Talking Green: The Rhetoric of “Good Corporate Environmental Citizens”

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Abstract
Several corporations try to cast themselves as “good environmental citizens.” In this presentation I analyze and critique the ethos building strategies of three corporations, which have made loud claims in this respect. Classical and modern theories on ethos are used, and I argue that the mentioned companies use four overarching strategies: They claim to improve the world, they say they clean up their own act, they point to approval from others, and they argue that they care about you. The rhetoric is found wanting in some respects, and a yardstick for evaluating the forwarded claims is also suggested.

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