

Management Communication

First Year Management Communication (MC) aims to prepare you for leadership as a manager. This course views communication from managerial, organizational, and corporate points of view, preparing you to rise to the challenges posed to the manager as communicator.

Throughout the year, MC broadens your knowledge of contemporary communication, while offering opportunities to develop your skills and abilities. Because you will play many roles as you motivate and lead numerous stakeholders, we will teach you to analyze and understand audiences. Whether you will play the leader, liaison, interpreter, disseminator, advocate, or spokesperson, MC will help you to understand important factors to consider when communicating in a given role. Since you will spend up to 90% of your day communicating in a wide variety of situations, using an ever-increasing number of methods and channels, we will encourage you to develop a broad yet flexible repertoire of communication skills. Information explosion and globalization will press you to respond decisively and quickly, so MC will help you to craft messages capable of overcoming boundaries presented by time, space, and culture. Since as a manager you will represent the organization in whatever you do, MC will help you understand the issues related to communicating in and as an organization. With an understanding of these demands and their effects, you will be better equipped to develop and apply your skills effectively.

To focus our work, MC takes a *strategic* approach. We encourage you to pay attention to both processes and goals. As a result, you will develop improved judgment that will raise the probability that in any given situation your skills will achieve the response you want.

FY MC Course Objectives

Consistent with the dual objectives of the FY Program, FY MC is designed

- To build your knowledge of the issues and best practices involved in today's essential and compelling management communication challenges, and
- To boost your personal oral, written, and visual communication skills, by providing opportunities to practice familiar and new techniques in a variety of assignments.

Methods of Instruction

Cases and readings will provide the basis for classroom discussion. MC cases are intended to raise important issues, while readings offer relevant background, theory, and practical information. In addition to case discussions, many days feature in-class oral, written, and visual communication exercises and assignments. Consequently, MC meets in groups of 30 students in a workshop-like setting.

Fall Semester (Blocks 1 & 2)

Module I: Introduction to Strategic Communication

The Fall Semester foregrounds managerial communication, meaning the topics and skills related to communicating as an individual manager in an organization, while touching on some aspects of organizational and corporate communication. Module I introduces you to a model for communicating strategically that you should internalize during the year. This module also introduces other year-long themes, such as the importance of

credibility, methods for influencing others, making wise channel choices, and dealing with the effects of technology. Questions addressed include:

- How can I craft and convey messages that are most likely to get the response I want?
- How does a manager establish and maintain credibility?
- What roles does storytelling play in business and how can I use it to my advantage?
- How do I explain succinctly the purpose of a business?
- How can I narrow the gap between what I intend to say and how an audience receives it?
- How is the way I manage people reflected in the way I manage words?
- What should I consider when communicating across boundaries created by language, culture and technology?
- How can I help a peer improve his or her communication?

Assignments include an oral presentation and short written assignments. Students also meet in conferences with instructors to review performance.

Module II: Persuasion and Argument

To accomplish their goals, managers need to motivate, convince, and move others to implement change quickly. Often managers act as advocates, selling new ideas designed to improve organizational performance. For example, most high-performing managers scan their business environment, alert to controversial issues that have important consequences for their organizations and their own careers. To stay ahead, astute managers thoughtfully develop a position on such issues and persuade others to join them. To that end, Module II explores persuasion and argument and addresses questions such as:

- How can I use persuasion to promote change in an organization?
- What process of research and listening do I need to follow to develop my point of view?
- What are the elements of persuasion and how do I balance them to convince an audience?
- How can I construct arguments that will anticipate questions and diffuse resistance to my ideas?
- What are the best ways to make my point visually?
- How do I keep my cool when answering tough questions?
- Why do I need to adjust my approach when selling my point in writing?

The assignment for Module II is to persuade an audience to adopt your position on a contemporary business issue, first in a presentation, then in writing.

Spring Semester (Block 4)

Module III: Communication Management

Module III reverses terms from MC to CM, or communication management. Not only do managers need to learn how to communicate effectively as an individual (MC), but they also need to understand how to effectively manage communication within an organization and as an organization (CM). Communication management includes organizational and corporate communication perspectives. Simply put, organizational communication focuses on how messages move around in organizations, while corporate communication focuses on the organization as communicator with multiple audiences. Further, Module III introduces you to the formal function area of Corporate Communication, while encouraging you as an individual to incorporate principles of

corporate communication in your own managerial practice, regardless of whatever field you choose. Increasing your knowledge of communication management will enable you to operate more effectively as an agent in and a spokesperson for your organization. Module III addresses these questions:

- Why is corporate reputation so important?
- How can organizations use dialogue as an effective method of influence and knowledge sharing?
- What if organizational communication could be managed like cash flow or inventory?
- How does an organization communicate its identity and influence its image?
- What is the relationship between business strategy and corporate communication?
- What are the special issues associated with communicating with different constituencies, such as employees, investors, the media, and opposition groups?
- How can an organization unify its messages and align stakeholder interests during and after a crisis?

On days featuring a case, various opportunities are available to try out new communication skills, including impromptu speaking, role-playing meetings, and reporting-out on small group work. On occasion, guest speakers may join us to share their expertise.

Module IV: Communicating as a Group

Module IV marries Module III topics with the practical concerns of preparing a group consulting-style presentation on organizational or corporate communication. Several classes will be devoted to in-class workshops in which groups will meet together to work on their projects and learn skills such as project management, storyboarding, communicating with one voice, and choreographing a group-delivered presentation. The group presentation assignment serves as a finale to the FY Program, requiring you to synthesize MC and FY learnings and preparing you for group project work typically done during summer internships and the SY MBA Program. Module IV classes ask

- What communication challenges can I expect in group project management?
- How can we manage our group process in a way that will lead to an excellent product?
- What resources and interests do we have to work with?
- Who should do what and how will we make decisions?
- How can we manage our deadline and synthesize our work into a whole?
- What technologies might help us do our work efficiently?
- What is our central message and how can we deliver the presentation with one voice?
- Why do our recommendations make the best sense for this case?

The spring semester concludes with group presentations, followed by an individual written assignment on organizational or corporate communication.

Communication for a Lifetime

FY MC offers opportunities for future managers to establish a foundation of knowledge about important management communication issues. At the same time, your learning will surely go beyond this course. Communication is a performing art, akin to mastering a sport, or a musical instrument, or management itself. As a performing art, communicating well can be pursued over a lifetime yet has no clear end point. At first you learn the fundamentals and put lessons into practice. You then start to increase

your repertoire of skills and keep up with developments in your field. Over time, you will know more about the art and yourself, understanding both with greater complexity and depth. Periodically, you might go back to basics to “keep on top of your game” or to “stay in tune.” As you increase your mastery, you may question what you think you know and identify new questions to ask. You may mentor others in their communication. With experience, and the wisdom and confidence that come with it, you may even develop a personal philosophy that will guide your practice. The MC faculty recognize that each student has unique personal needs. Wherever you are on your path of learning about communication, we look forward to working with you to help you achieve your goals. Please do not hesitate to contact one of us to discuss your needs and ask questions.

First Year Management Communication Faculty

Instructor	Office	Office Phone	Home Phone
Course Head: Elizabeth Powell	157	982-2730	971-6870
Marc Modica	158	924-6884	(540) 456-7079
James Rubin	156	924-4830	979-4053
June West	153	243-7693	923-8233
Rob Vaughan (Fall)	134	924-3296	295-5872
Ted Forbes (Spring)	116	924-4722	979-7586
Course Assistant			
Kelly Sipe	251	924-4807	