

Communication Planning and Project Management

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Course description

The course wants to prepare the participants to effectively apply strategic and creative communications skills. The main goal is to develop an awareness of the strategic nature of Corporate Communications, understood as a managerial function inside organizations. Students will also develop core Public Relations skills as planning, leadership, project management, writing and oral presentation.

The course will focus on Strategic planning and Communication skills and will discuss the relationship that PR has with Marketing, Advertising, and Human Resources departments.

ECTS Credits

4 ECTS Credits

Specific competences

- To understand the main models and principles of the PR and Communication theories.
- To learn how to think strategically and brainstorm.
- Understanding the role of Corporate Communication and Public Relations in business management.
- To identify the roles and functions of Corporate Communication professionals.
- To Know how to manage strategically public relations and communication programs.
- Capability of understanding the client's demands.
- Capability of identifying targets, providing strategic solutions.
- Capability of identifying procedures and phases on the development of a PR and communication campaign: briefing, strategy, creation and communication plan.
- Comprehension of PR as a communication process in an economic and social environment. 360° Communication concept

Learning outcomes

- Acquire an extensive knowledge of Communication Planning
- Know how to develop the acquired knowledge in order to plan, design, execute and evaluate a communication project
- Critically examine and evaluate PR theories and research.
- Engage actively in discussions on case studies

Content

1. INTRODUCTION:

- The need for Strategic Public Relations and Communication Management.
- Strategic Corporate Communication versus Tactic Corporate Communication.
- Communication management by objectives.
- Theories of PR: Why are them useful?
- PR vocabulary: reputation, image, propaganda...
- The role of persuasion on the modern era.

2. PUBLIC RELATIONS: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND DEFINITION

3. THE PR SYSTEM

- Clients.
- PR consultancies and Communication in-house department. Organizational structures of main PR agencies. Internal PR departments.
- Publics and audiences.

4. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Project-driven organizations versus non-project driven organizations
- Project problem solving
- The management of conflicts
- Scheduling

5. COMMUNICATION PLANNING:

- Research:

Master of Arts in Communication Management

- Understanding the importance of research in the PR process.
Methods and techniques.
 - Analyzing the situation.
 - Analyzing the organization.
 - Analyzing the publics (public, market, audience and stakeholders). Elaborating the publics map.
- Strategy:
 - Identification of the different elements of a PR Strategic plan: bases, proceedings and characteristics.
 - Mission versus Vision
 - Goals
 - Objectives
 - Strategy
 - Tactics
 - Messages development.
- Action:
 - Implementation of the PR plan
 - Understanding the role of an effective communication on the PR process. Media and targets.
- Evaluation:
 - Measuring the different elements of the communication process.

6. PR AND COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES & SECTORS

- Corporate Communication.
- Internal Communication.
- Media Relations.
- Lobby & Public affairs.
- Crisis Communication & Issues Management.
- Marketing Communication.
- Event Management.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- Entertainment, Sport, Tourism and PR.
- Politics, Government and PR.
- Global Public Relations.
- Nonprofit, Health, and Education.

7. PR ETHICS

- Definition and ethical codes.

Method of presentation

In-class activities (30 hours):

- Lectures (10 hours)

- Debates and class discussion (3 hours)
- Practical exercises and activities (10 hours)
- Tutorials (4 hours)
- Visits of PR and communication practitioners (3 hours)

Out-of-class activities (70 hours):

Personal study & work: (70 hours)

The teaching method includes traditional lectures with case-studies, debates and class discussion from previous readings, and practical activities.

Course assessment

The evaluation includes the following elements:

1. **Pair-work assignment:** Design of a Communication Plan (40% of final grade)
2. **Pair-work assignment:** PR Agency Credentials Presentation (10% of final grade)
3. **Individual assignment:** Analysis of a PR campaign (5 pages maximum) (40% of final grade)
4. **Participation in class discussion** (10% of final grade)

Assignments 1 and 2 will be developed during classes, under the supervision of both professors.

Exercise 1 should include the following aspects:

- Research (analysis of the situation)
- Publics map

- Goals
- Strategy
- Message
- PR Techniques and tactics
- Actions
- Evaluation

Each one of the included actions should be properly explained and justified, according to the selected strategy.

Progress: The Communication Plan will be developed through four stages that will be evaluated as follows:

Stage 1: Research(10%)

Stage 2: Strategy (10%)

Stage 3: Action (10%)

Stage 4: Evaluation (10%)

Course schedule

[to be confirmed]

Required reading

Smith, R. D. (2018). *Strategic planning for public relations*. Routledge.

Kerzner, H., & Kerzner, H. R. (2017). *Project management: a systems approach to planning, scheduling, and controlling*. John Wiley & Sons [some chapters]

Recommended reading

Austin, Erica Weintraub, and Bruce E. Pinkleton. *Strategic public relations management: Planning and managing effective communication programs*. Routledge, 2006.

Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2009). *PR strategy and application: Managing influence*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Cutlip, S. M., Center, A. H., & Broom, G. M. (2006). *Effective public relations*. Prentice-Hall international editions.

Gregory, A., & Willis, P. (2013). *Strategic public relations leadership*. Routledge.

Heath, R. L. (ed.). *Encyclopedia of public relations*. Sage Publications, 2013.

L'Etang, J. (2006). Public relations and rhetoric. *The future of excellence in public relations and communication management: Challenges for the next generation*, 359-371.

Meredith, J. R., & Mantel Jr, S. J. (2011). *Project management: a managerial approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

Munns, A. K., & Bjeirmi, B. F. (1996). The role of project management in achieving project success. *International journal of project management*, 14(2), 81-87.

Pieczka, M., & L'Etang, J. (2006). Public relations and the question of professionalism. *Public relations: Critical debates and contemporary practice*, 265-278.

Wilcox, D. H., Cameron, G. T., & Reber, B. H. (2014). *Public relations: Strategies and tactics*, Pearson, Boston.