

# PR, TRUST AND LINGUISTICS

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How modern approaches to meaning can help companies assess their presented image



## TRUST AS TASK OF PR AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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- Central aim of PR efforts: Achieve an image of corporation or organisation as **trustworthy**
- Achievable through long-term experience
- But also: Important role of communicative efforts – possibility of assessing quality of text on the basis of text (not only effect testing)
- **'L'umanesimo che innova'** → applying linguistic methods for supporting business tasks with more insight and reflection = **Purpose and idea of the whole book.**



# STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

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Trust as task of Public Relations efforts in Business Communication

Aspects of assessing trust and efforts to achieve trust

Practical analysis



# CONCEPTS OF TRUST INDICATORS (OF THE EXISTENCE OF FACTORS)

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A total of 22 linguistically analysable indicators

Choice of indicators with relevance for indicating expertise / knowledge

- Appropriate level of detail
- Appropriate length of message
- Appropriate choice of words (technical terms, promotional wording)
- Similarity and solidarity between sender and receiver
- Obvious vested interest
- References

**Conceptual Frame Analysis**

Reinmuth 2006



# FRAME ANALYSIS – RELATED TO CONTENT ARCHITECTURE

Frame = Structured model of individual or collective knowledge in long-term memory about a concept

Frame analyses investigate,

- which parts of a concept is expressed textually and thus occupies a profiled position in the content structure of a text
- which parts of a concept are merely presupposed, thus occupying a less profiled position

Frames are thus models that may help text writers in the practical and systematic work on content architecture and on choosing content for a text

Class / Engberg 2018



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# RELATIONS TO CONTENT ARCHITECTURE

- My hypothesis: When making these structured choices, the aspect of achieving trust is a relevant parameter of text evaluation – here: achieving trust through the description of the central textual objects
- Relations to **Content Marketing as the marketing of the sender** via the description of products of a company or other topics with a reflection effect upon the image of the sender
- Different from achieving trust by advertising the company or the products directly

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## EXAMPLE: EXCERPT FROM BROCHURE PRESENTING APPLICATIONS (PAUL HORN GMBH)

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### Wenn Metall auf Kunststoff trifft

Ein Entwicklungstrend im Automobilbau sind elektrische Lenksysteme. Sie kommen ohne Hydraulikpumpe aus, was zu einer Senkung des Kraftstoffverbrauchs beiträgt und damit die Schadstoffemissionen eines Fahrzeugs nachhaltig senkt. Die konstruktive Besonderheit ist ein Ritzel aus Spezialkunststoff, welches auf eine Schnecke aus hochfestem Spezialstahl trifft. Da sich bei dieser Werkstoffkombination kein gegenseitiges „Einlaufen“ an den Flanken ergibt, kommt es darauf an, eine besonders präzise Geometrie und eine genau definierte Rauheit zu gewährleisten. **Horn** liefert **dafür** hochpräzise Fräser mit Wendepplatten, die zum einen die geometrisch perfekte Form sicherstellen und zum anderen genau die Oberflächenqualität liefern, die für eine dauerhaft einwandfreie Funktion entscheidend ist. Dazu kommt eine Verbesserung der Standzeit um 250 Prozent gegenüber bisher bekannten Bearbeitungsmethoden.

# CHOICE OF WORDS

*Promotional wording* (HORN's product)

1. Hochpräzise
2. Geometrisch perfekt
3. Einwandfreie Funktion
4. Verbesserung

- No repeated terms
- No explained terms

*Specialised terms* (both artefacts; 13 % of all)

1. Elektrische Lenksysteme
2. Hydraulikpumpe
3. Kraftstoffverbrauch
4. Schadstoffemission
5. Ritzel
6. Spezialkunststoff
7. Schnecke
8. Hochfester Spezialstahl
9. Flanken
10. Geometrie
11. Rauheit
12. Fräser
13. Wendeplatten
14. Oberflächenqualität
15. Standzeit



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# RUDIMENTARY FRAME: ARTEFACT

Slot 1: Characteristics

Slot 2: Function

Slot 3: Construction

Two artefacts: 1) Steering system 2) Cutter with cutting insert



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# ARTEFACT 1: STEERING SYSTEM

Cf. Next slide

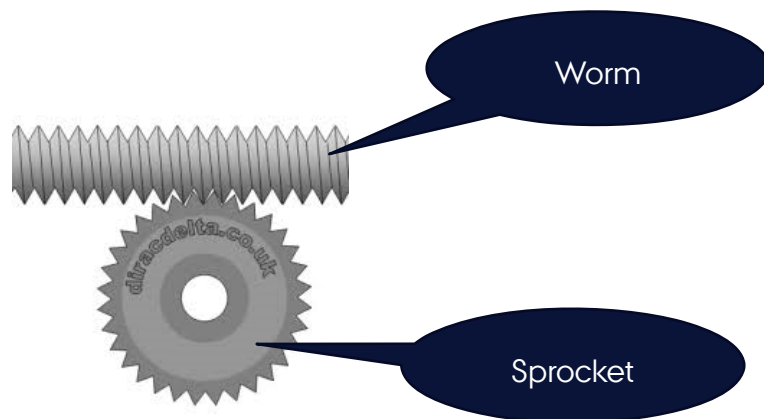
*Construction:* No hydraulic pump → *Function:* Lower fuel consumption → *Function:* Lower level of emissions

*Construction:* 1) Specialized 2) Consists of sprocket made of special plastic that meets worm of high-strength steel → *Characteristic:* No 'mutual "shake-down"' → *Characteristic:* Precise geometry necessary + precisely defined roughness necessary

## Result:

- In text: Background of artefact + construction details + causal consequences of these
- No explanation of functioning, only highlighting relevant construction details
- **Presuppose insight in details (= no explanation of terms)**
- **But still expressly mention consequences, not presupposed → Content Architecture**
- Focus upon problem that HORN's tool will solve

# WORM DRIVE



# ARTEFACT 2: CUTTER & CUTTING INSERT

*Characteristic:* highly precise

*Construction:* cutting insert

*Function (of insert):* guarantees geometrically perfect form

*Function (of insert):* creates required surface quality

*Characteristic (of insert):* improved endurance (250 %)

## Result:

- In Text: positive characteristics + adequate function + rudimentary construction
- **Focus upon (intended and wanted) consequences, not upon the functioning as such**



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# CONCLUSION

Indication of expertise is applied in the studied case (→ Trust!)

Promotional language is applied in the studied case (→ Trust?)

Presupposed concepts, but low degree of presupposed complexity → Publication for audience with mixed background

Preliminary result: **Expertise is used for PR purposes** → Content Marketing, Content Architecture



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