

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

PADM-GP 4137 / EXEC-GP 4137

Strategic Communication

Meeting times

10:50am-12:30pm on Saturdays Sept 9, 23, Oct 7, 21, Nov 4, 18, Dec 9 | Bobst Library – LL1 – Room 38

Course instructor

Farra Trompeter

Contact information

- Best way to reach me is via email: farra@nyu.edu or work: 718-705-8092
- Emails and calls will be returned within one business day
- Office hours: 10:00-10:40am before class sessions or by appointment; please schedule in advance
- Please call me Farra ☺

Course description

An organization's brand can help it raise money, create change, and recruit participants as it effectively communicates its mission. But a brand is more than just a logo or a memorized elevator pitch, it is the way both internal and external audiences perceive your organization—and shaping this perception is as essential to the success of nonprofit and public organizations as it is to for-profit organizations. And since many nonprofits have limited staff and financial resources available for communications activities, it is even more important that these resources be deployed as strategically as possible. This course will offer an overview of branding and communications concepts, helping students approach communications in a way that builds commitment to their organization's mission, increases trust, creates ambassadors, and strengthens impact. Students will gain a basic familiarity with a variety of branding principles and develop strategic communication recommendations for an organization they are familiar with.

Learning objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Understand how brand can act as the driver to an organization's overall communications strategy.
2. Define positioning and personality for a nonprofit organization and apply these tools to make decisions around an organization's brand and communications channels.
3. Apply best practices for managing communications.
4. Explain the elements of a strategic framework and use it make better decisions.
5. Produce strategic recommendations to for an organization, movement, or campaign.

Course requirements

- There are no prerequisites for this course.
- For your projects, you will need to select a nonprofit or public sector organization, movement, or campaign to serve as your case study. You can pick something you are already connected to or something you admire. While you can do the assignments without talking to an actual organization, connecting with a staff person there will make your projects better. If you need help selecting an organization, let me know by our second session.
- We will read selections from the following book: Durham, Sarah. *Brandraising*. California: Wiley, 2010.
- You will purchase two case studies (\$8.50) to discuss during our fifth session.

Participation and attendance

Class attendance and preparation are critical. All of us bring different perceptions and ideas to this dialogue about strategic communications. Please prepare for each class by immersing yourself in the assignments, and be ready to provide an open and comfortable atmosphere in which to share comments and participate.

As your instructor, I will happily share my knowledge and experience, but I see myself as a facilitator. Our sessions will be interactive and I expect that you'll be ready to share your insights from the readings and engage one another in discussion. This course is for the student who wants to engage with the material and each other. Class participation is important and will count toward your overall grade. *If speaking in public is difficult for you, please let me know early on.*

Since we are only meeting for seven sessions, you are required to attend every class and arrive on time. If you are not able to attend a class due to an emergency, you must notify me beforehand. If there is an assignment due on a date you are absent from class, it is still due at the beginning of class unless you are granted an extension. Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency, out of respect for those who abide by deadlines despite hectic schedules. Late submissions without prior permission will be penalized by ½ a letter grade per day (eg B+ to B).

Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Class attendance and participation:	15%
Worksheets:	50%
• Organization overview:	5%
• Audience profile:	10%
• Brand refinement worksheet:	20%
• Case study answers worksheet:	15%
Final memo:	35%

I will also grade you in accordance to Wagner’s grading guidelines, available for your review at <https://wagner.nyu.edu/files/admissions/GradingGuidelines.pdf>.

Grading rubric

I will evaluate your work on the quality of your insights and your ability to demonstrate that you have processed the readings and reflected on our class discussions. I expect your projects to be organized and thoughtful. Your projects should be well written and reflect professional quality in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and clarity. I will use the following criteria when grading your projects, particularly the final memo:

- **WRITING (25%):** The writing is fluid; sentences/paragraphs are well structured; proper grammar; shows command of graduate level vocabulary and understanding of concepts; polished, not drafty.
- **PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION (10%):** Correct spelling/no typos; length limits honored (if given); timeliness and other instructions followed.
- **ANALYTICAL THINKING (25%):** Uses material from class to develop and support ideas; demonstrates effort to integrate materials; paper has a logical flow that presents and develops a clear, unified position/argument; argument is consistent (no contradictions or gaps) and based on critical thinking.
- **RECOMMENDATIONS (30%):** Reflects realities of nonprofit organization’s resources, mission, and community; applies insights to a practical discussion of strategic communications.
- **REFERENCES (10%):** Uses and cites references appropriately. You can use ANY reference system of your choice, as long as you are consistent.

I will use this rubric when calculating your participation grade:

14-15%: "A" Level Participation

- Attends all classes. If late, sends email to professor ahead of time.
- Frequently contributes to class conversation (roughly once or twice per class). Note: offering input does not mean you will always be called upon.
- Comments are clear, succinct, and relevant to the current conversation.
- Is prepared for class, as evidenced by: providing substantive responses; applying ideas from the readings to the discussion; challenging or extending ideas in the readings; and integrating or contrasting ideas from current readings with previous readings

12-13%: "B" Level Participation

- Misses one class. May not send email to professor ahead of time.
- Rarely contributes to class conversation.
- Comments are sometimes unclear, long-winded, or not relevant to discussion.
- Is less prepared for class (see above).

10-11%: "C" Level Participation

- Misses two classes. Doesn't email professor ahead of time.
- Arrives late more than once.
- Rarely contributes to class conversation.
- Is unprepared for class (see above).

Incompletes and academic integrity

This course will abide by the Wagner School's general policy guidelines on incomplete grades, academic honesty, and plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with these policies. All students are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity.

The Wagner School has a strict policy regarding incompletes. The grade of "Incomplete Pass" will only be available in extreme circumstances such as serious medical emergencies. Students may withdraw from the course up until the date set by the Registrar. Students who withdraw will receive a grade of W and will have to pay for the course again when they retake it. <http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/incompletes>

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating, forgery, plagiarism and collusion in dishonest acts undermine the Wagner School's educational mission and your own personal and intellectual growth. You are expected to bear individual responsibility for your work and to uphold the ideal of academic integrity. Any student who compromises or devalues the academic process will be reported to the administration and be subject to disciplinary action.

<https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies> and <https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code>

Students with disabilities

Any students requiring accommodations should contact me to make proper arrangements. Please be prepared to share your documentation from the NYU disabilities office regarding appropriate accommodations.

Course website

The course website can be found on NYU's Classes system, accessible via the Academics tab on NYU Home (<http://newclasses.nyu.edu/>). Throughout the semester, I will post documents such as lecture slides and supplemental resources. In addition, I will occasionally send emails about course details and logistics to your NYU email account. Please check both the course website and your NYU email account on a regular basis.

Course Schedule

Session 1: September 9 *Introduction | Understanding strategic communication and defining Brandraising*

- *Brandraising*, chapters 1-3
- “From the Expert: Developing Your SWOT Analysis” by Susan Burnash (2011)
<http://newyorkblog.foundationcenter.org/2011/02/from-the-expert-developing-your-swot-analysis.html>
- “Why Most SWOT Analyses Stink and How You Can Make SWOT Work for You” by Lincoln Arneal (2016)
<http://nonprofithub.org/nonprofit-marketing-plan/why-most-swot-analyses-stink-2/>
- “Are you underestimating the power of communications?” by Elizabeth Ricca (2017)
<http://bigducknyc.com/insights/power-of-communications>
- “The Role of Brand in the Nonprofit Sector” by Nathalie Kylander & Christopher Stone (2012)
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_role_of_brand_in_the_nonprofit_sector

Assignment: Submit organization overview worksheet.

Session 2: September 23 *Setting goals and engaging audiences*

- “Nonprofit Communications Strategy: Outlining the context, goals and objectives” by James Howe (2013)
<http://www.communicateandhowe.com/2013/08/21/outlining-the-context-goals-and-objectives-of-your-nonprofit-communications-strategy/>
- “How to Set the Big-Picture Marketing Goals that Get You Where You Want to Go” by Nancy Schwartz (2011)
<https://www.networkforgood.com/nonprofitblog/how-set-big-picture-marketing-goals-get-you-where-you-want-to-go/>
- “Nice to meet you, audience.” by Elizabeth Ricca (2012)
http://bigducknyc.com/insights/nice_to_meet_you_audience
- “Create Personas to Bridge the Gap with Target Audiences” by Nancy Schwartz
<http://gettingattention.org/articles/202/audience-research/nonprofit-audience-research-persona.html>
- “5 Ways To Use Your Audience Persona To Tell A Better Story” by Vanessa Chase
<http://www.thestorytellingnonprofit.com/blog/5-ways-to-use-your-audience-persona-to-tell-a-better-story/>

Assignment: Submit worksheet “Audience Profile” for one audience using your selected organization.

Session 3: October 7 *Brand strategy and identity – what are we communicating?*

- *Brandraising*, chapters 4-5
- “How Great Leaders Inspire Action” (TED talk) by Simon Sinek (2009)
http://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action
- “Positioning: Why you should define your nonprofit’s big idea” by Dan Gunderman (2014)
<http://bigducknyc.com/insights/what-is-your-organizations-big-idea>
- “The Power of Brand Personality for Your Nonprofit” by Farra Trompeter (2017)
<http://bigducknyc.com/insights/the-power-of-personality>
- “How to Create a Winning Brand Strategy (and Why It’s Critical for Nonprofits)” by Sarah Durham (2016)
<http://www.nonprofitpro.com/article/how-to-create-a-winning-brand-strategy-and-why-its-critical-for-nonprofits/all/>
- “Using your brand strategy everyday in everything” by Sarah Durham (2017) <http://bigducknyc.com/insights/using-brand-strategy-daily>
- “The Eight-Word Mission Statement” by Kevin Starr (2012)
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/the_eight_word_mission_statement
- “The language of values” by Dan Gunderman (2016) <http://bigducknyc.com/insights/express-nonprofit-team-values>

Assignments: Develop the positioning and personality for your selected organization and bring it to class to discuss.

Session 4: October 21

Brand experience and brand architecture

- *Brandraising*, chapters 6-7
- “Six steps to ensure your rebranding sticks” by Sarah Durham (2014) <http://www.bigducknyc.com/organizational-strategy-and-clear-communications-goals>
- “Rebuild before repainting: What's really holding your communications back?” by Elizabeth Ricca (2014) <http://www.bigducknyc.com/weak-organizational-development-can-trip-up-branding>
- “The #1 Nonprofit Branding Issue Impacting Organizations Today” by Meghan Dankovich (2015) <http://www.plentyconsulting.com/news/the-1-nonprofit-branding-issue-impacting-organizations-today>
- “Expressing the hierarchy of your brand” by Laura Fisher (2016) <http://bigducknyc.com/insights/family-of-brands-architecture>
- “Why bad brand architecture happens to good organizations” by Ally Dommu (2016) <http://bigducknyc.com/insights/bad-brand-architecture>

Assignment: Submit brand refinement worksheet for your selected organization. You should also review the brand experience/architecture of the organization you are studying and come to class ready to discuss it.

Session 5: November 4

Making real-life brand and communications decisions

- “DonorsChoose.Org: Refining A Successful Brand” by Allison Johnson and Emily Chen Bendle (2015)
- “Marketing New York City” by V. Kasturi Rangan; Anita Elberse (2008)

Access both at <http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/66148708> (requires free registration, then payment of \$8.50)

Assignment: Come to class ready to discuss both case studies and submit the case study worksheet for one of the cases.

Session 6: November 18

Using campaigns and social media to attract supporters

- “A Chorus for Wildlife: How World Wildlife Fund helped organize a global clarion call to stop wildlife crime.” by Carter Roberts & Steve Ertel (2016) http://ssir.org/case_for_communications/entry/a_chorus_for_wildlife
- “Advocating an End to the Death Penalty” by Annmarie Benedict & Eric Brown (2016) https://ssir.org/case_for_communications/entry/advocating_an_end_to_the_death_penalty
- “Communications Matters: Strategy: Channels” (2014) <http://www.com-matters.org/attribute/channels>
- “Nine Digital Marketing Lessons Nonprofits Can Learn from charity: water” by Chloe Gray (2013) <http://www.bethkanter.org/charitywater-digital/>
- “Discover how the City of New York used Hootsuite to triple its online audience.” <https://hootsuite.com/resources/case-study/a-new-york-city-case-study>
- “A Strategic Guide to Social Media for Nonprofits” by Alicia Johnston (2017) <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/nonprofit-social-media-guide/>

Assignment:

- Review the website, sign the pledge, analyze the messaging and engagement, review social media channels of WWF (see footer), and come to class ready to discuss: <http://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/stop-wildlife-crime>.

Session 7: December 9

Internal communications, strong teams, and developing plans

- “Internal communications: elements to include in your nonprofit’s plan” by Meg Shannon (2016) <http://nonprofitmarcommunity.com/internal-communications-plan-elements/>
- “17 Internal Communications Best Practices for 2017” by Colin Bovet (2017) <https://blog.enplug.com/internal-communications-best-practices-2017>
- “DARCI framework” by Robert Gass (2013) <https://lists.okfn.org/pipermail/okfn-br/attachments/20150526/897aa8c5/attachment-0007.pdf>

- “MOCHA model” by The Management Center <http://www.managementcenter.org/resources/assigning-responsibilities/>
- “What it Takes to be Great: The Top Five Factors of Successful Nonprofit Communications Teams” by Sarah Durham and Kivi Leroux-Miller (2016) <http://bigducknyc.com/insights/5-factors>
- “How to Empower Staff to be the Voice for the Organization through Social Media” (webinar/video) by Farra Trompeter (2014) <https://vimeo.com/108941692> (password: empowerstaff)
- “Four Steps Every Nonprofit Should Take Before Creating Its Strategic Communications Plan” by Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (2016) https://www.msdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/MSDF_strategic_nonprofit_communications_planning_ebook_2014.pdf
- “Creating an Effective Communications Plan for Your Nonprofit Organization” by Linda Gerhardt (2017) <https://blog.razoo.com/creating-an-effective-communications-plan-for-your-nonprofit-organization-edec9e328fbb>

Assignment: Submit 4-5 page memo proposing the strategic framework and communications recommendations for your selected organization. **Due 9am on Saturday, December 16.**