# Digital communication (with module of Media relation)

## Prof. Andrea Cioffi; Prof. Dalia Andreotti

Module A: *Digital communication* (Prof. Andrea Cioffi – 30 hours)

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The Digital Communication course was designed to guide communication students towards learning how to use digital and inbound marketing to launch a start-up or grow the business of a company already operating in the market from a professionalising point of view. The revolution started by the internet and social media has radically changed the way people live, work, sell and buy. Consequently, also the modalities employed by businesses to attract, persuade and satisfy their clients have altered. The Digital Communication course intends to focus on inbound marketing to put companies in a position to find clients, via specific focus on defining precise content strategy which can push potential clients towards the company and its products. The course intends to provide students with an overview of the methodologies and tools which can attract potential clients without interrupting business.

*Intended learning outcomes*

By following the Digital Communications Management course, students will acquire the following knowledge and skills:

* develop awareness of the relevance of a digital strategy as a premise for the defining an effective communication positioning on digital channels;
* understand the formulation stages of a digital strategy aimed at reaching a communication positioning objective;
* understand the methodological stages of communicating the strategic nucleus of a company via storytelling;
* understand inbound methodology supporting both communication processes and commercial processes within a company;
* understand the meaning of success factors and critical success factors and develop basic skills for mapping said factors within a company;
* develop skills related to creating a Business Model Canvas for Communication, as a fundamental prerequisite for defining an effective content strategy;
* develop skills for building buyer personas;
* learn the methodology for developing frameworks for communication positioning, both as a support when defining content strategy, as well as for optimising editorial plans;
* learn the methodology for translating a communication positioning objective into SEO clusters which organically position a company into the top results on the first page of a search engine.
* learn the methodological stages of translating a communication positioning objective into content strategy and creative formats to support a distinctive brand image;
* understand recent theories regarding consumption models and the main methodologies employed to define a customer journey, as well as the main reference practice to control it effectively.
* develop basic modern technology (HubSpot) skills for inbound marketing, sales and customer service, as well as basic knowledge of how to use a modern CRM;
* understand the basic functions of LinkedIn Sales Navigator as support for inbound sales;
* learn how to write effective e-mails.
* know the trends in conversational marketing and the implementation stages of the development of information chatbots;
* develop basic skills regarding the design of automated workflow within the environment of marketing automation;
* understand the tools and methodological stages related to measuring performance in digital channels as well as for setting up effective reporting.
* develop critical thinking by listening to accounts from companies and learning from different case studies.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The Digital Communication course is organised into weekly modules and includes guidance in obtaining certification inbound methodology offered by Hubspot, an international leader in methodology and technological tools for inbound marketing, sales & customer service. In this way, Digital Communication students will have the opportunity of obtaining certification issued by a leading company on an international level, which will certainly enrich their CV’s.

Therefore, each week will be organised as follows:

* presentation of learning content geared towards obtaining inbound certification. Part of this material will have to be studied independently, outside lectures, consistent with the flipped teaching method;
* commentary of topics addressed in the classroom;
* exercises and debates regarding material analysed in class and material studied independently.

**Part 1: defining a positioning strategy on digital channels**

Part 1 of the course illustrates the different steps of a strict methodology for defining an effective communication positioning on digital channels. More specifically, the first part intends to answer the following questions:

* how can the value offered by a company be aligned with its market sector?
* How can a company position itself effectively on digital channels?

In order to answer these questions, the first part presents the following:

* alignment of sources of value within the environment of digital communication. This stage concentrates on techniques for pinpointing the strategic nucleus for communication purposes, such as the Business Model Canvas for Communication and Buyer Personas;
* the strategic alignment of communication processes. This stage concentrates on the development of a communication positioning framework as a useful tool for translating company strategy for communication positioning on digital channels.

**Part 2: content strategy: from the positioning framework to brand image**

Following the definition of the methodological steps and the main tools for defining communication positioning on digital channels, the second part focuses on content strategy and how to deduce meta subjects of communication beginning with critical factors of corporate success. This part of the course also focuses on defining content strategy for which blogs are a starting and focal point for inbound strategy. As well as examining aspects connected to the formulation of content ideas for blogs and correlated aspects regarding SEO, the lesson will focus on aspects such as editorial plans and creative action to support the brand image.

**Part 3: the evolution of customer journeys and the role of conversational marketing**

Following the presentation of the development of customer journey models and digital procedures for checking them, the third part illustrates operative modalities for implementing conversational marketing strategy with multiple touchpoints as support for the generation of conversions. This module also includes the presentation of tools such as Conversational Chatbots, Smart Call-to-Action, Landing pages and so on.

**Part 4 – CRM, lead nurturing and workflow automation**

The fourth part presents the cardinal aspects of a CRM, as well as illustrating the one provided by Hubspot, and how CRM can support e-mail marketing strategies to foster relations with existing and potential clients. This part also presents an outline of designing automated workflows for contextual communication throughout the customer journey.

**Part 5 – measuring performance**

The fifth part concentrates on methodology related to a Balanced Scorecard of Communication and the Digital Communication Score to implement effective measurement of strategic performance measurement of corporate positioning on digital channels.

***READING LIST***

A. Cioffi, *Digital Strategy*, Hoepli, 2018, Milan.

Reading, cases and supplementary material provided by the tutor (posted on BlackBoard).

***TEACHING METHOD***

The teaching methodology includes the use of the Hubspot platform to test in practice what has been learned from a theoretical point of view. Flipped teaching will be applied in the classroom thanks also to the multiple videos that will be used, to be watched independently and then discussed in class. The course includes inbound certification provided by the Hubspot platform. In addition, there will be visits from people representing companies who will contextualise what has been seen in theory within a specific company context.

Lastly, students will have the opportunity to take part in project work to develop an inbound campaign working from a specific brief.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Module A will account for 70% of the final examination mark. The examination consists of a one-hour written test that will take into account the outcome of the inbound certification issued by Hubspot.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Blackboard will provide didactic and operational support to the course and it is where students can find material posted by the lecturer.

Students are strongly recommended to attend the course and take an active part in lectures.

Students must have basic knowledge of marketing concepts and corporate communication.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.

Module B: *Media relation - Curriculum Communication and marketing for manufacturing companies* (Prof.ssa Dalia Andreotti – 20 hours)

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

This module intends to provide students with a general understanding of the role and importance of Media Relations and more generally, of Public Relations today, within manufacturing companies and the management thereof. The aim is to illustrate the main theoretical and practical tools for understanding and overseeing an increasingly complex subject, which dialogues on a daily basis, either directly or in a mediated manner, with all the company’s stakeholders: from its shareholders to its employees, from its consumers to customers and suppliers, from local communities to public opinion, to the world of institutions, finance and politics.

At the end of the course, students will be familiar with different profiles operating within companies in the Media Relations and Investor Relations fields; the reference sector, the main Italian and foreign operators; the most important institutions. Students will be able to use the main management tools of a press office, as well as acquire specific skills for creating digital Public Relations campaigns.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will explore the following topics in detail:

* the strategic role of Public Relations within a modern company;
* the sector, the main international players, the agencies, the professional figures;
* Opinion, Corporate and Brand PR;
* Aims and tools of Media Relations within manufacturing companies;
* Digital PR and relations with influencers;
* crisis and issue management;
* measuring needs and outcomes.

***READING LIST***

Material and presentations provided by the lecturer.

R.R. Venturi-C. Casalegno-P. De Palma, *Comunicazione integrata e PR: istruzioni per l’uso*, Franco Angeli, Milan, 2014.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course is based on classroom lessons designed to conceptually explore all the main topics concerning modern Media Relations. Ample space will be given to the presentation of company cases and accounts from various professional figures operating in the sector, as immediate feedback, from a practical point of view, about what has been presented on a theoretical level.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Module B will account for 30% of the final examination mark. The examination will consist of a one-hour written examination. Students will be required to answer three open-ended questions on content from lessons in the classroom, on material provided by the lecturer and the course reading list.

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