ACADEMIC COURSE WINTER SEMESTER 2021
MASTER COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT, MODULE 06-005-537

Global Corporate Communications (S)

Prof. Dr. Christof E. Ehrhart

Friday, 10:15–17.45hrs, Nikolaistr. 27-19, Room 1.01, on the following dates:
Examination: Portfolio; written part due on 25.03.2022.

Topic
The seminar addresses current challenges and solutions for strategic communication in
global companies. Practical knowledge on the success factors of international corporate
communications will be conveyed and tested along case studies. The focus will be on long-
term communication strategies, tactical communication planning, organizing the com-
munication function and departments, and leadership culture in communication
management. Specifically, the following topics will be addressed based on current debates and
literature introduced in the parallel course “International Research in Communication
Management” in this module:
– Digitalization: Building reputation, trust and relationships in a digital world
  characterized by virtualized and automated communication environments;
– Sustainability: Meeting stakeholder expectations and activism while facing global
  sustainability challenges including environmental, social and governance goals;
– Societal and political change: Managing public affairs in times of antagonistic
  international relations, confrontational trends in politics, and tribalization of society.

Learning objectives
Upon completion of the module, students will be able to understand challenges of
communication management in international contexts and to design solutions. In addition,
they will be able to bridge the gap between debates in academia and society on the one
hand and practical demands for communication leaders and practitioners on the other.
Students will be able to classify the significance of current debates for companies and their
communications, and they will be able to develop strategic concepts for addressing such
debates by means of corporate communications. The aim is to recognize not only the
professional requirements for excellent corporate communications, but also the unfolding
changes in the global environment for communications.

Method
The seminar is based on interactive discussions and group work. Essential insights into the
practice of global corporate communications and dimensions of the fundamental change
in corporate communications will be conveyed by the lecturer in the first session. In a
second step, students are asked to develop their own ideas and perspectives for specific
challenges (listed below) within the three topical areas of digitalization, sustainability and
societal and political change. The international research literature discussed in the parallel
course in this module can serve as a starting point, but additional sources need to be identified. 10 teams with three students each will be formed to work on these challenges. In the second session, the teams will present their own positions and defend them against critical questions from fellow students. Finally, the task is to develop solutions for the specific challenges in the groups and to present it during one of the last two sessions. Each group will consider the feedback from the presentations and prepare a final paper that presents their solution in writing.

Module overview and examination
This course is part of the module “International Communication”. Students enrolled have to attend both classes. Examination: Portfolio, composed of a) case study solution with presentation (in the seminar), b) presentation, moderation or protocol (in the lecture). Grading is based on a); presentations, moderations and notes have to be assessed as “passed”. Regular attendance during this course is required, as study regulations require 30 hours of presence time for acquiring credit points in this course. Please inform the lecturer in any case of illness etc. via e-mail. The written study solution has to be submitted until 25.03.2022 digitally (PDF via e-mail to Prof. Ehrhart and Prof. Zerfass) and in print (via post or personally to Ms Böhland).

Digital platforms
This course will be taught in presence, but we will be able to switch to hybrid or digital teaching if necessary. Please make sure that you can use zoom.us (https://zoom.us/) to its full extent. You will need a computer or notebook with camera, microphone and speakers as well as a stable WLAN access. Please register free of charge with your university e-mail address at zoom.us in advance and test the functionalities.

Topics
10 groups with 3 (or 2) students each will be formed to address one of the challenges below. These are preliminary outlines that might be modified or detailed during the seminar. Topics fall into two categories:
– The advising topics ask students to research the challenge at hand and identify potential implications for global companies and their communications at large. Imagine that the trend at hand pops up in the public discourse or during a top management meeting, and the CEO asks your team what this means for the company and its communication strategy, and you ask yourself what this means for the set-up, leadership and culture of the communication function. Your task is to give a concise overview, outline potential areas of action, and suggest how priorities can be identified and internal projects designed to address the challenge.
– The conceptual topics ask students to research the challenge at hand and its implications for corporate communication strategies of a specific industry. Imagine that you are in charge of global communications in such an industry, or that you are a strategic consultant working for clients in the industry. You ask yourself whether you can address the challenge through communication strategies and tactics. Your task is to develop a communication concept.

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Advise</td>
<td>Reputation management and building trust in a digital world: Strategic opportunities and risks of data-based communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>Building reputation in a digital world: AI-based communication strategies for multiple stakeholders. A concept for the (IT industry, automotive industry, pharmaceutical industry)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>Disrupting internal communications? New ways to inform, connect and engage employees after the pandemic. A concept for the (IT industry, automotive industry, pharmaceutical industry)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Advise</td>
<td>Sustainability: Meeting stakeholder expectations and activism while facing global sustainability challenges including environmental, social and governance goals</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>Dealing with activism: Facing critical stakeholder campaigns against inequality with credible communication. A concept for the (IT industry, automotive industry, pharmaceutical industry)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>Stakeholder engagement: Using virtual formats for connecting with activists and opinion-makers. A concept for the (IT industry, automotive industry, pharmaceutical industry)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Advise</td>
<td>Societal and political change: Managing public affairs in times of antagonistic international relations, confrontational trends in politics, and tribalization of society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>Keeping the license to operate: The case for purpose-driven public affairs. A concept for the (IT industry, automotive industry, pharmaceutical industry)</td>
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Campaigning for legitimacy? – Matching risks and opportunities of corporate political advocacy. A concept for the (IT industry, automotive industry, pharmaceutical industry)

Contact
Please contact Professor Ehrhart via e-Mail christof.ehrhart@uni-leipzig.de or during the seminar sessions.

Course material
There is no Moodle course for this seminar. Basic research literature for the topics in this seminar will be discussed in the parallel course “International Research in Communication Management” and provided there via Moodle. The following overview texts in German language are also available there:


Furthermore, students are also invited to read:
