

PUR 4972-0412 Internal Communications and Employee Engagement

Fall 2017 Tuesdays 1:55pm-4:55pm
Weimer G030

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Office Hours: T 12:45-1:45 pm, R 2:00-3:00 pm, and by appointment. (Feel free to stop by anytime my office door is open! ☺)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Employees have long been recognized as the No. 1 stakeholder of the organizations. Especially in this increasingly connected, globalized, and transparent digital age, the line between internal and external is blurred. Effective internal communication is critical for the success of an organization. This course focuses on the influential roles that communication managers play to address the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing internal stakeholders. It integrates theories, research insights, practices, as well as current issues and cases into a comprehensive guide for future internal communication managers and organizational leaders on how to communicate effectively with internal stakeholders, build beneficial relationships, and engage employees in the fast-changing business and media environment. Through lectures/discussions and/or time reserved for team meetings and work sessions, students will be equipped with effective strategies, tactics, and tools to be able to act as an internal communication strategist.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Discuss the basic principles of internal communication management, as related to topics of internal public segmentation, ethics, culture, communication strategies, channels, and measurement
- Counsel organizational leaders such as the C-Suite and supervisors on how to communicate effectively
- Develop a working understanding of the strategies, techniques, and tools required to engage employees, with specific emphasis on digital and social capabilities
- Develop a standard of excellence in internal communications by analyzing “real life,” award-winning cases
- Apply strategic, creative thinking in the development of an internal communication plan

REQUIRED TEXT:

Men, L. R., & Bowen, S. (2017). *Excellence in Internal Communication Management*. Business Expert Press, New York.

CONTINUING READING:

The Institute for Public Relations' Organizational Communication Research Center (<http://www.instituteforpr.org/organizational-communication-research/>), the International Association of Business Communication (<https://www.iabc.com/resources>), and PRSA (www.prsa.org).

ABSCENCES AND PUNCTUALITY:

Attendance is required for each scheduled class meeting. Each student is allowed **two** unexcused absences for the semester. Your final grade may be lowered by one letter grade (e.g., B- to C-) for each unexcused absence beyond two. An excused absence is one supported by documentation (e.g., from UF, a doctor's office, or the employer) and approved by the professor prior to the absence. Regardless of the reason for your absence, you are responsible for all class work missed, and a missed class is not an excuse for missing a deadline. Late arrivals and/or early departures from class, without prior approval from the professor, will be counted as unexcused absences.

OTHER CLASS POLICIES:

- The University of Florida Honor Code applies to all activities associated with this class.
- Class members are expected to read the assigned reading (if any) before class and participate actively in class discussion.
- Although you may use computers in class, internet messaging and surfing are disruptive and, if caught, you may forfeit computer use in the class.
- All work will be judged by professional standards. All out-of-class work must be well written, typed and visually appealing, with no spelling or grammatical errors.

SPEFICAL NOTES:

- *Disability Accommodations:* Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.
- *Religious Observance:* Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.
- *Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:* Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up any graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the

instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.

GRADING:

Grades are *earned* via five modes: (1) Assignments/exercises; (2) Case studies (3) Exam; (4) A final internal communication plan and presentation [group]; and (5) Class participation

Area	Percent of Grade
Assignments	15%
Case Studies	20%
Exam	25%
Communication Plan	25%
Class Participation	<u>15%</u>
	100%

Grading scale: 100-93 A; 92-90 A-; 89-87 B+; 86-84 B; 83-80 B-; 79-77 C+; 76-74 C; 73-70 C-; 69-67 D+; 66-64 D; 63-60 D-; 59 and below E

- **Assignments** include individual writing assignments and in-class case study assignments that will require you to apply the principles, techniques, and skills you've learned to real-world scenarios and solve various problems.
- For **case study 1**, each team of two students will browse case databases such as PRSA Silver Anvil Award cases (<http://www.prsa.org/Awards/SilverAnvil/Search>) or case books to select a successful campaign case on any aspect of *internal communication* and present to the class. For **case study 2**, each team of two students will browse the Institute for Public Relations' Organizational Communication Research Center (<http://www.instituteforpr.org/organizational-communication-research/>), the library database or use google scholar to find a research study on any aspect of internal communication of your interest and present to class. Detailed guidelines for case presentations can be found on page 9.
- There will be one closed-book, comprehensive **exam** on **Nov 2**. A study guide will be provided to you prior to the exam. Content of class discussions and required readings are subject to inclusion.
- **The internal communication plan project** requires students to work in teams to research and propose an internal communication plan for an organization of your interest. A written plan will be turned in and students will present their communication plan on the last day of class. Detailed instructions on the team communication plan project are included in this syllabus.

The Team Project grade is comprised of a Team Grade (75%) and an Individual Grade (25%). Individual grade will be based on peer evaluations. Utilizing confidential forms, team members will evaluate each others' contributions. Team Grade will be based on the

quality of the communication plan (75%) as well as the final oral presentation (25%).

Notes: Teams will be responsible for providing supplies and other materials, such as presentation binders and prototypes, which are necessary for producing two copies of a written communication plan and an oral presentation of professional quality.

- **Participation** points can be earned via the following in-class exercises. NOTE: None of the following in-class exercises may be made-up.
 - “Case of the Week”: Every student is encouraged to bring in an internal communication case from CURRENT events every week for a five-minute informal discussion and critique. Such cases can be found in the news, PR magazines, and trade publications.
 - In-Class Reports: “What points are most clear to you?” and “What do you still not understand?”
 - Q&As/Class Discussions: Your level of engagement and participation in class discussions and work attitude throughout the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Please Note: As the semester progresses, this schedule may change to reflect the progress and needs of the class and work groups.

Date	Topic	Recommended Readings
Week 1 (Aug 22)	Syllabus Handed Out <u>Course Overview and Syllabus Review</u> <u>Introduction to Internal Communications</u>	M & B: Chapter 1
	[An introduction to the course. What internal communication is and why internal communication is important for the organization’s success is discussed.]	
	❖ Students sign up for case presentations ❖ Form teams for the final project	
Week 2 (Aug 29)	<u>Theoretical Perspectives and the Evolving Practice</u>	M & B: Chapter 2 & 10
	[Five theoretical perspectives (i.e., scientific management, human relations, human resources, systems, and culture) that shaped the development of present companies, businesses, and corporations, which offer insights into the evolution of internal communication are introduced. Current issues and trends in internal communication are discussed.]	
	❖ Assignment #1: SWOT analysis of a selected organization with a particular focus on communication. (Due Sept 5)	

- Week 3
(Sept 5) Understanding Your Internal Publics Ethics M & B: Chapter 2 & 3
- [Various approaches in segmenting internal publics are introduced. Ethical issues related to internal communication are discussed.]
- ❖ **DUE in class: Assignment # 1**
 - ❖ **Assignment #2: Design an employee survey for an organization that you are interested in. (Due Sept 12)**
- Week 4
(Sept 12) Leadership Communication: Executive Communication M & B: Chapter 4
- [The importance of top leadership and CEO communication style, channels, strategies, and social media presence will be discussed.]
- ❖ **DUE in class: Assignment # 2**
- Week 5
(Sept 19) Leadership Communication: Supervisory Communication M & B: Chapter 4
- [Supervisory leadership communication with an emphasis on supervisors' and line managers' communication strategies, tactics, channels, and effectiveness is discussed.]
- ❖ **Role Play**
- Week 6
(Sept 26) Reaching Your Internal Stakeholders: Communication Channels M & B: Chapter 5
- [Various traditional and new media channels for internal communication are introduced.]
- Week 7
(Oct 3) The Organization's Internal Use of Social Media Handouts/Readings
GUEST SPEAKER
- Week 8
(Oct 10) Organizational Structure, Culture, and Climate M & B: Chapter 5
- [Discussion is focused on how organizational factors including organizational structure, culture, and climate influences internal communication effectiveness.]
- Week 9
(Oct 17) Field Research (Internal Communication Audit)
- ❖ *Note: Dr. Men will be attending the Annual Page Up Conference of the Arthur Page Society in Washington D. C. on Oct 17.*
- Week 10 Employee Engagement M & B: Chapter 7

(Oct 24, 26)

[How employee engagement is defined, why it is important, and how to boost employee engagement through strategic internal communication are discussed.]

Week 11
(Oct 31)

Change Management and Internal Communication

M & B: Chapter 8

[The roles of strategic internal communication for successful change initiatives are discussed. A roadmap for strategic change communication and management is provided.]

Week 12
(Nov 7)

Measuring the Value of Internal Communication
Exam Review

M & B: Chapter 9

[What should be measured from the output, outcome, and outcome perspectives in internal communication and how to measure these results are discussed.]

Week 13
(Nov 14)

Exam

Week 14
(Nov 21)

Communication Plan Production

Happy Thanksgiving! ☺

❖ **Team Project**

- ✓ **Teams meet on their own to complete the draft of the communication plan book on Nov 21.**

Week 15
(Nov 28)

Communication Plan Production

❖ **Team Project**

- ❖ **Communication plan draft review with Dr. Men and Q & A on Nov 28**

Week 16
(Dec 5)

Final Presentations & Hard Copy Communication Plan Due

APPENDIX: INSTRUCTIONS ON ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignment #1: SWOT Analysis

DUE: Sept 5

Select an organization that you are interested in or would like to work for in future. Conduct background research on the organization and create a SWOT analysis for the organization as related to its communication practices, including internal communications. Report your findings in a two-page (double-spaced) report.

Assignment #2: Employee Survey

DUE: Sept 12

Create an employee survey to understand employees' attitudes toward the organization. You may choose one or several aspects of the organization that you are interested in (e.g., culture, products/services, work environment, communication satisfaction, leadership, etc.) to evaluate from the employees' perspective. The survey should include at least ten questions in addition to demographic questions.

GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAM CASE PRESENTATION:

A typical case study presentation lasts approximately **15** minutes.

- Background/Situation Analysis:
 - a. Describe the situation that called for the internal communication program
 - b. What's the employee communication issue/problem?

- Research:
 - a. Describe any research that communication manager conducted to gain insight into the problem/opportunity/audience. Which methods did planners use? What were the key research findings?

- Target Audience:
 - a. Outline the target audiences for the communication program.
 - b. How were the employee audiences segmented (e.g., demographically, psychographically, geographically, by department, or levels of position, etc.)?

- Goals/objectives:
 - a. What were the goals/objectives for the internal communication program?
 - b. Were the objectives measurable? In other words, did planners quantify each objective (e.g., increase recycling program participation among employees by 40%...)? How could the objectives be re-written to make them more effective?

- Key messages:

- a. List the major messages the planners wished to communicate to internal audiences in the program?
 - b. What did planners want the employees to know, remember, think about, or do?
- Strategy: Identify the strategy or strategies for the internal communication program. What are the overall concepts, approaches, or general plans to achieve the goal(s) and objectives?
- Tactics/Channels:
 - a. Describe how were the messages communicated to employees in the organization. Be specific. Through one-way or two-way, interpersonal or mediated, traditional or new media channels?
 - b. Was there any special event involved?
- Evaluation: Discuss how the program effectiveness was evaluated, and whether it achieved its stated objectives. What were the results of the internal communication program?
- Opinion: On this last slide, comment on the strengths or weaknesses of the program. What was or was not done well? Why?

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH CASE PRESENTATION:

A typical research case study presentation lasts approximately **15** minutes.

- Research Background:
 - a. What is the research background? What is the purpose of the study?
 - b. What is the research problem?
 - c. Why is this research important?
- Literature Review:
 - a. What have previous researchers found, wrote, or theorized about this area of internal communication research?
 - b. What is/are the theoretical framework or theories utilized?
 - c. What are the key concepts in the study? How is each defined? What is discussed about each concept in the literature review?
- Research Questions/Hypotheses/Conceptual Model
- Method:
 - a. What was the method used? Who were the study participants?
 - b. How was the research conducted? What was the research procedure?
- Results:
 - a. What were the key findings of the study?
 - b. Were the hypotheses accepted or rejected?
- Discussion:

- a. Use layman's terms to discuss the findings.
- b. Discuss what the study findings mean for internal communication professionals.
- c. What are the limitations of the study? What are the author's suggestions for future research?

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLAN PROJECT GUIDELINE:

- Executive Summary
- Table of Content
- Background
 - a. Brief introduction of the organization including its history, structure, culture, etc.
- Situational Analysis
 - a. Describe the situation that calls for the internal communication plan, including the SWOT analysis of the organization.
 - b. Assessment of the current internal communication efforts (e.g., strategies, tactics, and channels)
 - c. What are the internal communication issues/problems?
- Audience Analysis
 - a. Who are the target audience for the internal communication program?
 - b. How are the audience segmented (e.g., demographically, psychographically, geographically, by position, etc.)?
- Goals/objectives:
 - a. What are the goals and objectives for the internal communication program?
 - b. What are the expected outputs, outtakes, and outcomes?
 - c. Be sure to follow the SMART guidelines in writing the goal/objective statements.
- Message Platform/Key Messages:
 - a. Are there any key messages that you want to communicate to the internal audience?
 - b. What do you want the employees to know, remember, think about, or do?
- Strategy: Identify the strategy or strategies for the communication plan. What are the overall concepts, approaches, or general plans to achieve the goal(s) and objectives?
- Tactics/Channels:
 - a. Describe how the messages will be communicated to the internal audience. Be specific.
 - b. Will you rely on owned, paid, earned, or shared media? How?
 - c. Any special events?
 - d. Include as many prototypes as possible.
- Evaluation: Discuss how the internal communication efforts will be evaluated and what will be evaluated.

- **Stewardship:** Applying the principles of stewardship and relationship management; discuss specifically how you would strengthen the relationship with employees.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

A fixed grading scale allows you to earn a 0, 70, 80, 90 or 100 on each project, which will be evaluated as follows:

Grade Earned	Following Instructions	Writing Style	Content
An essay will earn the grade of 0 if it is not turned in by the deadline OR <u>any</u> of the following occurs:	The essay is written without any regard for the instructions provided.	Many errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice render the essay incomprehensible.	The content of the essay suggests the author is “winging it” without any regard for the assignment OR sources <i>other than class materials</i> are not properly referenced.
An essay will earn the grade of 70 if <u>any</u> of the following occurs:	The essay is missing major required elements stated in the instructions.	Three or more errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice.	The content of the essay suggests the author does not fully comprehend the assignment. Some content is correct but major points are missed.
An essay will earn the grade of 80 if <u>any</u> of the following occurs:	The essay is missing some required elements stated in the instructions.	Two errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice. Some writing is not very clear and adequate.	The content of the essay suggests the author does not fully comprehend the assignment. Some content is correct but some points are missed.
An essay will earn the grade of 90 if <u>each</u> of the following occurs:	The essay meets the expectations of the instructions provided. All required elements are covered.	No more than one error in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice. Writing style is basic but clear and adequate.	The content of the essay suggests the author has an accurate and thorough grasp of the assignment.

<p>An essay will earn the grade of 100 if <u>each</u> of the following occurs:</p>	<p>The essay exceeds the expectations of the instructions provided. Required elements are not only covered, but also enhanced by additional content drawn from class discussions and well-informed insights.</p>	<p>No errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice. Writing style is advanced yet highly readable and engaging.</p>	<p>The content of the essay suggests the author has an advanced and applied understanding of the assignment. That is, the author incorporates topics covered in class to enhance his/her points in an original way that exceeds expectations.</p>
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GRADING RUBRIC FOR CASE STUDY

	Superior 100	Excellent 90	Good 80	Fair 70	Poor 0
Completeness	All required components incorporated into submission	Only one component not incorporated	Two or more components not incorporated	Up to half of the required components not incorporated	More than half of the required components not incorporated
Thoroughness	Each topic is treated very thoroughly	Each topic is treated somewhat thoroughly	Only some topics are treated somewhat thoroughly	Some topics are treated somewhat weakly	Each topic is treated only weakly
Readings (Application of case materials)	Very clear that readings were understood and incorporated well	Clear that readings were understood and incorporated well	Somewhat unclear that readings were understood	Submission has questionable relationship to reading material	No evidence that readings were incorporated
Accuracy and/or quality of ideas	Contains well-developed original ideas and/or precisely-worded, accurate information	Contains original ideas and/or accurate information	Contains at least some original ideas and/or some accurate information	Contains few original ideas or some accurate information	Contains only unoriginal ideas and/or inaccurate information
Surface features Surface features (e.g., formatting, correct spelling, grammar, complete sentences, and appropriate citation of sources)	Controls very well for surface features (i.e., formatting, spelling, grammar, typographical errors, etc.)	Controls well for surface features (i.e., formatting, spelling, grammar, typographical errors, etc.)	Somewhat lax in control of surface features (i.e., formatting, spelling, grammar, typographical errors, etc.)	Very lax in control of surface features (i.e., formatting, spelling, grammar, typographical errors, etc.)	Lacks acceptable control of surface features (i.e., numerous distracting flaws in formatting, spelling, grammar, etc.)

GRADING RUBRIC FOR THE COMMUNICATION PLAN BOOK

Criteria	Excellent >90	Proficient 80-89	Basic 70-79	Inadequate <70
Format /Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typed • Cover page, references & page numbers • Well-constructed sentences • No grammar or typing/spelling errors • Outstanding design/layout/neatness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typed • Cover page, most references included & page numbers • Mostly well-constructed sentences • Relatively free of grammar and spelling/typing errors • Good design/layout/neatness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typed • No cover page, references or page numbers • Some poorly constructed sentences • Some grammar and spelling/typing errors • Poor Design/layout/neatness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format errors or handwritten • No cover page, references or page numbers • Numerous poorly constructed sentences • Multiple grammar and spelling/typing errors • Poor design/layout/neatness
Structure/ Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-organized • Clear background, planning, and recommendations • Ideas are developed in a logical way • Relevant and concisely written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-organized • Clear background, planning, and recommendations • Ideas are developed • Some irrelevant or redundant information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some problems with organization • Weak background, planning, and recommendations • Ideas are somewhat developed • Lacks precision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with organization • Insufficient background, planning, and/or recommendations • Ideas are undeveloped
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound and appropriate research methods • Sufficient primary and secondary information related to the issue • Every recommendation is supported by research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound and appropriate research methods • Sufficient primary and secondary information related to the issue • Most recommendations are supported by research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some problems with research methodology • Some primary and secondary information related to the issue • Some recommendations are supported by research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with research methodology • Insufficient primary and secondary information related to the issue • Recommendations have little research support
Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of reflection on and incorporation of concepts, models, tactics, and tools from class discussions/texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of concepts, models, tactics, and tools from class discussion/texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal evidence of concepts, models, tactics, and tools from class discussion/texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No attempt to apply concepts, models, tactics, or tools from readings or class discussions
Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unique or creative approach is used • Ideas are original, interesting, and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unique or creative approach is used • Ideas are original and interesting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of uniqueness and creativity • Some ideas are original 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of uniqueness or creativity • No original ideas
Completeness /Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content beyond what was required • Specific information and examples used to support points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did all that was required • Accurately presented facts and concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did most of what was required • Accurately presented most facts and concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not fulfill requirements • Understanding of facts or concepts inconsistent or inaccurate