

Syllabus of Record



Program: CET Shanghai

Course Code / Title: (SH/BUSN 310) Corporate Communication

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Business Administration and Management / Communication and Media Studies, Public Relations

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description

To match today's world of highly digitized, "always on" information exchange, the field of corporate communication has undergone a dramatic transformation, emerging with increased impact on the image, business model, and profitability of companies. This course aims to increase awareness of the importance of strategic communication in the business and management contexts. The course demonstrates how companies and other organizations generate favorable points of view among all stakeholders through explaining organizational mission, vision, and values, and through disseminating messages, images, and actions designed for specific audiences.

Students develop an in-depth understanding of both external communication systems, including public relations, marketing, political communication, media relations, and social media management, as well as internal communication systems such as interpersonal and cross-cultural communication. The course also explores the importance of integrated communication and trust, the theory of stakeholder management, and other key theoretical frameworks from the studies of core communication and sociolinguistics to the business environment.

Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- articulate and discuss the importance of corporate communication in terms of corporate identity, image, and reputation.
- understand and apply the Stakeholder Management Theory to corporate communication campaigns.
- identify the key drivers of corporate communication and their potential influence on internal and external communication strategies.
- conceptualize the role of "trust" and the incorporation of "sense of purpose" into corporate communication.
- analyze and critique past and current corporate communication campaigns against a range of diverse measurement criterion.
- prepare and deliver an oral and written report for a corporate communication campaign.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend each class as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Active participation is essential. Students are to read all assigned materials before each class session and

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come prepared to participate thoughtfully in class discussions. Reading assignments may average 50-80 pages per class. Graded assignments include:

- **Group Written Report:** Students work in small groups to analyze a corporate communication campaign and prepare a detailed report of 3,000 words offering thoughtful, creative, and feasible suggestions for further improvement. Students select a company that has recently faced a serious internal or external issue and analyze the company's ability to resolve the issue and improve public perception via corporate communication. Thinking as consultants, they offer suggestions for how the company could have achieved greater success with its communication campaign. Finally, the group report offers a roadmap of communication strategies to be implemented in the next 6-12 months.
- **Group Oral Presentation:** Students work in small groups to prepare a 12-16 minute oral presentation plus Q&A based on the same content as the written report. The presentation format emphasizes the three components of Big Idea, Support Arguments, and Call to Action. Students receive coaching in effective presentation skills. Teams are evaluated for presentation content, structure, and research rigor; individual marks will be given for individual presentation performance.
- **Final exam:** Students choose from a selection of essay topics for the final exam.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Participation: 20%
- Oral Presentation: 25%
- Written Report: 25%
- Final exam: 30%

Readings

Argenti, Paul. *Corporate Communication*. 8th ed. New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2015.

Berger, Jonah. "Bad Reviews Can Boost Sales. Here's Why." *Harvard Business Review*. March 2012. Accessed July 1, 2020.
<https://hbr.org/2012/03/bad-reviews-can-boost-sales-heres-why>

Brendl, C. Miguel, Prashant Malaviya, Laszlo Szocs, and Swati Srivastava. "Lay's Potato Chips in Hungary (A): Creating Awareness and Building Brand Image at Product Launch." Insead Case INS439. Fontainebleau, France: INSEAD Publishing, 2013.

Coombs, Timothy W. "The Value of Communication During a Crisis: Insights From Strategic Communication Research." Business Horizons Case BH655. *Business Horizons* 58, no. 2 (2015): 141-148.

Diggs-Brown, Barbara. *The PR Style Guide: Formats for Public Relations Practice*. 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012.

Edelman. *Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Brand Trust in 2020*. Edelman, 2020. Accessed July 1, 2020. <https://www.edelman.com/research/brand-trust-2020#top>

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Fernandez, Juan Antonio, and Laurie Underwood. *China CEO II: Voices of Experience from 25 Top Executives Leading MNCs in China*. Singapore: John Wiley & Sons, 2020.

Friedman, Milton, and Rose D. Friedman. *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement*. New York, NY: Harcourt, 1990.

Gregory, Anne. *Planning and Managing Public Relations Campaigns, A Strategic Approach*. 5th ed. London: Kogan Page, 2020.

Hammond, John S. "Learning by the Case Method." Harvard Business School Case 376-241, April 1976.

Harvard Business Review. "9 Employee Engagement Archetypes." Filmed February 4, 2016. Video, 1:27. <https://hbr.org/video/4738869655001/9-employee-engagement-archetypes>

Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation. *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Communication*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2013.

Heath, Chip, and Dan Heath. *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*. New York: Random House, 2007.

Henderson, Rebecca, and Frederik Nellesmann. "Sustainable Tea at Unilever." Harvard Business School Case 712-438, November 2012.

Ignatius, Adi. "Future Economy Project: Finding Practicality in Sustainability. Q&A with Doug McMillon." *Harvard Business Review*, November 2017. Accessed July 1, 2020. <https://hbr.org/2017/11/the-future-economy-project-qa-with-doug-mcmillon>

Keinan, Anat, Jill Avery, Fiona Wilson, and Michael I. Norton. "EILEEN FISHER: Repositioning the Brand." Harvard Business School Case 512-085. Revised May 2012.

Mayo, Anthony, and Heather Beckam. "Marie Jackson: Revitalizing Renfield Farms." Harvard Business School Brief Case 915-555. June 2015.

McKinsey & Company. "Creating a High Performance Culture." October 3, 2017. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/our-insights/creating-a-high-performance-culture>

Rielly, Ann H., and Katherine Hynan. "Corporate Communication, Sustainability, and Social Media: It's Not Easy (Really) Being Green." *Business Horizons* 57, No. 6 (November–December 2014): 747-758.

Rubin, James R., and Barbara Carmichael. "Aetna Inc.: Managing Inherent Enterprise Risks Through Stakeholder Management (A)." Darden School of Business Case UV3935. November 2009.

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Sinclair, Upton. *The Jungle*. Mineola, NY: Dover Thrift Editions, 2001.

Strunk, William Jr. *The Elements of Style*. Edited by Richard De A'Morelli. Vancouver, Canada: Spectrum Ink Publishing, 2018.

Winkler, Matthew, and Jennifer Sondag. *The Bloomberg Way: A Guide for Reporters and Editors*. 13th ed. New York, NY: Bloomberg Press, 2014.

Zeng, Ming. "Alibaba and the Future of Business: Lessons from China's Innovative Digital Giant." *Harvard Business Review*. September-October 2018.
<https://hbr.org/2018/09/alibaba-and-the-future-of-business>

Outline of Course Content

Topic 1 – Introduction to the Course and Field

- Why corporate communication matter
- What success and failure mean for companies
- How corporate communication fluctuates over time
- Introduction to the concept of trust

Topic 2 – History of Corporate Communication

- Before regulation; the era of muckraking
- The birth of corporate communications
- The merging of public relations and corporate communications
- Fluctuations in public trust for corporate messaging

Topic 3 – Corporate Communication Fundamentals

- Integrated framework for managing communication
- Communication drivers: market, environment, communication channels, organizational
- Consolidated Corporate Communication Strategy Framework
- Convergence of marketing and public relations
- From tactical to strategic communication
- Organizational positioning
- The AIM framework for strategic communication

Topic 4 – Stakeholder Management Theory and Corporate Identity

- Introduction to Milton Friedman and Douglas Freeman
- Corporate identity, image, and reputation
- Corporate identity model
- Corporate rebranding

Topic 5 – Media Relations

- Identity management model
- Corporate media relations management

Topic 6 – Social Media

- Impact of social media on traditional media
- Comparative consumer behavior; social media in the US and China

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Topic 7 – Internal Communication

- Evolution; the rise of employee engagement and employee experience
- New ways of working (NWOW) and flat organizations
- Drivers of sustainable employee engagement

Topic 8 – Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

- UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Science-based targets
- Evolution of CSR reporting and the rise of reputation tracking
- Introduction to fair trade

Topic 10 – Government Relations

- Corporate communication and government regulation

Topic 11 – Crisis Communication

- Crisis management processes and norms
- How and why crisis communication differs from standard corporate communication
- Crisis holding statements, press releases, and live briefings
- Social media and crisis communication

Topic 12 – Future trends in Corporate Communication

- Impact of digital tribes and coopting of KOLs
- Native advertising and product placement controversies
- Convergence of online-to-offline