
Disney Corporate Communication Course

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THE DISNEY CORPORATE COMMUNICATION COURSE FOCUS (44 contact hours)

Credit Recommendation: In the lower division baccalaureate/associate degree category or in the upper division baccalaureate degree category, three semester hours in Communication, Hospitality Communications, Management or Business Administration. (2/08) (4/11)

The Disney Corporate Communication Course describes how American companies communicate with key audiences, both internal and external to the corporation. Course introduces students to the communication function and how companies reach a variety of publics to include customers, investors, employees, media, government agencies and communities located in the proximity of the corporation. The purpose of this course is to introduce the students to the purpose and significance of communication within an organization at many levels. Students will learn both the why and how of communication techniques as organizations interface with customers, employees, and the public. As a result, students should have greater understanding of and appreciation for the corporate communication process.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this course, the students should be able to:

- Identify key functions of organizational communication departments within a corporation
- Identify the design of a corporate communication strategic planning model
- Recognize special communication functions, including government, investor, and consumer relations
- Recognize the significance of communication research
- Appreciate the value of cost-effective communication planning
- Define and identify the impact of communication technologies on reputation management and surveillance functions
- Explore problem solving strategies associated with crisis communication

Course Requirements

Attendance:

Attendance is required for all of the Disney Corporate Communications Course classes. This is an interactive course that requires each student's involvement. All students will be allowed two absences with or without excuse (student does not need to call instructor); however, any absences will affect the student's final grade. On the third absence, the student will automatically be dropped from the course.

Required Textbook: (to be purchased prior to class)

Caywood, C. (1997). *The Handbook of Strategic Public Relations & Integrated Communications*: McGraw Hill.

Suggested Readings:

Barnicle, M., Byrne, J. and Welch, J. (2005). *Straight from the Gut*: Warner Books.

Freiberg, K. (1998). *Nuts! Southwest Airline’s Crazy Recipe for Business and Personal Success*: Broadway.

Packard, D. (2006). *The HP Way: How Bill Hewlett and I Built Our Company*: Collins.

Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of Innovations (5th ed.)*: Free Press.

Sandar, Larkin, TJ and Larkin, S. (1994). *Communicating Change*: McGraw Hill.

Course Assignments:

- Case Studies
- Exam
- Group Presentation

Group Presentation:

- Students will work in groups to present a corporate communication case study to the class
- The Instructor will assign teams, approve topics, and provide additional details during class
- All group members must be present and everyone in the group must participate in the presentation
- Delivery must include a PowerPoint presentation
- Teams will complete a 10 - 12 minute presentation allowing an additional 3 minutes for Q&A
- Teams are to assume they are the corporate communication team and are using these examples to brief their CEO and senior executive teams on how these would relate to their achieving corporate business goals and objectives
- Teams will reference at least three sources with factual data in support of the topic
- Presentations must reference at least three sources with factual data in support of the topic

Grading Policy:

Case Studies	30%
Final Exam	30%
Group Presentation.....	30%
Attendance & Class Participation	10%

The Disney Corporate Communication Course is a pass/fail course. In order to earn a passing grade, you must receive an overall score of 70% or better.

Class Meeting	Learning Objectives	Assignments to be Completed Prior to Class
Module 1: Introduction and Welcome (4 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify course expectations, policies, and course workload • Identify a key model for corporate communication • Describe the significance of community, employee, and media relations to an organization • Identify “special” communication functions, such as government and investor relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Introduction, pages xi-xxv in required text, <i>The Handbook of Strategic Public Relations and Integrated Communications</i>
Module 2: Planning and Research Functions (4 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the key variables in a strategic communication plan • Recognize the value of strategic planning to cost effective communication tactics and program execution • Evaluate the importance of spokesperson source selection in communication problem solving • Discuss typical communication research methods used to evaluate program effectiveness • Assess the relative value of primary and secondary research in terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 3: The Role of Research in Public Relations Strategy and Planning, pages 34-59 in required text
Module 3: Media Relations (4 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between traditional and new methods of social and cultural communication • Explore the history and consider the viability of traditional media • Explore the implications and impact of the “New Media” • Illustrate the interaction between age and media uses and gratifications • Discuss how the rise of new media penetration has impacted control and flow of news and information to external publics • Examine how the growth of new media has changed corporate media relations practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 4: Global and Local Media Relations, pages 63-76, and Chapter 5: Broadcast Media Relations, pages 77-89 in required text
Module 4: Community Relations (4 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and assess the importance of external stakeholders to the company’s long-term viability • Differentiate groups based on demographic data • Specify messages and channels appropriate to key external audiences • Discuss the value of community goodwill as it relates to corporate viability • Measure the costs and benefits associated with corporate community relations programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 10: The Strategic Uses of Corporate Philanthropy, pages 149-172 in required text

Class Meeting	Learning Objectives	Assignments to be Completed Prior to Class
Module 5: Employee and Customer Communication (4 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagram communication flows throughout the organization • Assess the difficulty of communicating with key internal publics • Relate the importance of localized information to the line employee • Criticize top-down versus bottom-up corporate communication tactics • Explain the value of first line leader communication with key employee publics • Question the relative cost effectiveness of traditional mediated employee communication tactics • Identify key customers as critical corporate external stakeholders • Assess the value of “ally development” plans and tactics • Question the cost effectiveness of corporate customer relations functions • Discuss typical tactics such as “trade shows” and site visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 8: Labor Relations: Union-Management Relations and Negotiations, pages 119-138 and Chapter 15: Managing a Diverse Workforce in a Changing Corporate Environment, pages 23-243 in required text • Read Chapter 9: Connecting with Consumers, pages 139-148 in required text
Module 6: Government Relations (4 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the variety of governmental agencies which affect corporate viability at the local, state, national and international levels • Differentiate between “education” and registered lobbying • Explain the differences between authorization and appropriation • Discuss communicating with elected officials as special cases of corporate media and community relations programs and tactics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 31: Public Relations in Government, pages 453-480 in required text
Module 7: Project (4 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work in preparation for team Corporate Communication project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare individual research contributions team presentation
Module 8: Management, Trends and Technology (4 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the impact of blogs, chat rooms, and Web-based groups on public perception of corporate activities • Discuss the value of informal employee communication networks and channels in terms of providing critical, timely information for decision making • Explain the value of “futurists” in predicting trends which affect corporate viability • Examine the concept of participation with key external publics in terms of providing critical corporate information in a timely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 11: Issues Management: Managing Trends through the Issues Life Cycle, pages 173-188 in required text • Read Chapter 14: Media Transformation and the Practice of Public Relations, pages 222-230 in required text

Class Meeting	Learning Objectives	Assignments to be Completed Prior to Class
	and cost effective manner	
Module 8 continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the changes in corporate communication practices driven by the rapid evolution of computer-based technologies • Compare and contrast the costs and benefits of corporate intranet and Internet-based communication programs and tactics • Explain how Web sites have changed the traditional relationships between external media representatives and internal media relations specialists • Identify the impact of technology on employee communication programs and the resulting affects on workforce information flows • Relate how electronic media have impacted corporate decision making 	
Module 9: Crisis Communication (4 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify three key questions asked in crisis communication cases • Assess the value of rapid response communication planning • Examine the importance of media relations training in terms of rapid and credible response • Explain the need to invest in realistic crisis communication training scenarios • Discuss the value of in-depth communication team training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 12: A Strategic Approach to Crisis Management, pages 189-206 in required text • Read Chapter 17: Ethical Implications of Corporate Communications, pages 286- 300
Module 10: Group Presentations (4 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present and submit final group research project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare group presentation including outline, PowerPoint and handouts
Module 11: Final	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess learning through objective exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for final