

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

developing business models for communications
and advancing the profile of communicators



Strategic communication at a glance

In today's rapidly changing world, communication leaders face a significant challenge. Stakeholders are more demanding than ever, publics are fragmented, and distrust and polarization are on the rise. Meanwhile, economic and technological competition is fiercer than ever. Effective communication plays a crucial role in building relationships, driving sales, shaping public opinion, and maintaining reputation. However, a recent study found that many corporate leaders are unaware of their communication department's goals, highlighting a gap in understanding and effectiveness.

This uncertainty prompts questions about where to invest resources: in automated content, chatbots, or innovative events like the Metaverse? Furthermore, the importance of activities such as reputation building, media presence, and employee engagement is questioned in relation to overall organisational success. Bridging the gap between long-term impact and the demands of a 24/7 media environment requires a strategic approach to communication.

This masterclass offers conceptual and practical solutions to redefine the role of communication teams. Drawing on international research and insights from industry leaders, it emphasises strategic communication—a discipline focused on activities essential for organisational survival and success. Participants will learn to articulate communication's value in the language of executives and to distinguish strategic from operational communication activities.

The course introduces management tools for analysis, alignment with corporate goals, and positioning within organisations. Through interactive sessions and peer exchange, participants will gain practical skills and insights to apply strategic thinking in their current roles and future careers. Ultimately, the goal is to develop a business model for communication that creates, delivers, and captures value tailored to each organisation's unique context and objectives.

Learning objectives

This three-day course is designed to help you:

- understand the principles of strategic thinking for corporate communications, and how this helps to guide practical decisions, even in times of change
- analyse existing business models for communications in organisations, which includes assignments by top management and resources, operating models for managing communication, functional activities like stakeholder communication and internal advising, and the impact on value-creation
- align communication to organisational goals by using adequate management tools for corporate communications, such as the Communication Value Circle and the Communication Strategy House
- position communication departments and communicators at the top and throughout the organisation with different techniques
- enhance your personal profile as a communication leader, next-generation leader, or consultant coaching communicators and general managers
- experience practice-proven management tools to solve the challenges listed above
- enable you to analyse the communication business model of your own (or another) communication unit and develop concrete ideas for optimization as part of the assignment
- utilise the power of communications for corporate success both effectively and efficiently – to make your organisation future-proof in times of political and economic uncertainty.

Your learning experience

The course will introduce you to different management tools for analysis, for aligning communication to corporate goals, and for positioning communication departments and communicators within organisations. You will learn techniques in interactive sessions, share experiences with peers working in different organisational setups, and talk to seasoned chief communication officers about their experiences.

There is an environment based on experiential learning, which will help you to assimilate new knowledge. It combines these learning tools:

- **Lectures** that provide the basic theoretical frameworks to approach every topic, and additional reading to further develop your understanding of each course topic.
- **Case studies** to help you discuss each topic in depth and better understand how to practise the theoretical concepts.
- **Guest speakers** who transfer knowledge and practical tools from experience.
- **In-class discussions** which encourage active engagement and sharing of experiences.

Certification and ECTS

Participants are asked to apply the theoretical and practical notions presented in the first part of course to an organisation of their own preference, showcasing in a written report what can be improved, why, and how this can be implemented using the framework presented in the course. This is an individual assignment. Details will be discussed in the final session of the course.

You will receive a certificate upon successful completion of the course.

This course is worth 5 ECTS, if you take this as part of the complete part-time MSc in Corporate Communication.

For whom?

You will benefit from this course if you are communication professional and want to apply strategic thinking for corporate communication in your own organisation. It is ideal for:

Communication Managers: Individuals responsible for overseeing communication strategies within an organisation will benefit from gaining new insights and tools to enhance their effectiveness in driving organisational success.

Corporate Communication Executives: Senior leaders responsible for shaping and implementing communication strategies at the corporate level will find value in deepening their understanding of strategic communication principles and the position of communication departments within the organisation.

Communication Consultants: Consultants advising organisations on communication strategies will enhance their expertise by learning practical tools and frameworks for strategic communication planning.

Overall, this course is suitable for anyone who seeks to enhance their strategic communication skills and drive meaningful impact within their organisation.

In our classroom, you will meet a diverse group of accomplished, driven and open-minded professionals from Europe and beyond, working in various communication positions in the public and private sectors, NGOs, and consultancies.

Why strategic communication?

You can use many new channels, formats and technologies. You may have asked yourself: should we rather invest in Clubhouse, chatbots or a virtual event? Which is the most important: to build reputation with politicians, increase share of voice in the media or foster employee engagement? Are these activities – and is communication in general – crucial for the overall success of the organisation? How can we solve the gap between long-term impact and daily requirements of a 24/7 media environment? These questions force us to reflect upon the fundamental relationship between communication and corporate success. Every organisation needs a suitable business model for its communication department, which helps practitioners to operate smoothly in a turbulent world, create overall value, and explain this to top management.

This course will provide you with conceptual and practical solutions to position yourself and your communication team in a new way. It builds on the latest insights from international research and lessons learned from thought leaders in the field. Combining knowledge from corporate communications and strategic management helps you to understand and explain communications in the language of executives.



Programme overview

Monday, 29 September 2025

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND TOOLS FOR FOCUSING YOUR ACTIVITIES

- Strategic thinking and strategic communication
- Aligning communication and business goals: Concepts and practices
- Applying the Communication Value Circle and the Communication Strategy House
- Workshop: Deriving strategic objectives for communications
- Workshop: Creating the strategy house
- Guest lecture

Tuesday, 30 September 2025

BUSINESS MODELS FOR COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS

- Business models for communications
- Workshop: Business Model
- Part I: Analysis and idea development Part II: Creating the strategy house
- Guest lecture

Wednesday, 1 October 2025

POSITIONING COMMUNICATIONS TO MEET TOP MANAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS

- The positioning of communication departments and the changing roles of communicators in organisations
- Peer-to-peer debate
- Plenary discussion: Learning and strategies for improvement
- Wrap-up

Teaching experts

Leading lecturer: Professor Ansgar Zerfass – Leipzig University

Ansgar Zerfass is Professor and Chair of Strategic Communication at Leipzig University, Germany. He is also Professor of Communication and Leadership at BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo, Norway, and editor of the "International Journal of Strategic Communication", Routledge, USA. He has published 44 books and over 430 articles, chapters, and study reports and is lead researcher for the European Communication Monitor series, the world's largest research project surveying trends in strategic communication since 2007. According to Google Scholar, Ansgar Zerfass is the world's most influential and cited researcher in strategic communication, corporate communications, communication management, and public relations.

Julia Huhn, Head of Communications – Santander Consumer Bank

Julia Huhn is a passionate communications professional with a strong expertise in strategy, operational excellence and transformation processes. She is a founding

member of the Modern Leaders Initiative by PRCC HR Consulting. She has also held several positions at Henkel. In her last role at Henkel, she was the global head of corporate branding and communications strategy. She holds a master degree in communications management.

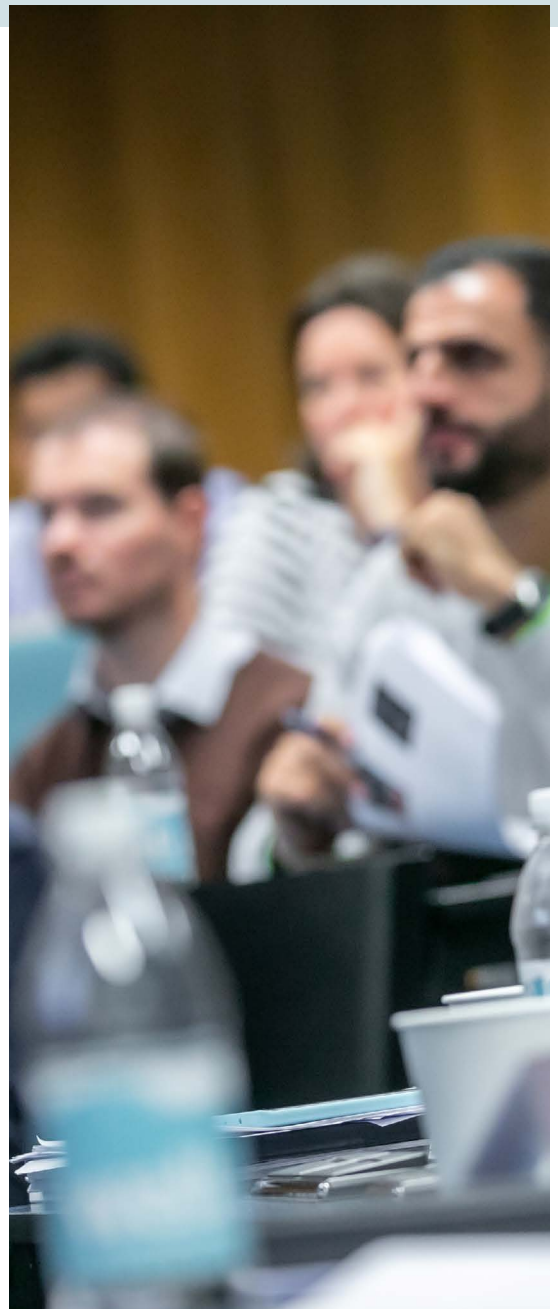
Christoph Lautenbach, Managing Partner – Lautenbach Sass

Christoph has helped international organisations to align communications with corporate strategy for more than 25 years. His mission is to ensure that communication contributes to overall value creation. Christoph is a proven expert in developing communication strategies as well as in designing operating models for communication across disciplines and organisational borders. He holds a master degree in history and communication sciences.

Teaching experts

Ines Schurin, Group Director of Corporate Communications – REWE Group

Ines Schurin, Group Director of Corporate Communications at REWE Group, leads communication for one of Europe's largest retail and tourism companies. With 385,000 employees across 21 countries, REWE boasts a €84.4 billion turnover. Schurin, based in Cologne since 2022, previously managed communication for REWE International AG in Vienna and served as a press spokesperson at VERBUND. Her diverse background includes agency work, cultural sector experience, and academic qualifications in English language, literature, Public Relations, General Management, and Legal Studies.



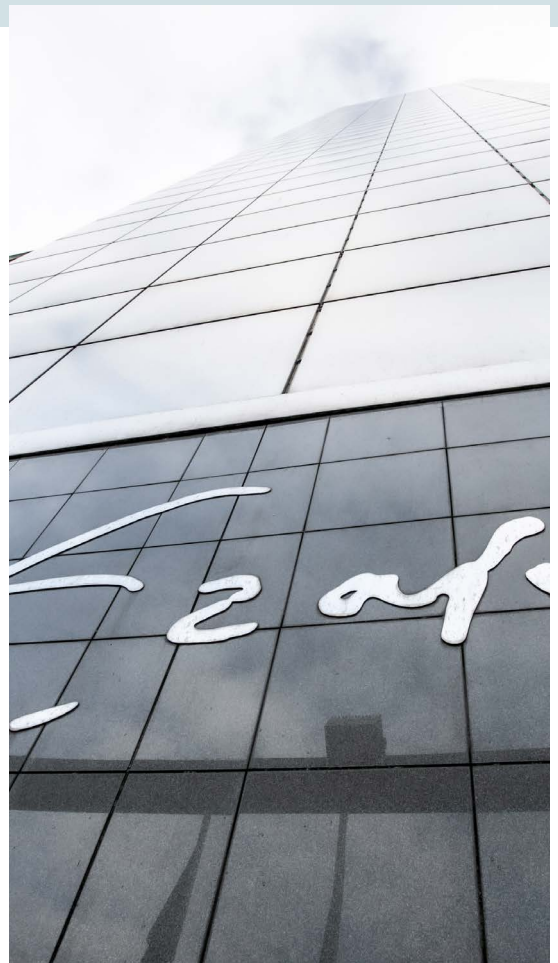
Practical information

Explore the latest updates on dates, fees, and locations by visiting our website at rsm.nl/mcc. Take advantage of the convenience of our frequently offered live online courses.

If you have any questions or need more information, we're here to help. Feel free to reach out to us at ccc@rsm.nl or call us at +31 (0) 10 408 2851.

Ready to take the next step?
Secure your spot by completing our [online application form](#).

We look forward to welcoming you to our programme!



About our Part-time Executive Master in Corporate Communication programme

This course can be followed on its own, or as a part of our **Part-time Executive MSc in Corporate Communication**.

We have offered this master programme since 1998, to communication professionals who wish to further enhance their careers. The aim is to provide strategic, leadership and management skills, as well as in-depth knowledge of corporate communication, reputation management and related disciplines. Participants who complete the whole programme are rewarded with a master degree from Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Our accredited programme is designed to be flexible, and can be combined with a full-time career. You can therefore start at any time, with any of our four modules:

Part I **Foundation of corporate communication** Foundation course (in January or June)



Part II Six advanced elective courses Six advanced elective courses. You can choose six courses from the 15 that are offered, depending on your personal or professional interest and availability



Part III International Study Trip Discover and learn from the best practices in corporate communication by visiting global companies.



Part IV **Master thesis** Master thesis.



To obtain the master degree you must complete all four modules. Upon completion, you will have gained insight from new academic, international perspectives, and learned from working with international peers from diverse industry backgrounds within Europe and beyond.

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Accredited by



RSM Executive Education

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Rotterdam School of Management Erasmus University (RSM)

is one of Europe's top-ranked business schools. RSM provides ground-breaking research and education furthering excellence in all aspects of management and is based in the international port city of Rotterdam – a vital nexus of business, logistics and trade. RSM's primary focus is on developing business leaders with international careers who can become a force for positive change by carrying their innovative mindset into a sustainable future. Our first-class range of bachelor, master, MBA, PhD and executive programmes encourage them to become critical, creative, caring and collaborative thinkers and doers.