



**ACADEMIC COURSE WINTER SEMESTER 2023
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. 27–29, Room 1.01,
on the following dates: 20.11., 04.12., 11.12., 18.12.2023;
08.01., 15.01., 22.01. 29.01.2024.

Written exam for the module on February 20, 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; etc.) 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 27 and October 2 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 24 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.

Schedule

Conceptual foundations: Strategic communication from an organizational perspective	
20.11.2023	Business acumen, value creation and strategic thinking <i>Literature:</i> <i>Gulbrandsen & Just, 2020 (Chapter 1); Gulbrandsen & Just, 2020 (Chapter 2, 3); Ragas & Culp, 2021a; Zerfass et al., 2018; Zerfass & Link, 2022b</i>
04.12.2023	Aligning communication and organizational goals <i>Literature:</i> <i>Volk & Zerfass, 2018; Zerfass et al., n.d.</i> <i>Additional reading:</i> <i>Zerfass & Viertmann, 2017</i>
11.12.2022	Performance measurement and evaluation <i>Literature:</i> <i>Buhmann & Volk, 2023; Zerfass, 2018</i> <i>Additional reading:</i> <i>Buhmann et al., 2019</i>
Functional perspective: Creating valuable communication services and products	
18.12.2022	Stakeholder communications & Advising and coaching internal clients <i>Literature:</i> <i>Holtzhausen et al., 2021; Borner & Zerfass, 2018</i> <i>Additional readings:</i> <i>Macnamara, 2020; Zerfass & Franke, 2013</i>

Individual perspective: Developing practitioners' competencies and mindset	
08.01.2023	<p>Roles, functions, competencies, and leadership characteristics of communicators</p> <p><i>Literature:</i> <u>Nothhaft, 2010; Zerfass & Volk, 2017</u></p> <p><i>Additional readings:</i> <u>Falkheimer et al., 2016; Zerfass et al., 2020; Zerfass et al., 2021</u></p>
Organizational perspective: Designing excellent communication departments	
15.01.2024	<p>Business models for communications in organizations</p> <p><i>Literature:</i> <u>Zerfass & Link, 2022; Zerfass & Link, 2022a</u></p> <p><i>Additional reading:</i> <u>Ragas & Culp, 2021c</u></p>
Market perspective: Developing successful strategies in the communications industry	
22.01.2024	<p>15:15–16:15h</p> <p>Guest lecture</p> <p><i>"Communication agencies: The market, business models, and drivers of success"</i></p> <p>Hanning Kempe, FleishmanHillard</p> <p>Hanning Kempe is General Managing Director of FleishmanHillard Germany and Vice President of GPRA, the association of Germany's leading communications agencies. FleishmanHillard (part of Omnicom Group) is an international communications consultancy with offices in 30 countries on several continents. Hanning Kempe is recognized as an executive communications consultant in all aspects of dialogue management, corporate strategy development, corporate, change and crisis communications and issues management. His main emphasis is on government, pharma, technology and FMCG. Before joining the agency he served as spokesperson for the CDU, the Minister of Defense in Germany and the United Nations Mission in Somalia. He was Vice President Corporate Communications at ABB Ltd., Managing Partner of Zurich based Opon Communication and CEO of Grayling Germany & Switzerland.</p> <p>16:15–16:45h</p> <p>Business models for communication agencies, consultants, and service providers</p> <p><i>Literature:</i> <u>Man et al., 2016; Hoffjann et al., 2021; Ragas & Culp, 2021b</u></p>
Conclusion and outlook: Positioning communications as a value driver in a changing world	
29.01.2024	<p>Positioning communication departments and future-proofing communications</p> <p><i>Literature:</i> <u>Brockhaus & Zerfass, 2022; Stieglitz et al., 2022; Tench & Waddington, 2021</u></p> <p>Course evaluation</p>
Assessment	
20.02.2024	Details will be announced in the course.

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/course/view.php?id=33763>. The password will be sent to enrolled students.

Literature (available on Moodle; sources underlined in the plan above are most relevant for the exam)

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. (2022). Strengthening the role of communication departments: A framework for positioning communication departments at the top of and throughout organizations. *Corporate Communications – An International Journal*, 27(1), 53–70.
- Buhmann, A., & Volk, S. C. (2022). Measurement and evaluation: Framework, methods, and critique. In J. Falkheimer & M. Heide (Eds.), *Research handbook of strategic communication* (pp. 475–489). 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.
- 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.
- Man, A.-P. de, Man, M. de, & 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.
- 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 accumen for strategic communicators. Emerald. (Chapter 1: Strategic communication and business acumen, pp. 3–16)
- Ragas, M. W., & Culp, R. (2021b). Business accumen for strategic communicators. Emerald. (Chapter 11: Business models – Strategic communication agencies and consultancies; pp. 159–176).
- Ragas, M. W., & Culp, R. (2021c). Business accumen for strategic communicators. Emerald. (Chapter 12: Business models – In-house departments and teams; pp. 177–194).
- Stieglitz, S., Zerfass, A., Ziegele, D., Clausen, S., & Berger, K. (2022). *Communications Trend Radar 2022. Language awareness, closed communication, gigification, synthetic media & cybersecurity* (Communication Insights, Issue 14). Leipzig, Germany: Academic Society for Management & Communication.
- 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). *Business models for communication departments: A comprehensive approach to analyze, explain and innovate communication management in organizations*. Paper presented at the 25th International Public Relations Research Conference (IPRRC), 3–5 March, Orlando, FL.
- 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* (pp. 237–258). 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. (n.d.). *Toolbox communication management: Thinking tools and methods for managing corporate communications.* Springer. (Excerpts from the manuscript)