



## Why do we argue - in order to seek the truth or solely to win an argument?

We daily experience small and huge lies presented to us through the media and in the business world. There always seems to be a twist in statistics, whether it is presented in political speeches or corporate targets. Has the pursuit for the sincere truth become something which belongs to the Age of Reason, where enlightenment and the belief that the mind could unravel the mysteries of the universe? Philosophers generally think that the use of reason in argumentation is directed to attaining the truth.

These players are taken to saying not what they believe, but what they want others to believe – not necessarily what is, but what works. Just listen to the news, watch advertisements and listen to politicians. Much of what you are exposed to, is in harsher terms: bullsh\*t (BS) - used to convince you to act in a certain way i.e. vote for a certain politician or consume a certain product.

Perhaps BS-ing has become 'one of the most salient features of our culture' (Harry Frankfurt). BS-ing differs from lying, in the sense that the liar knows what he is saying to be false, however the BS-er simply doesn't care – it's what he can get away with. There is so much more visible BS-ing today, because of the more open communicating via the Internet and social media. Everyone can send out their views and send their communication rapidly all over the globe.

Telling lies in business is not a new phenomenon; perhaps the world cannot function without little white lies to get through the day. Offices are competitive, meaning that you put your foot forward and sell yourself – which usually means stretching the truth.

This view is challenged by two behavioral scientists (Hugo Mercier and Dan Sperber's), who claim that people argue just to win. People are 'confirmation bias', meaning they focus on data that support a view they hold. In other words people find it difficult to stick to the rules of deductive logic and constantly make basic errors in statistical reasoning. So the evolutionary point of human reasoning is to win arguments, not reach the truth?

Well, it can hardly come as a surprise that people often argue just to win arguments. Justification is a matter of being able to convince other people that a claim is correct. This is definitely something we experience daily in advertising, politics and in the social media.



## Ask the Editor

Do you have a question you would like us to answer or a topic you would like us to discuss, please send an email to

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There is a fine balance in telling the truth in business. We should be careful and not start to believe the little white lies ourselves.

If we cannot really know for sure what is true, then at least we can be sincere. It ought to be possible to proceed as though it is achievable to think objectively and do one's best to present one's conclusions without significant distortion. Perhaps these assumptions may be hard to justify, but they contribute to a form of

communication that is very useful. One must make a determined effort to tell the authentic truth, even though everyone around is BS-ing. Presenting the truth as we see it, is a capacity that is available to everyone. So we argue, not solely to win, but because we want to be right and sincere. In this way we want to seek the truth as we see it.

## The future Workplace year 2025

The future will be less about general skills and more about in-depth mastery; less about working as a competitive, isolated individual and more about working collaboratively in a joined world; and less about focusing solely on a standard of living and more on the quality of experiences. The following five forces will affect the way we work in 2025, according to Lynda Gratton, London School of Economics professor:

- CO2 reduction and low carbon economy** – We already see this tendency in the business world. We no longer just take the flight to a meeting on the other side of the world, but use videoconference. Companies implement policies to become more environmentally friendly i.e. use less paper.
- Rapid technological change** – The use of smartphones and other technological development enables us to be online constantly and give a different frame for working than earlier i.e. The CEO who's abroad can be in contact with his staff back home.
- Increased globalization** – New strong economies will increasingly add value through innovation as well as low-cost manufacturing. Your closest colleague can be situated on the other side of the world. Much of the world will become joined.
- Demographic change** – We live longer and will have to work longer. This will bring into question our current assumptions about retirement, about the employment of the over-65s and about provisions of pension.
- Changes in lifestyle** – By 2025, we can expect that people be increasingly prepared to forge lifestyles based on their own needs rather than societal expectations. More people will work as freelancers and 'neo-nomads', expecting increasing autonomy and freedom.

NotaBene agrees that these tendencies are already present in the choice of workplace, however we believe there will be more focus on **integrity in the workplace** and social corporate responsibility. With society's expectations of responsible business and increasing enforcement, ensuring integrity has become critical to every organization. Recent scandals and the financial crisis demonstrate that efforts to prevent ethical breakdowns through relying on rules and controls works like nailing jelly to the wall. The Swiss based 'Integrity by Design', challenges conventional thinking on how to manage an organization for integrity, visit website: [www.integritybydesign.ch](http://www.integritybydesign.ch).

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