003001).
- Bostrom, R. (1970), "Patterns of communicative interaction in small groups", *Speech Monographs*, Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 257-263, doi: [10.1080/03637757009375675](https://doi.org/10.1080/03637757009375675).
- Brown, B. (2018), *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts*, Random House, New York, NY.
- Browne, J. and Nuttall, R. (2013), "Beyond corporate social responsibility: integrated external engagement", available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/beyond-corporate-social-responsibility-integrated-external-engagement>

- Buber, M. (1923/1994), *I and Thou*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh.
- Burleson, B.R. (2011), "A constructivist approach to listening", *International Journal of Listening*, Vol. 25 Nos 1-2, pp. 27-46, doi: [10.1080/10904018.2011.536470](https://doi.org/10.1080/10904018.2011.536470).
- Canel, M.J., Barandiarán, X. and Murphy, A. (2022), "What does learning by listening bring to citizen engagement? Lessons from a government program", *Public Relations Review*, Vol. 48 No. 1, pp. 102-132, doi: [10.1016/j.pubrev.2021.102132](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2021.102132).
- Carey, J.W. (1988), *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Carey, J. (2009), *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Carlzon, J. (1989), *Moments of Truth*, Perennial Library, New York.
- Carnegie, D. (1936), *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Simon & Schuster, New York.
- Carroll, J.S. (2015), "Making sense of ambiguity through dialogue and collaborative action", *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 59-65, doi: [10.1111/1468-5973.12075](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.12075).
- Claro, C.M. (2022), "Organizational listening and its implementation in the Chilean multi-store sector", *Public Relations Inquiry*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 221-239, doi: [10.1177/2046147x221081173](https://doi.org/10.1177/2046147x221081173).
- Cooper, L.A. (1997), "Listening competency in the workplace: a model for training", *Business Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 60 No. 4, pp. 75-84, doi: [10.1177/108056999706000405](https://doi.org/10.1177/108056999706000405).
- Crane, A. and Glozer, S. (2016), "Researching corporate social responsibility communication: themes, opportunities and challenges", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 53 No. 7, pp. 1223-1252, doi: [10.1111/joms.12196](https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12196).
- Dahlman, S. and Heide, M. (2021), *Strategic Internal Communication: A Practitioner's Guide to Implementing Cutting-Edge Methods for Improved Workplace Culture*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- de Beer, E. (2014), "Creating value through communication", *Public Relations Review*, Vol. 40 No. 2, pp. 136-143, doi: [10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.02.024](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.02.024).
- Deetz, S.A. (1995), *Transforming Communication, Transforming Business: Building Responsive and Responsible Workplaces*, Hampton Press, Cresskill, NJ.
- Dewey, J. (1916/2004), *Democracy and Education*, Dover, Mineola, NY.
- Dozier, D.M., Grunig, L.A. and Grunig, J.E. (1995), *Managers's Guide to Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ.
- Edmondson, A.C. (2003), "Speaking up in the operating room: how team leaders promote learning in interdisciplinary action teams", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 40 No. 6, pp. 1419-1452, doi: [10.1111/1467-6486.00386](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00386).
- Edmondson, A.C. (2019), *The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth*, Wiley, Hoboken, NJ.
- Edmondson, A.C. (2023), *Right Kind of Wrong*, Atria Books, New York, NY.
- Einola, K. and Alvesson, M. (2021), "When 'good' leadership backfires: dynamics of the leader/follower relation", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 42 No. 6, pp. 845-865, doi: [10.1177/0170840619878472](https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840619878472).
- Etter, M., Morsing, M. and Castello, I. (2011), "Barriers to dialogue: on the use of social media for car communication in the pharmaceutical industry", *Paper presented at the CSR Communication Conference 2011*, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
- Fairhurst, G.T. and Connaughton, S.L. (2014), "Leadership: a communicative perspective", *Leadership*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 7-35, doi: [10.1177/1742715013509396](https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715013509396).
- Falkheimer, J. and Heide, M. (2022), "Introduction: the emergent field of strategic communication", in Falkheimer, J. and Heide, M. (Eds), *Research Handbook of Strategic Communication*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, pp. 1-12.
- Falkheimer, J. and Heide, M. (2023), *Strategic Communication: An Introduction to Theory and Global Practice*, Routledge, New York, NY.

- Fieseler, C. and Fleck, M. (2013), "The pursuit of empowerment through social media: structural social capital dynamics in CSR blogging", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 118 No. 4, pp. 759-775, doi: [10.1007/s10551-013-1959-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1959-9).
- Frandsen, F. and Johansen, W. (2017), "Strategic communication", in Scott, C.R. and Lewis, L.K. (Eds), *The International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication*, Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, MA.
- Gergen, K.J. (1985), "The social constructionist movement in modern psychology", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 266-275, doi: [10.1037//0003-066x.40.3.266](https://doi.org/10.1037//0003-066x.40.3.266).
- Gergen, K.J. (1998), "Constructionism and realism: how are we to go on?", in Parker, I. (Ed.), *Social Constructionism, Discourse and Realism*, Sage, London.
- Gordon, M. (2011), "Listening as embracing the other: Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue", *Educational Theory*, Vol. 61 No. 2, pp. 207-219, doi: [10.1111/j.1741-5446.2011.00400.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.2011.00400.x).
- Grönroos, C. (1978), "A service-oriented approach to marketing of services", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 12 No. 8, pp. 588-601, doi: [10.1108/EUM00000000004985](https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM00000000004985).
- Grönroos, C. (1979), "An applied theory for marketing industrial services", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 45-50, doi: [10.1016/0019-8501\(79\)90017-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0019-8501(79)90017-8).
- Grönroos, C. (1981), "Internal marketing – an integral part of marketing theory", in Donnelly, J.H. and George, W.R. (Eds), *Marketing of Services*, American Marketing Association, Chicago, IL, pp. 236-238.
- Grönroos, C. (1990), "Service management: a management focus for service competition", *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 6-14, doi: [10.1108/09564239010139125](https://doi.org/10.1108/09564239010139125).
- Grönroos, C. (2015), *Service Management and Marketing: Managing the Service Profit Logic*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.
- Grönroos, C. (2021), *Tjänstefiering*, Volante, Stockholm.
- Grönroos, C. (2023), "Towards a marketing renaissance: challenging underlying assumptions", *Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 270-278, doi: [10.1177/14413582231172269](https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582231172269).
- Grönroos, C. (2024), "Business model innovation through the adoption of service logic: evolving to servification", *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, Vol. 34 No. 3, pp. 347-360, doi: [10.1108/jstp-12-2022-0295](https://doi.org/10.1108/jstp-12-2022-0295).
- Grönroos, C. and Ojasalo, K. (2015), "Service productivity as mutual learning", *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, Vol. 7 Nos 2/3, pp. 296-311, doi: [10.1108/ijqss-03-2015-0035](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijqss-03-2015-0035).
- Grönroos, C. and Ravald, A. (2011), "Service as business logic: implications for value creation and marketing", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 5-22, doi: [10.1108/09564231111106893](https://doi.org/10.1108/09564231111106893).
- Grunig, J.E. (2001), "Two-way symmetrical public relations: past, present, and future", in Heath, R.L. (Ed.), *Handbook of Public Relations*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 11-30.
- Grunig, J.E. (2006), "Furnishing the edifice: ongoing research on public relations as a strategic management function", *Journal of Public Relations Research*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 151-176, doi: [10.1207/s1532754xjpr1802_5](https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532754xjpr1802_5).
- Grunig, J.E. and Hunt, T. (1984), *Managing Public Relations*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Orlando, FL.
- Gummesson, E. (1978), "Toward a theory of professional service marketing", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 89-95, doi: [10.1016/0019-8501\(78\)90054-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0019-8501(78)90054-8).
- Gummesson, E. (1991), "Marketing-orientation revisited: the crucial role of the part-time marketer", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 60-75, doi: [10.1108/03090569110139166](https://doi.org/10.1108/03090569110139166).
- Gummesson, E. (2002), *Total Relationship Marketing Marketing Strategy: Moving from the 4ps – Product, Price, Promotion, Place – of Traditional Marketing Management to the 30rs – the Thirty Relationships – of a New Marketing Paradigm*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.

- Gummesson, E. (2014), "Productivity, quality and relationship marketing in service operations", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 26 No. 5, pp. 656-662, doi: [10.1108/ijchm-01-2014-0017](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-01-2014-0017).
- Gummesson, E. and Grönroos, C. (2012), "The emergence of the new service marketing: nordic school perspectives", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 479-497, doi: [10.1108/09564231211260387](https://doi.org/10.1108/09564231211260387).
- Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., van Ruler, B., Verčič, D. and Sriramesh, K., (2007), "Defining strategic communication", *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 3-35, doi: [10.1080/15531180701285244](https://doi.org/10.1080/15531180701285244).
- Heide, M. and Simonsson, C. (2011), "Putting Co-workers in the limelight: new challenges for communication professionals", *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, Vol. 5 No. 4, pp. 201-220, doi: [10.1080/1553118x.2011.605777](https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118x.2011.605777).
- Heide, M. and Svingstedt, A. (2024), *Strategic Listening: How Organizations, Managers and Coworkers Become Better at Listening*, Routledge, London.
- Heide, M., Simonsson, C., von Platen, S. and Falkheimer, J. (2018), "Expanding the scope of strategic communication: towards a holistic understanding of organizational complexity", *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 452-468, doi: [10.1080/1553118x.2018.1456434](https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118x.2018.1456434).
- Heide, M., Simonsson, C., Nothhaft, H., Andersson, R. and von Platen, S. (2019), *The Communicative Organization: Final Report*, The Swedish Communication Association, Stockholm.
- Hunt, S.D. (2000), *A General Theory of Competition: Resources, Competences, Productivity, Economic Growth*, Sage, London.
- Hurley, A. and Walczak, M.M. (2020), "Audiology", in Worthington, D.L. and Bodie, G.D. (Eds), *The Handbook of Listening*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ, pp. 89-101.
- Itzhakov, G., DeMarree, K.G., Kluger, A.N. and Turjeman-Levi, Y. (2018), "The listener sets the tone: high-quality listening increases attitude clarity and behavior-intention consequences", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 44 No. 5, pp. 762-778, doi: [10.1177/0146167217747874](https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167217747874).
- Jaakkola, E., Becker, L. and Panina, E. (2022), "Understanding and managing customer experiences", in Edvardsson, B. and Tronvoll, B. (Eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Service Management*, Springer, pp. 655-675, doi: [10.1007/978-3-030-91828-6_33656](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91828-6_33656).
- Johansson, C. (2020), "Communicative leadership development", in *Business Case: Volvo Group Trucks Operations*, New River Valley. DEMICOM, Sundsvall.
- Johnson, S.D. and Bechler, C. (1988), "Examining the relationship between listening effectiveness and leadership emergence perceptions", *Small Group Research*, Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 452-471, doi: [10.1177/1046496498294003](https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496498294003).
- Jonsdottir, I.J. and Fridriksdottir, K. (2020), "Active listening: is it the forgotten dimension in managerial communication?", *International Journal of Listening*, Vol. 34 No. 3, pp. 178-188, doi: [10.1080/10904018.2019.1613156](https://doi.org/10.1080/10904018.2019.1613156).
- Kakkar, H. and Tangirala, S. (2018), "If your employees aren't speaking up, blame company culture", *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles*, pp. 1-4, available at: <https://hbr.org/2018/11/if-your-employees-arent-speaking-up-blame-company-culture>
- Kang, M. and Moon, B. (2023), "Developing organizational employee communication competency diagnosis: breaking employee silence via organizational climate of listening for dialogic employee communication", in Place, K.R. (Ed.), *Organizational Listening for Strategic Communication: Building Theory and Practice*, Routledge, London, pp. 41-62.
- Karlsson, J. (2018), *Frontline Employees' Role in Service Innovation and Value Creation*, Karlstad University, Business Administration, Karlstad.
- Kent, M.L. (2022), "Dialogue as a tool of strategic communication?", in Falkheimer, J. and Heide, M. (Eds), *Research Handbook on Strategic Communication*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, pp. 83-98.

- Kent, M.L. and Taylor, M. (2016), "From Homo economicus to Homo dialogicus: rethinking social media use in CSR communication", *Public Relations Review*, Vol. 42 No. 1, pp. 60-67, doi: [10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.11.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.11.003).
- Kent, M.L. and Taylor, M. (2021), "Fostering dialogic engagement: toward an architecture of social media for social change", *Social Media + Society*, Vol. 7 No. 1, doi: [10.1177/2056305120984462](https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120984462).
- Kernstock, J. and Brexendorf, T.O. (2009), "Implications of Habermas's "theory of communicative action" for corporate brand management", *Corporate Communication: An International Journal*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 389-403.
- Kluger, A.N. and Itzhakov, G. (2022), "The power of listening at work", *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 121-146, doi: [10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012420-091013](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012420-091013).
- Kriz, T.D., Kluger, A.N. and Lyddy, C.J., (2021), "Feeling heard: experiences of listening (or not) at work", *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 12, 659087, doi: [10.3389/fpsyg.2021.659087](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.659087), available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/34381396>
- Kuo, C.-C., Chang, K. and Cheng, S. (2022), "Can manager's listening behavior benefit employees? Power distance may have the answer", *International Journal of Listening*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 1-15, doi: [10.1080/10904018.2021.2004892](https://doi.org/10.1080/10904018.2021.2004892).
- Lagioia, F., Jabłowska, A., Liepina, R. and Drazewski, K. (2022), "AI in search of unfairness in consumer contracts: the terms of service landscape", *Journal of Consumer Policy*, Vol. 45 No. 3, pp. 481-536, doi: [10.1007/s10603-022-09520-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10603-022-09520-9).
- Le, H.N., Pham, T.-A.N. and Pham, T.N. (2022), "The transformative outcomes of frontline employee adaptability for service value co-creation: a study of the banking sector", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 401-424, doi: [10.1108/IJBM-03-2021-0093](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-03-2021-0093).
- Levitt, T. (1981), "Marketing intangible products and product intangibles", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 59 No. 3, pp. 94-103.
- Lewis, L. (2020), *The Power of Strategic Listening*, Rowman Littlefield, Ithaca, NY.
- Lewis, L. (2022), "Strategic organizational listening", in Falkheimer, J. and Heide, M. (Eds), *The Research Handbook on Strategic Communication*, Elgar, pp. 221-235.
- Lund, A.K. and Refshaug, M. (2024), *Mastering Corporate Communication: A Modern Guidebook for Future-Fit Strategies, Tools*, Springer, Berlin.
- Macnamara, J. (2016), "Organizational listening: the missing essential", in *Public Communication*, Peter Lang, New York, NY.
- Macnamara, J. (2017), "Toward a theory and practice of organizational listening", *International Journal of Listening*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 1-23, doi: [10.1080/10904018.2017.1375076](https://doi.org/10.1080/10904018.2017.1375076).
- Macnamara, J. (2019), "Explicating listening in organization-public communication: theory, practices, technologies", *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 13, pp. 5183-5204.
- Macnamara, J. (2021), "New insights into crisis communication from an 'inside' emic perspective during COVID-19", *Public Relations Inquiry*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 237-262, doi: [10.1177/2046147X21999972](https://doi.org/10.1177/2046147X21999972).
- Macnamara, J. (2023), "A call for reconfiguring evaluation models, pedagogy, and practice: beyond reporting media-centric outputs and fake Impact scores", *Public Relations Review*, Vol. 49 No. 2, 102311, doi: [10.1016/j.pubrev.2023.102311](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2023.102311).
- Macnamara, J. (2024), *Organizational Listening II: Expanding the Concept, Theory, and Practice*, Peter Lang, New York, NY.
- Men, L.R., Zhou, A. and Sunny Tsai, W.-H. (2022), "Harnessing the power of Chatbot social conversation for organizational listening: the Impact on perceived transparency and organization-public relationships", *Journal of Public Relations Research*, Vol. 34 Nos 1-2, pp. 20-44, doi: [10.1080/1062726x.2022.2068553](https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726x.2022.2068553).
- Mintzberg, H. (2011), *Managing*, Pearson, Harlow.

- Mukhtar, U., Grönroos, C., Hilletofth, P., Pimenta, M.L. and Ferreira, A.C. (2023), "Inter-functional value co-creation as an antecedent of supply chain performance: a study based on the coordination theory", *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 38 No. 11, pp. 2324-2340, doi: [10.1108/jbim-12-2021-0549](https://doi.org/10.1108/jbim-12-2021-0549).
- Neill, M.S. and Bowen, S.A. (2021a), "Employee perceptions of ethical listening in U.S. Organizations", *Public Relations Review*, Vol. 47 No. 5, 102123, doi: [10.1016/j.pubrev.2021.102123](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2021.102123).
- Neill, M.S. and Bowen, S.A. (2021b), "Ethical listening to employees during a pandemic: new approaches, barriers and lessons", *Journal of Communication Management*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 276-297, doi: [10.1108/JCOM-09-2020-0103](https://doi.org/10.1108/JCOM-09-2020-0103).
- Nichols, R.G. and Stevens, L.A. (1957), "Listening to people", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 35 No. 5, pp. 85-92.
- Normann, R. (1984), *Service Management: Strategy and Leadership in Service Business*, Wiley, Chichester.
- Normann, R. (2001), *Reframing Business: When the Map Changes the Landscape*, Wiley, Chichester.
- Ospina, S. and Uhl-Bien, M. (2012), "Mapping the terrain: convergence and divergence around relational leadership", in Uhl-Bien, M. and Ospina, S. (Eds), *Advancing Relational Leadership Research: A Dialogue Among Perspectives*, Information Age, Charlotte, NC, pp. 203-225.
- Parcham, E. and Ghasemizad, A. (2017), "The Impact of organizational culture on employees' organizational silence in Shiraz university of medical sciences", *Journal of Health Management and Informatics*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 25-30.
- Pery, S., Doytch, G. and Kluger, A.N. (2020), "Management and leadership", in Worthington, D.L. and Bodie, G.D. (Eds), *The Handbook of Listening*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ, pp. 163-179.
- Peters, T.J. and Waterman, R.H. (1982), *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*, Harper & Row, New York, NY.
- Place, K.R. (2022), "Toward a framework for listening with consideration for intersectionality: insights from public relations professionals in borderland spaces", *Journal of Public Relations Research*, Vol. 34 Nos 1-2, pp. 4-19, doi: [10.1080/1062726X.2022.2057502](https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2022.2057502).
- Place, K.R. (2023a), "Introduction", in Place, K.R. (Ed.), *Organizational Listening for Strategic Communication: Building Theory and Practice*, Routledge, London, pp. 1-5.
- Place, K.R. (2023b), *Organizational Listening for Strategic Communication*, Taylor & Francis, Milton Park.
- Place, K.R. and Flamme, E.J. (2023), "Exploring ethical listening among public relations professionals", *Journal of Media Ethics*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 2-15, doi: [10.1080/23736992.2023.2292811](https://doi.org/10.1080/23736992.2023.2292811).
- Potter, J. and Wetherell, M. (1987), *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*, Sage, London.
- Pounsford, M., Ruck, K. and Kraiss, H. (2024), *Leading the Listening Organization: Creating Organizations that Flourish*, Routledge, London.
- Qin, Y.S. and Men, L.R. (2022), "Why does listening matter inside the organization? The Impact of internal listening on employee-organization relationships", *Journal of Public Relations Research*, Vol. 33 No. 5, pp. 365-386, doi: [10.1080/1062726x.2022.2034631](https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726x.2022.2034631).
- Ramsey, R.P. and Sohi, R.S. (1997), "Listening to your customers: the impact of perceived salesperson listening behavior on relationship outcomes", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 127-137, doi: [10.1007/BF02894348](https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02894348).
- Reddy, M.J. (1993), "The conduit metaphor: a case of frame conflict in our language about language", in Ortony, A. (Ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*, 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 164-189.

- Reed, K., Goolsby, J.R. and Johnston, M.K. (2016), "Listening in and out: listening to customers and employees to strengthen an integrated market-oriented system", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 69 No. 9, pp. 3591-3599, doi: [10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.01.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.01.002).
- Ridgway, V.F. (1956), "Dysfunctional consequences of performance measurements", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 240-247, doi: [10.2307/2390989](https://doi.org/10.2307/2390989).
- Rogers, C.R. (1961), *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*, Houghton Mifflin, New York, NY.
- Rogers, C.R. and Farson, R.E. (1957), *Active Listening*, Industrial Relations Center of the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL.
- Rogers, C.R. and Roethlisberger, F.J. (1952), "Barriers and gateways to communication", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 46-52.
- Ruck, K. (2015), *Exploring Internal Communication: Towards Informed Employee Voice*, Routledge, London.
- Ruck, K. (2021), "Employee voice and internal listening: towards dialogue in the workplace", in Ana Tkalac, V. and Linjuan Rita, M. (Eds), *Current Trends and Issues in Internal Communication*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 93-111, doi: [10.1007/978-3-030-78213-9_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78213-9_6).
- Ruck, K. (2022), "Ethical internal communication", in Falkheimer, J. and Heide, M. (Eds), *Research Handbook on Strategic Communication*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, pp. 348-365.
- Sahay, S. (2023), "Organizational listening during organizational change: perspectives of employees and executives", *International Journal of Listening*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 12-25, doi: [10.1080/10904018.2021.1941029](https://doi.org/10.1080/10904018.2021.1941029).
- Salisbury, J.R. and Chen, G.-M. (2007), "An examination of the relationship between conversational sensitivity and listening styles", *Intercultural Communication Studies*, Vol. 16 No. 1, available at: <https://web.uri.edu/iaics/files/24-Jennife-Salisbury-Guo-Ming-Chen.pdf>
- Schramm, W.A. (1948), *Mass Communications*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana.
- Shostack, G.L. (1977), "Breaking free from product marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 41 No. 2, pp. 73-80, doi: [10.1177/002224297704100219](https://doi.org/10.1177/002224297704100219).
- Sias, P.M. (2014), "Workplace relationships", in Putnam, L.L. and Mumby, D.K. (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Communication: Advances in Theory, Research, and Methods*, Sage, London, pp. 375-399.
- Simonsson, C. (2018), "Leader-follower perspectives", in Heath, R.L. and Johansen, W. (Eds), *The International Encyclopedia of Strategic Communication*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ.
- Simonsson, C. and Heide, M. (2021), "Developing a communicative logic: the key to communication professionalism", *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 253-273, doi: [10.1080/1553118x.2021.1906682](https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118x.2021.1906682).
- Skålén, P. (2018), *Service Logic*, Studentlitteratur, Lund.
- Skålén, P. (2022), "Public services and service innovation: a practice theory view", *Nordic Journal of Innovation in the Public Sector*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 20-34, doi: [10.18261/njips.1.1.2](https://doi.org/10.18261/njips.1.1.2).
- Smircich, L. (1983), "Concepts of culture and organizational analysis", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 339-358, doi: [10.2307/2392246](https://doi.org/10.2307/2392246).
- Stauss, B. and Seidel, W. (2012), "Complaint management in retailing", in Kandampully, J. (Ed.), *Service Management: The New Paradigm in Retailing*, Springer, Berling, pp. 207-230, doi: [10.1007/978-1-4614-1554-1_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-1554-1_12).
- Taiminen, H. (2024), "Organisational listening as a means to create more citizen-centric well-being public policies", *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, Vol. 19, pp. 1-13, doi: [10.1080/1553118x.2024.2395406](https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118x.2024.2395406).
- Tam, L., Kim, J.-N., Grunig, J.E., Hall, J.A. and Swerling, J. (2020), "In search of communication excellence: public relations' value, empowerment, and structure in strategic management", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 1-24, doi: [10.1080/13527266.2020.1851286](https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2020.1851286).

- Thayer, L. (1987), *Pieces: Toward a Revisioning of Communication/Life*, Ablex Publishing, London.
- Tjan, A.K. (2012), "Listen to your frontline employees", *Harvard Business Review*, available at: <https://hbr.org/2012/04/listen-to-your-frontline-emplo>
- Tourish, D. (2019), "Is complexity leadership theory complex enough? A critical appraisal, some modifications and suggestions for further research", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 40 No. 2, pp. 219-238, doi: [10.1177/0170840618789207](https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618789207).
- Varey, R.J. (2000), "A critical review of conceptions of communication evident in contemporary business and management literature", *Journal of Communication Management*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp. 328-340, doi: [10.1108/eb023530](https://doi.org/10.1108/eb023530).
- Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2004), "Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 68, pp. 1-17, doi: [10.1509/jmkg.68.1.1.24036](https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.68.1.1.24036).
- Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2008), "Service-dominant logic: continuing the evolution", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 1-10, doi: [10.1007/s11747-007-0069-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-007-0069-6).
- Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2017), "Service-dominant logic 2025", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 46-67, doi: [10.1016/j.ijresmar.2016.11.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2016.11.001).
- Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2019), "An overview of service-dominant logic", in Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Service-Dominant Logic*, Sage, London, pp. 3-21.
- Vargo, S.L., Lusch, R.F. and Morgan, F.W. (2006), "Historical perspectives on service-dominant logic", in Lusch, S.L. and Vargo, R.F. (Eds), *The Service-Dominant Logic of Marketing: Dialog, Debate, and Directions*, Routledge, London, pp. 29-42.
- Virtanen, P. and Jalonen, H. (2023), "Public value creation mechanisms in the context of public service logic: an integrated conceptual framework", *Public Management Review*, Vol. 26 No. 8, pp. 2331-2354, doi: [10.1080/14719037.2023.2268111](https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2023.2268111).
- Warner, P. (2018), "From surveys to transformation: take your customer experience to the next level", available at: <https://www.cmswire.com/customer-experience/from-surveys-to-transformation-take-your-customer-experience-to-the-next-level/>
- Waymer, D. and Heath, R.L. (2007), "Emergent agents: the forgotten publics in crisis communication and issues management research", *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 88-108, doi: [10.1080/00909880601065730](https://doi.org/10.1080/00909880601065730).
- Weber, M. (2011), *Methodology of Social Sciences*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Weick, K.E. (1969), *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA.
- Weick, K.E. (1995), *Sensemaking in Organizations*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Winkler, P. and Schoeneborn, D. (2022), "Understandings of organization in strategic communication research", in Falkheimer, J. and Heide, M. (Eds), *Research Handbook on Strategic Communication*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, pp. 118-132.
- Worthington, E.L. and Allison, S.T. (2018), *Heroic Humility: what the Science of Humility Can Say to People Raised on Self-Focus*, American Psychological Association, Washington, DC. doi: [10.1037/0000079-000](https://doi.org/10.1037/0000079-000).
- Worthington, D.L. and Bodie, G.D. (2020), "Introduction", in Worthington, D.L. and Bodie, G.D. (Eds), *The Handbook of Listening*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ, pp. 1-6.
- Worthington, D.L. and Bodie, G. (2023), "External stakeholders' conceptualizations of organizational listening: a conceptual replication of the revised listening concepts inventory", in Place, K.R. (Ed.), *Organizational Listening for Strategic Communication*, Routledge, London, pp. 9-23.
- Yukl, G. (2011), "Contingency theories of effective leadership", in Bryman, A., Collinson, D., Grint, K., Jackson, B. and Uhl-Bien, M. (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Leadership*, Sage, London, pp. 286-297.
- Zerfass, A. and Link, J. (2022), "Communication management: structures, processes, and business models for value creation through corporate communications", in Falkheimer, J. and Heide, M. (Eds), *Research Handbook on Strategic Communication*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, pp. 237-258.

- Zerfass, A. and Sherzada, M. (2015), "Corporate communications from the Ceo's perspective", *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 291-309, doi: [10.1108/CCIJ-04-2014-0020](https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-04-2014-0020).
- Zerfass, A. and Viertmann, C. (2017), "Creating business value through corporate communication", *Journal of Communication Management*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 68-81, doi: [10.1108/jcom-07-2016-0059](https://doi.org/10.1108/jcom-07-2016-0059).
- Zuboff, S. and Maxmin, J. (2002), *The Support Economy*, Penguin, New York, NY.

Corresponding author

Mats Heide can be contacted at: mats.heide@iko.lu.se