

Strategic People Management / Electives / 2026

CONTENTS

Strategic People Management / Electives / 2026	1
Contents	1
Faculty Information	2
Faculty bio.....	2
Abstract	2
Educational Goals	3
Teaching methods and workload	3
Grading and assessment.....	3
Required textbook(s) and Readings.....	5
Detailed course schedule	5
Assignments Description	8

FACULTY INFORMATION

Name, Title	Dr. Madleen Meier-Barthold, Assistant Professor at RSM (course coordinator)
Email address	meierbarthold@rsm.nl
LinkedIn/RSM profile	https://www.rsm.nl/people/madleen-meier-barthold/
Preferred contact	Please make an appointment via email.

FACULTY BIO

Dr. Madleen Meier-Barthold is an Assistant Professor at Rotterdam School of Management. Her research focuses on the strategic role of HRM in organizations, investigating how HR policies, practices, and leadership shape employee perceptions, decision-making, and organizational outcomes. Her work employs a wide range of advanced quantitative methods from different disciplines. Her work has been recognized by best paper awards of the Academy of Management and the Dutch HRM Network Conference and has appeared in leading journals including *Human Resource Management* and *Organizational Research Methods*. Besides her research and teaching, she is committed to bringing research and practice closer together.

ABSTRACT

People are at the heart of every organisation. They are a key determinant in translating business strategy to business value. Yet effectively managing people remains one of the most complex challenges for leaders at all levels. Aligning people's strengths, weaknesses, motivations, and interests with the business strategy is no easy feat. In most cases, managers and leaders learn this the hard way, even though there are clear evidence-based guidelines to follow and build upon.

This course helps you on your journey of finding a professional, structured, and evidence-based approach to managing people. Whether it concerns your direct colleagues, your direct reports, or your organisation, this course equips you with the strategic insight, interpersonal skills, and tools necessary to navigate today's evolving workplace. Through six interactive sessions, you will explore the interdependence between people management, business strategy, and leadership effectiveness. You will develop critical interpersonal skills for managing difficult conversations and building inclusive and high-trust organisations, while learning how leaders align talent, motivation, and organisational systems with strategic goals. Whether you are a manager, consultant, or executive, this course will provide you with the frameworks and skills to align people management with organisational success.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Learning areas	Educational Goals
I. Content-related	Upon completion of the course, participants will be able to: - Identify opportunities for improvement in people management policies and processes. - Understand how changes in work and the management of work affect people management.
II. Skills-related	Participants will be able to: - Analyse how strategic people management drives business performance and organisational success. - Design evidence-based interventions in people management.
III. Attitude-related	Participants will be able to: - Take a strategic and evidence-based perspective of the organization, viewing people as a key driver of competitive advantage.

TEACHING METHODS AND WORKLOAD

The course consists of six sessions. Each session will combine discussion of theory with practical application through exercises to build your people management skills. The sessions will be highly interactive, and attendance is required to gain the benefits of this course. The course Canvas page will be used to publish slides decks and to provide feedback on submitted assignments. We will also open a discussion forum on Canvas to keep the conversation going.

Description	Calculation	Total
In-Class sessions:	6 sessions x 3 hours	18 hours
Class Preparation: (average 2 hours for every 1 hour spent in class)	6 sessions x 3 hours x 2 hours	36 hours
Preparation of In-Class Group Assignments		6 hours
Individual Assignment		24 hours
Total Course Hours		84 Total hours
EC (Number of study credits)	3 EC x 28	84 Total hours

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

Course: MBA26 Strategic People Management	Assessment Format	
Educational goals per course (formulated using action verbs (Bloom's Taxonomy))	Individual Assignment	Total
• Identify opportunities for improvement in people management policies and processes.	X	
• Understand how changes in work and the management of work affect people management.	X	
• Analyse how strategic people management drives business performance and organisational success.	X	
• Design evidence-based interventions in people management.	X	
• Take a strategic and evidence-based perspective of the organization, viewing people as a key driver of competitive advantage.	X	
	Individual Assignment	Total

Weighting factor	100%	100%
Minimum grade required	5.5	5.5
When failed, resit option (Yes/No) within academic year	Yes	
Form of examination (e.g. MC, Open-book, etc.)	Assignment	
Group / Individual assessment (Group/Individual)	Individual	

In order to pass the course, each assessment or deliverable (component grade) with a resit option, needs to be at least 5.5. Components with no resit option bear no minimum grade required, but to pass the overall course, the final grade needs to be at least 5.5.

Grades are rounded according to the rounding provisions included in the Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) of the programme, and are expressed with 1 decimal point. Not meeting the minimum grade required for either a component grade or the overall course grade determines a fail for the course. Participants can resit a failed component only once. There is no capping of the grade for a resit examination. The only exception is when the nature of the failed assignment allows for an improvement effort of the same assignment (capped at 5.5 for that component). For this particular course, the faculty has decided that you will have the opportunity to **improve your individual assignment** (which determines 100% of the final grade) if the minimum grade requirement (5.5) is not met. The maximum grade after the improvement opportunity is capped at 5.5.

Grade penalties for unauthorized late submissions will be automatically imposed. Penalties for unauthorised late submissions range from 10% to 20% deduction from the examination component depending on the hours/days late. Unauthorised late submissions 4 days or longer after the deadline without prior notification and a reasonable explanation for the late submission, will not be accepted.

Attendance is mandatory and a requirement to pass the course. Missing classes and arriving late may result in grading penalties and even a fail for the course.

Fraud, Plagiarism / Self-plagiarism (Appendix B on Code of Conduct, Teaching and Examination Regulations -TER-)

The Examination Board defines fraud as *“the action or negligence of a student because of which it is impossible, entirely, or partially, to form a correct judgment about the knowledge, insight, and skills of them or another student”* (TER). Examples of fraud are cheating, cribbing, plagiarism, freeriding in a team assignment, availability of unauthorized (study) material during a test such as mobile phones, contract cheating/outsourcing/ghost-writing, unauthorized use of generative AI, identity fraud, theft.

Confirmed cases of fraud/plagiarism will lead to (appropriate and proportional) sanctions as defined by the Examination Board in the Rules and Guidelines. Repetitive cases of fraud/plagiarism lead to expulsion from the programme.

Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarising of the work of another person or group without acknowledgment, including submission of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge the quotation of paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else.

Using ideas from your own prior work (assignment) without referencing the work in your assignment is considered self-plagiarism.

Participants are required to adhere to the 6 principles outlined in the RSM AI guidelines with regard to the use of Artificial Intelligence Platforms such as ChatGPT and related software/tools. The unauthorised use constitutes

violation of plagiarism/ fraud policy. For this particular course, the faculty **embraces the uses of AI**. This means that you are free to use GenAI tools to assist with, for example, brainstorming, structuring your writing, and deepening your understanding of complex concepts. However, it is crucial to maintain the originality of your work. The use of GenAI does not replace the need for original thought and analysis. Your work should reflect your ideas and contributions. We expect that your submissions will allow us to distinguish your thinking from that generated by others, including AI tools. Failure to follow these existing regulations regarding plagiarism will be considered fraud.

For more information about academic integrity and AI please refer to the Programme's Examination Regulations and RSM AI guidelines documents on the Student Hub.

Assessment / Deliverable:	Individual or group:	(Due) date and hand in location:	% of final grade:
Individual Assignment	Individual	TBD	100 %

For all Canvas submissions, please make sure to include the student name and programme name in the title of the file submission, as well as within the document itself (on the cover page).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S) AND READINGS

This course relies solely on articles that can be retrieved from the library.

DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE

Each session begins with a real-world challenge you might face in your daily work. Together, we will explore scientific insights, share experiences, and engage in hands-on in-class exercises to build practical skills. You will leave each session with key principles and actionable strategies to apply in your own organisation.

The Right People: Finding, Developing, and Retaining Talent

Session 1	
Topics:	The Strategic Importance of People Management for Leaders - People are the most valuable asset of an organisation, yet CEOs frequently cite challenges such as talent shortages, engagement issues, and leadership gaps as key concerns. - How can leaders—beyond HR—strategically manage people to drive performance and long-term success? Session 1: Talent Management - Problem: Organisations struggle to attract, select, and retain top talent in an increasingly competitive and dynamic environment. - Focus: How leaders can build a talent strategy that aligns with business goals. - Key Topics: Recruitment, selection, onboarding, retention strategies. - Skills Learned: Make strategic hiring decisions that align with long-term business goals.
In-class exercises:	Common talent management myths Real-world talent management dilemmas

Readings:	- TBD
-----------	-------

Session 2	
Topics:	Session 2: Learning, Adaptability & Skill Management - Problem: The pace of change requires employees to continuously develop skills, yet many organisations lack effective learning cultures. - Focus: How leaders can foster adaptability, continuous learning, and self-management within their teams. - Key Topics: Learning & development, reskilling/upskilling, employee autonomy. - Skills Learned: Create an environment that encourages self-directed learning and skill development.
In-class exercises:	TBD
Readings:	- TBD

The Right Processes: Managing People Effectively

Session 3	
Topics:	Session 3: Motivation, Incentives and Performance Management - Problem: Poorly designed incentives, unclear goals, and weak feedback systems can lead to disengagement, short-termism, or unintended behaviours. - Focus: How leaders motivate employees and manage performance while encouraging sustained effort, learning, and responsible behaviour. - Key Topics: Motivation, incentives and rewards, feedback, performance evaluation, evaluation bias. - Skills Learned: Recognise how incentives and feedback shape behaviour and use performance management practices that support motivation and long-term performance.
In-class exercises:	TBD
Readings:	- TBD

Session 4	
Topics:	Session 4: Managing Issues & Difficult Conversations - Problem: Poorly handled conflicts and difficult conversations can derail teams and damage performance. - Focus: How leaders can effectively manage workplace tensions while maintaining trust. - Key Topics: Conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, feedback culture. - Skills Learned: Techniques for handling difficult conversations while maintaining trust and engagement
In-class exercises:	Practicing with difficult conversations
Readings:	- TBD

The Right System: Creating Responsible Workplaces

Session 5	
Topics:	Session 5: Creating Inclusive and High-Trust Organizations - Problem: Many organisations struggle to build truly inclusive cultures where diverse perspectives thrive. - Focus: How leaders can design systems and behaviors that promote equity, inclusion, and belonging. - Key Topics: Unconscious bias, psychological safety, inclusive leadership. - Skills Learned: Recognise and mitigate unconscious bias while building an inclusive culture
In-class exercises:	Practicing including behaviors
Readings:	- TBD

Session 6	
Topics:	Session 6: Managing Stakeholders - Problem: Leaders must balance the interests of multiple stakeholders. These interests may align in some cases but conflict in others, creating difficult trade-offs for organisations. - Focus: How leaders navigate competing stakeholder interests while maintaining organisational performance and responsible employment. - Key Topics: Stakeholder perspectives, mutual gains vs. competing outcomes, decent work and organisational performance. - Skills Learned: Assess stakeholder interests and make informed decisions about people management when goals conflict.
In-class exercises:	TBD
Readings:	- TBD

ASSIGNMENTS DESCRIPTION

More information about the assignment, and grading rubric, will be made available closer to the start of the course.

Individual Assignment (100%) – Reimagining Your Organisation for Strategic People Management

In this written assignment, you will critically analyse your own organisation or team and reimagine it as an ideal organisation from a strategic people management perspective.