Digital Media and Public Relations

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Course description

Public relations campaigns are currently using digital media intensively. A comprehensive approach to the fields is taken to deepen the understanding on how PR strategies can be optimized. The fundamentals of PR campaigns and strategies are presented within the digital sphere, as well as key drivers of the field such as strategic issue management, public affairs, and advocacy campaigns. Also, digital metrics, tools and indicators are presented and used to position, plan, and evaluate the impact of these campaigns.

ECTS Credits

4 ECTS Credits

Specific competences

At the end of the course, the student will be able to...

› To understand the role that public relations play in today's society.
› To apply public relations strategies to different types of cases and scenarios.
› To design and produce public relations strategies in digital media,
› To design strategies of issue management and crisis communication
› To align public relations strategies with current public affairs and advocacy campaigns
› To apply digital techniques in public relations campaigns.
› To acquire critical thinking towards persuasive communication in the new public sphere after the digital revolution.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, the student...

› Will have acquired the fundamentals of public relations in the digital environment: key concepts, techniques and tools of positioning and evaluation.
› Will have learned the advantages, outcomes, challenges, and process of public affairs and advocacy in the digital sphere.
› Will be able to plan, design, produce and test strategic communication campaigns in the digital media.

Content

The course covers 8 topics to be presented in 8 sessions. The 5th session is devoted to students' presentations for Assignment 1 and a planning on the second part of the course. The 10th session is dedicated to the final presentation by students and the professors' feedback:

1. Public relations strategies in the digital environment
2. Overview of digital marketing
3. Customer Relationship Model
4. Strategic digital communication planning
5. Individual presentations & starting up
6. Insight into digital advertising: strategies, goals, and metrics
7. Display and programmatic advertising, and feature of email marketing
8. Social media advertising
9. Branded content and influencer marketing
10. Final presentations

Method of presentation

The teaching method combines lectures and practical work in the form of readings, debates, case-studies, presentations, problem solving. Every session will have 90-minute lectures (approximately) to present the main concepts, theories, techniques, and tools of the topic. And then, students will work on a topic for debate, a case study, a reading (uploaded previously in the virtual campus) or will make a presentation. In both parts, the student's participation is highly valued, and many examples can be used. The students will be working from session one in an individual assignment about an innovative PR campaign. This assignment will be presented in session 5. Then, students will join in pairs or groups, or keep working individually if they prefer, to implement and evaluate the promotion and impact of this campaign. A presentation of Assignment 2 (the Final Project) is required in the last session.

Course assessment

This course's assessment is compounded of three parts: participation in class (debates, case-studies, and readings), Assignment 1 and Final Project or Assignment 2. Students will work in class with readings and case-studies provided by the professor. Also, students should submit an assignment and make a short presentation in class in session 5. Finally, a final project (Assignment 2) will be submitted and presented in the last session:

› Attendance/participation in readings, debates, and case studies: 15%
› Assignment 1 (individual): 35%
› Final project/Assignment 2 (individual or in pairs): 50%

Course schedule

Weeks	Content of the class	Practical activities
Week 1	Public relations strategies in the digital environment	Explanations and brainstorming debate on objectives and strategies & Assignment 1 presentation, Reading 1*
Week 2	Overview of digital marketing	Discuss Reading 1 and ask questions about progress made on Assignment 1, Reading 2*
Week 3	Customer Relationship Model	Discuss Reading 2, Assignment 1
Week 4	Strategic digital communication planning	Tutorials on Assignment 1, Assignment 1
Week 5	Individual presentations & feedback to start-up with Assignment 2	Assignment 1 presentation
Week 6	Insight into digital advertising: strategies, goals, and metrics	Assignment 2 presentation, reading & Debate, in-class practice, Assignment 2
Week 7	Display and programmatic advertising, and features of email marketing	Case studies, Assignment 2
Week 8	Social media advertising	Reading & Debate, in-class practice, case studies, Assignment 2
Week 9	Branded content and influencer marketing	Case studies, Assignment 2
Week 10	Final presentation Assignment 2	Assignment 2 presentation

Required reading and key web references

Reading 1: Nur Uysal (2018). On the relationship between dialogic communication and corporate social performance: advancing dialogic theory and research, Journal of Public Relations Research, 30:3, 100-114, DOI: 10.1080/1062726X.2018.1498344

Reading 2: Erica Ciszek & Nneka Logan (2018). Challenging the dialogic promise: how Ben & Jerry's support for Black Lives Matter fosters dissensus on social media, Journal of Public Relations Research, 30:3, 115-127, DOI: 10.1080/1062726X.2018.1498342

Kotler, Philip (2017). Marketing 4.0. Moving from traditional to digital. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Edelman. Edelman Trust Barometer (2o21). https://www.edelman.com/trust/2021-trustbarometer

Kantar Media. Thinking and Resources (2021). https://www.kantarmedia.com/us/thinking-andresources

Nielsen. Global Media Insights (US + English speaking versions) (2021).

https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/media/

* Other reading materials can be provided during the course.

Recommended reading

Einstein, M. (2016). Black ops Advertising. Or books: London and New York.

Grunig, J. E. (2009). Paradigms of global public relations in an age of digitalisation. Prism 6(2): http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/prism_on-line_journ.html

Kingsnorth, Simon (2019). Digital Marketing Strategy: An Integrated Approach to Online Marketing. London: Philadelphia, PA: Kogan Page.

van Dijk, J. (2013). The culture of Connectivity. A Critical History of Social Media. Oxford University Press.