



**ACADEMIC COURSE WINTER SEMESTER 2021  
MASTER COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT, MODULE 06-005-542**

**Strategic Communication:  
Value Creation and Business Models for Communications (V)**

**Prof. Dr. Ansgar Zerfaß**

Monday, 15:15–16.45hrs, Nikolaistr. 27-19, Room 1.06, on the following dates:  
22.11.2021, 29.11.2021, 06.12.2021, 13.12.2021,  
10.01.2022, 17.01.2022, 18.01.2022, 24.01.2022, 31.01.2022  
Written exam for the module on February 22, Tuesday, 09:15–11.15hrs.

**Topic**

This course explores the contribution of communication to value creation for corporations and other organizations. Every inhouse communicator and every consultant should be able to explain organizational leaders or (internal) clients why, when and how it makes sense to use scarce resources for communication activities.

Commonplaces like the positive impact of reputation or relationships for success, positive effects in the media or stakeholder reactions are not sufficient. What is needed internally is a business model for communications – a model that describes the rationale of how a communication department creates, delivers, and captures value for an organization. This will be different for any organization depending on its strategy and stakeholders, and it might change over time. In a similar way, communication agencies and consultancies need profitable business models that deliver value-creating services for their clients.

The course introduces core concepts like shareholder and stakeholder value, value creation, business model design, and the use of strategic thinking for communications. It will discuss the challenges of aligning communication activities to organizational goals; setting-up structures, processes and digital infrastructures for communications; utilizing techniques to position communication departments and communicators at the top and throughout the organization; creating valuable products and services in competitive environments; and measuring the success of communications.

**Learning objectives**

After finishing the course, students will be able to a) understand the principles of strategic thinking for corporate and organizational communications, and how this helps to guide practical decisions in today's turbulent world; b) analyze existing business models for communications in organizations and for consultancies; c) explain methods for aligning communication to organizational goals; d) know how to position communication departments, agencies and communicators; e) enhance their personal profiles and competencies as communicators; and f) utilize the power of communications for organizational value creation both effectively and efficiently.

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## Method

The course is organized as a lecture with integrated discussions. Students should read the relevant literature *prior* to each session. Current research and developments in the professional field will be included in the debate. As such, participants are encouraged to browse recent issues of academic journals (Academy of Management Review; Corporate Communications – An International Journal, Communication Management, Harvard Business Review; International Journal of Strategic Communication, Public Relations Review; Long Range Planning; Strategic Management Journal; most of them are available online at the Leipzig University Library) and follow the discussion in industry magazines, esp. those focusing on managing communication departments and agencies.

## Module overview and course assessment

This course is part of the module “Strategic Communication”. Students enrolled have to attend both classes and take an exam. Assessment: Written exam (Klausur, 120 min.) in English, dealing with the content of both courses and the accompanying literature. Regular attendance during this course is required, as study regulations require 15 hours of presence time for acquiring credit points in this course. Please inform the instructor in any case of illness etc. via e-mail.

## Exchange students / Guest students

This course and module are offered in English; they expand the offerings at the Institute for Communication and Media Studies for international students. Please note that this is a graduate level (master) course and knowledge about strategic communication, organizational communication, public relations, etc., is required. Students should enroll for the overall module between September 29 and October 8 via AlmaWeb or by contacting the lecturers. Exchange students may receive a certificate of attendance (3 ECTS), which requires full attendance during every session, and a short evaluation meeting with the instructor. Alternatively, they might take the written exam to receive a grade and 10 ECTS (if passed). Please approach the module leader, Professor Hoffmann, via e-Mail until January 17 latest to arrange evaluation meetings or exams.

## Digital platforms

Access passwords for Moodle and Zoom (see below) will be sent by e-mail to all registered students. 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.

## Schedule

<b>Conceptual foundations: Strategic communication from an organizational perspective</b>	
Mon 22.11.2021	<b>Value creation and strategic thinking</b> <i>Literature:</i> <i>Gulbrandsen &amp; Just, 2020; Ragas &amp; Culp, 2021a; Zerfass et al., 2018; Zerfass &amp; Link, 2022b</i>
Mon 29.11.2021	<b>Aligning communication and organizational goals</b> <i>Literature:</i> <i>Volk &amp; Zerfass, 2018; Zerfass et al., 2022</i> <i>Additional reading:</i> <i>Zerfass &amp; Viertmann, 2017</i>
Mon 06.12.2021	<b>Performance measurement and evaluation</b> <i>Literature:</i> <i>Buhmann &amp; Volk, 2022; Zerfass, 2018</i> <i>Additional reading:</i> <i>Buhmann et al., 2019</i>
<b>Functional perspective: Creating valuable communication services and products</b>	
Mon 13.12.2021	<b>Influencing and engaging stakeholders / Using insights and expertise</b> <i>Literature:</i> <i>Holtzhausen et al., 2021; Borner &amp; Zerfass, 2018</i> <i>Additional reading:</i> <i>Macnamara, 2020; Zerfass &amp; Franke, 2013</i>

<b>Individual perspective: Developing practitioners' competencies and mindset</b>	
Mon 10.01.2022	<p><b>Roles and competencies of communicators</b></p> <p><i>Literature:</i> Nothhaft, 2010; Zerfass &amp; Volk, 2017</p> <p><i>Additional readings:</i> Falkheimer et al., 2016; Zerfass et al., 2020; Zerfass et al., 2021</p>
<b>Market perspective: Developing successful strategies in the communications industry</b>	
Mon 17.01.2022	<p>15:15–16:15h</p> <p><b>Guest lecture</b></p> <p><i>”Positioning communication agencies in a dynamic market environment”</i></p> <p>Christiane Schulz, CEO, Edelman Germany, Berlin</p> <p>16:15–16:45h</p> <p><b>Business models for communication agencies and consultants</b></p> <p><i>Literature:</i> de Man et al., 2016; Hoffjann et al., 2021; Ragas &amp; Culp, 2021b</p>
<b>Organizational perspective: Designing excellent communication departments</b>	
Mon 24.01.2022	<p><b>Business models for communications in organizations</b></p> <p><i>Literature:</i> Zerfass &amp; Link, 2022a, 2022b; Brockhaus &amp; Zerfass, 2021</p> <p><i>Additional reading:</i> Ragas &amp; Culp, 2021c</p>
Thu 27.01.2022 14:00–17.30hrs Online	<p><b>Voluntary in-depth session (Virtual group exercise)</b></p> <p><i>“Analyzing business models for communications – A case study”</i></p> <p>Christoph Lautenbach &amp; Fiona Vaaßen Lautenbach Sass, Frankfurt am Main</p>
<b>Conclusion and outlook: Positioning communications as a value driver</b>	
Mon 31.01.2022	<p>16:15–16:45h</p> <p><b>Guest lecture</b></p> <p><i>”Positioning a communication department as valuable business partner”</i></p> <p>Matthias Michael Reinig, Head of Group Communications, Boehringer Ingelheim, Ingelheim</p> <p>15:15–16:15h</p> <p><b>Current debates, future trends and topics for research</b></p> <p><i>Literature:</i> Academic Society for Management &amp; Communication, 2022; Tench &amp; Waddington, 2021</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	
Tue 22.02.2022 09:15–11.15hrs	<p>Details will be announced in the course “Communication Management and Organizational Communication: Theories and Concepts”</p>

### Contact

Professor Zerfass offers regular consultation hours; please visit <https://bit.ly/StratKomm> to see details.

## Course material

The literature and presentation slides are available for download on the learning platform Moodle at <https://moodle2.uni-leipzig.de> > Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften und Philosophie > Institut für Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaft > Abteilung Communication Management > Wintersemester 2021. The password will be sent to everybody enrolled in the course.

## Literature (required for all students; relevant for assessments; available on Moodle)

- Academic Society for Management & Communication (Ed.). (2022). *Communications Trend Radar 2022: Language awareness, synthetic media, closed communication, cybersecurity & gigification* (Communication Insights, Issue 13). Leipzig.
- Borner, M., & Zerfass, A. (2018). The power of listening in corporate communications: Theoretical foundations of corporate listening as a strategic mode of communication. In S. Bowman, A. Crookes, Ø. Ihlen & S. Romenti (Eds.), *Public relations and the power of creativity: strategic opportunities, innovation and critical challenges* (pp. 3–22). Emerald.
- Brockhaus, J., & Zerfass, A. (2021). Strengthening the role of communication departments: A framework for positioning communication departments at the top of and throughout organizations. *Corporate Communications – An International Journal*, 26. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-02-2021-0021>
- Buhmann, A., & Volk, S. C. (2022). Measurement and evaluation: Framework, methods, and critique. In J. Falkheimer & M. Heide (Eds.), *Research handbook of strategic communication*. Edward Elgar.
- Buhmann, A., Macnamara, J., & Zerfass, A. (2019). Reviewing the ‘march to standards’ in public relations: A comparative analysis of four seminal measurement and evaluation initiatives. *Public Relations Review*, 45(4), 10825.
- de Man, A.-P., de Man, M., & Stoppelenburg, A. (2016). *The characteristics of new business models in consulting: An analysis of practice*. Paper presented at the Academy of Management Conference, 8–10 August 2016, Anaheim, CA, USA.
- Falkheimer, J., Heide, M., Simonsson, C., Zerfass, A., & Verhoeven, P. (2016). Doing the right things or doing things right? Paradoxes and Swedish communication professionals’ roles and challenges. *Corporate Communications – An International Journal*, 21(2), 142–159.
- Gulbrandsen, I. T., & Just, S. (2020). *Strategizing communication: Theory and practice (2nd ed.)*. *Samfundslitteratur*. (Chapter 1: Strategizing communication; pp. 17–50; Chapter 2: Strategy as deliberate decision, pp. 65–97; Chapter 4: Strategy as emergent action, pp. 145–175)
- Hoffjann, O., Hoffstedde K., & Jaworek, F. (2021). Ready for the unexpected: theoretical framework and empirical findings on communication consulting. *Journal of Communication Management*, 25(1), 1–17.
- Holtzhausen, D., Fullerton, J. A., Lewis, B. K., & Shipka, D. (2021). *Principles of strategic communication*. Routledge. (Chapters 9: Message tactics, pp. 190–216; Chapter 10: Traditional media, pp. 217–245; Chapter 11: Evolving media, pp. 246–275).
- Macnamara, J. (2020). Corporate listening: unlocking insights from VOC, VOE and VOS for mutual benefits. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 25(3), 377–393.
- Nothhaft, H. (2010). Communication management as a second-order management function: Roles and functions of the communication executive – results from a shadowing study. *Journal of Communication Management*, 14(2), 127–140.
- Ragas, M. W., & Culp, R. (2021a). Business acumen for strategic communicators. Emerald. (Chapter 1: Strategic communication and business acumen, pp. 3–16)
- Ragas, M. W., & Culp, R. (2021b). Business acumen for strategic communicators. Emerald. (Chapter 11: Business models – Strategic communication agencies and consultancies; pp. 159–176).
- Ragas, M. W., & Culp, R. (2021c). Business acumen for strategic communicators. Emerald. (Chapter 12: Business models – In-house departments and teams; pp. 177–194).
- Tench, R., & Waddington, S. (2021). Future issues for PR and strategic communication. In R. Tench & S. Waddington (Eds.), *Exploring public relations and management communication* (5th ed., pp. 591–610). Pearson.
- Volk, S. C., & Zerfass, A. (2018). Alignment: Revisiting a key concept in strategic communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 12(4), 433–451.
- Zerfass, A. (2018). 战略传播的测量、评估和控制 [Measurement, evaluation and controlling of strategic communication]. In X. Chen (Ed.), *中国公共关系学 [Public relations theories for contemporary China]* (pp. 390–410). Communication University of China Press. (English translation)
- Zerfass, A., & Franke, N. (2013). Enabling, advising, supporting, executing: A theoretical framework for internal communication consulting within organizations. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 7(2), 118–135.
- Zerfass, A., & Link, J. (2022a). *Unpublished manuscript*. Leipzig University.
- Zerfass, A., & Link, J. (2022b). Communication management: Structures, processes and business models for value creation through corporate communications. In J. Falkheimer & M. Heide (Eds.), *Research handbook of strategic communication*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

- Zerfass, A., & Viertmann, C. (2017). Creating business value through corporate communication: A theory-based framework and its practical application. *Journal of Communication Management*, 21(1), 86–91.
- Zerfass, A., & Volk, S. C. (2017). The boundary spanner. *Communication Director*, 12(4), 79–83.
- Zerfass, A., Buhmann, A., Tench, R., Verčič, D., & Moreno, A. (2021). *European Communication Monitor 2021. CommTech and digital infrastructure, video-conferencing, and future roles for communication professionals. Results of a survey in 46 countries*. Brussels: EUPRERA/EACD. (Chapter: Future roles for communication professionals, pp. 46–69)
- Zerfass, A., Verčič, D., Nothhaft, H., & Werder, K. P. (2018). Strategic communication: Defining the field and its contribution to research and practice. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 12(4), 487–505.
- Zerfass, A., Verhoeven, P., Moreno, A., Tench, R., & Verčič, D. (2020). *European Communication Monitor 2020. Ethical challenges, gender issues, cyber security, and competence gaps in strategic communication. Results of survey in 44 countries*. Brussels: EUPRERA/EACD. (Chapter: Competency development: Status quo and future needs, pp. 80–97)
- Zerfass, A., Volk, S. C., Meng, J., & Chen, P. (2022). *Toolbox communication management: Thinking tools and methods for managing corporate communications*. Springer. (Excerpts from the manuscript)