Economics and Techniques of Corporate Communication

Prof. Stefania Boleso; Prof. Stefania Micaela Vitulli

COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The first part of the course introduces the concept of corporate communication, intended as company communication and focusing on intangible assets embodied by a specific vocabulary; it will also deal with the evolution of the stakeholder's role from recipient of the corporate message to co-creator of value and subject of communication in a pull/peer to peer logic, and on the application of a multicultural logic to communication. Special attention will be paid to the CEO as a corporate communication tool and to the communication of environmental and social sustainability, with an introduction to the context, guidelines and approach to green stakeholders.

At the end of the module, students will be able to:

* critically understand the evolution and importance of corporate communication management as a strategic asset from a multi-stakeholder perspective;
* understand how corporate communication interacts with ethical decisions and can impact or be influenced by cultural conflicts;
* evaluate a corporate communication strategy and participate in its development by receiving a brief and analysing case studies (project work);
* recognise and analyse strategic options for corporate sustainability communication.

The aim of the second part of the course is to help students understand the strategic role of the brand in the current context. In this regard, the course will analyse both the concept of the brand, specifically addressing the dimensions that make up the brand identity and positioning process, and the story of how the various brand communication activities are important touchpoints for engaging and involving the consumer at all stages of their relationship with the company.

The topic of the evolution of brand communication will then be addressed; this will include the new expressive methods available to companies to engage the public and which organisations must be able to use in order to remain competitive and continue to generate value for the market, their ultimate aim being to create and increase the so-called equity, i.e. value of the brand.

This knowledge will allow students to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication strategies implemented by brands.

At the end of this second module, students will be able to:

- know and develop a critical thinking around tools and methods for brand communication, including through the analysis of case studies;

- apply the knowledge acquired for the conception and development of projects related to brand communication in multidisciplinary teams.

COURSE CONTENT

Module 1: *Prof. Stefania Micaela Vitulli*

* General Part
* Corporate Communication: the vocabulary of corporate communication and the related framework. Analysis of the current state and revamping of corporate tools
* The evolution of the company-stakeholder relationship in the communication process
* Cultural studies and the impact on corporate communication: barriers and opportunities
* Single-subject focuses
* CEO branding
* How and why to communicate sustainability as a reputational advantage

Module 2: *Prof. Stefania Boleso*

* The concept of brand and its functions
* The dimensions of brand identity
* The process of brand positioning
* Designing brand communication starting from insights
* Brand communication and the customer journey:
  + The different stages of the "journey"
  + Touchpoints and moments of truth
  + The marketing funnel
* The evolution of brand communication:
* The central role of the consumer in the relationship with the brand, from passive recipient of the message to active subject
* The importance of brand experience
* The opportunities offered by technological development
* The ultimate goal of brand communication: to obtain equity, i.e. value for the brand

Applied Part

Students will have to participate in a project work in groups on a business case proposed by a host company.

During the course, students may also be required to present theoretical contents in the form of a lecture to test their critical perspective and ability to understand and critically process connections, and/or to participate in application tasks and/or meetings with guest speakers related to the specific focuses of the course. Interaction in class with the lecturer and among peers will also be fundamental.

READING LIST

For those students carrying out the project work, the reading lists for Module 1 and 2 will be indicated during the course.

Supplementary material will be made available on the lecturer's Blackboard page.

For those students *not carrying out the project work*

K.L Keller, Strategic Brand Management, Pearson, 5th Ed. 2020. (Introduction, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16).

R. Fiocca-R.C. Gambetti-C. Solerio, Brand Experience. Relazioni impresa-cliente e valore di marca, Franco Angeli, Milan, 2015. (Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6).

R.C. Gambetti-S. Quigley (Eds.), Managing corporate communication: a cross-cultural approach, Palgrave McMillan, London, 2012 (Chapters 1, 2, 9, 10).

A. Detto, G. Ghini, S. Vitulli, *CEO branding nella reputation economy,* EGEA, Milan, 2021.

Mandatory supplementary material will be made available on the lecturer's Blackboard page.

TEACHING METHOD

Interactive lectures, presentation of case studies, carrying out of project work in groups, and the organisation of interventions by external experts.

ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA

The final mark *for students who carry out the project work* will be broken down as follows:

Group exercise: 40% of final mark. The mark will be divided between the lecturers and any company guest speakers, who will participate both in the preparation and presentation of the briefs and in the evaluation of the projects.

Final written exam – two open-ended questions (30%+30%) on the topics of the first and second module: 60% of the final mark.

The project assessment criteria will consider creativity, feasibility and consistency with the brief.

In addition to their knowledge of the basic contents, command of language and demonstrated terminological knowledge, the final exam will assess students' critical elaboration of and perspectives on the contents themselves (perceived links and development of topics and cases) when answering questions.

Course mark *for those students who do not carry out the project work*For those who have not carried out the exercise or final exam, a written exam is normally taken: this comprises four open-ended questions (each worth 25%) on all the texts in the reading list and the materials indicated by the lecturers and published on Blackboard, and is aimed at establishing both the students' in-depth knowledge of the texts and their ability to critically process the contents.

NOTES AND PREREQUISITES

Course attendance is strongly recommended, along with active participation in the lectures.

There are no prerequisites for attending the course. However, an interest and intellectual curiosity in the course topics is assumed.

Students interested in a thesis on the course topics are invited to contact the relevant lecturer via email.

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