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# Audience perceptions of charismatic and non-charismatic oratory: The case of management gurus

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### Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to investigate whether people consider someone a charismatic speaker because they are deploying the generic features commonly identified as being associated with charismatic oratory in the literature, or whether the attribution of charisma is informed by factors which vary across different settings. Video-taped extracts from speeches given by seven people widely regarded as influential thought leaders “ Kenneth Blanchard, Stephen Covey, Daniel Goleman, Gary Hamel, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Tom Peters and Peter Senge “ were shown to different audiences. After viewing each extract they rated the extent to which they found the speaker charismatic or non-charismatic and why. In addition, the whole speeches and focal messages were content analysed for the presence a number of factors “ delivery, rhetorical techniques, abstraction and inclusion “ identified in the previous literature as

underpinning charismatic oratory. When the speeches are taken as a whole the speakers rated as charismatic differed significantly from their non-charismatic counterparts only in terms of delivery. For focal sentences delivery remains significant but in addition the speakers rated as charismatic use a higher proportion of rhetorical techniques. This has important implications for theory and practice that are elaborated.



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## Keywords

Charismatic oratory; Speaker effectiveness; Management gurus

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