

CALL FOR PAPERS

Group & Organization Management

Special Issue on Gossip in / around Organizations

Due Date: December 1, 2008

**Guest Editors: Grant Michelson, Ad van
Iterson and Kathryn Waddington**

It has been fifteen years since Mike Noon and Rick Delbridge argued that gossip as a subject in management and organizations 'demands greater attention in the future in terms of theory and empirical research' (*Organization Studies*, 1993). They proposed that gossip was intrinsic to organizational life. To ignore its seemingly ubiquitous and pervasive character would be to limit our understanding and explanation of organizations and peoples' experience in organizations. Since then, there have been relatively few studies which have sought to engage with the topic of organizational gossip. Although some have explored the role of context on gossip (e.g. Tebbutt and Marchington, *Work, Employment and Society*, 1997) or how gossip is related to constructs such as power (e.g. Kurland and Pelled, *Academy of Management Review*, 2000), there seems still much to learn about the antecedents, processes and consequences of organizational gossip.

The aim of this special issue is to extend the study of organizational gossip by generating new insights about verbal and/or written gossip both within and between organizations. How, and in what ways, does gossip illuminate our understanding of individuals, teams, and organizations and the various relationships and dynamics between these different levels? To help address such questions we invite submissions from a wide spectrum of disciplinary and cultural/national perspectives.

We will welcome papers that examine how gossip is related to a number of important topics in the study of management and organizations. Such areas might include identity, reputation, emotion, stress, sensemaking, group behavior and dynamics, leadership, and change management. The parameters of the special issue allows for papers that address their research questions through both quantitative and qualitative approaches. However, all papers should provide rigorous and theoretically informed analyses of their subject matter.

Suggested topics might include the following:

- Gossip antecedents and processes
- The relationship between organizational gossip and other topics including trust, identity, emotion, voice, discipline, power, control and resistance
- Gendered understandings, rules and roles of organizational gossip
- Contexts of gossip including cross-cultural dimensions and meanings of gossip

- Organizational gossip as socialization, collaboration and/or competition
- The ethics of gossip in and around organizations
- The relationship between gossip and organizational knowledge/learning
- The contribution of gossip to social exclusion and victimization; distress and harm
- Team/organizational attempts to silence gossip and team/organizational benefits of gossip
- The role and influence played by the media and governments in shaping the wider social and global context of organizational gossip
- Various ambiguities and paradoxes about teams/organizations that are revealed by and through gossip
- Methodological challenges concerning the study of gossip in and around organizations

The above list is illustrative rather than exhaustive. Other proposals that help us better understand the purpose, nature, and consequences of gossip in/around organizations are also very welcome. Prospective authors are encouraged to approach the guest editors with proposals for papers. The review process will follow a two-stage approach: first, the guest editors will ensure the paper fits the general call and meets the usual high standard expected by the journal for an academic work. If these criteria are met, papers will then be double-blind refereed. The special issue will contain no more than 4-5 full-length papers.

All submissions should follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.) format. All papers should be submitted on-line with SageTrack (<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/gom>) and also send a copy of the paper to one of the guest editors: Grant Michelson (gmicelson@audencia.com), Ad van Iterson (a.vaniterson@os.unimaas.nl) or Kathryn Waddington (k.waddington@city.ac.uk).

The due date for submissions is December 1, 2008, but earlier submissions are welcome.