

Northwestern University
Executive Management for Design and Construction

Communication and Negotiation
PROJ_MGT 473

Course Objective:

This course is designed to prepare project executives to communicate and negotiate effectively and efficiently in positions of leadership. More specifically, it is designed to help students think strategically about how, as well as what, they communicate and how and when to negotiate. The course assumes that executive education students know communication basics: how to write emails, memos, letters, proposals, and reports. Also, they have probably made several, if not many, presentations during their careers, and they have likely conducted some successful negotiations. Thus, the challenge for this course is not simply to teach communication and negotiation skills, but rather to teach managers to achieve specific objectives with a given audience in a specific situation.

Drawing on best practices in management communication, this course will give participants a conceptual model for strategic communication and negotiation that can be adapted to many kinds of projects and purposes. By the end of the course, participants will have gained experience in how to:

- Use a framework for strategic communication
- Organize a complicated document
- Provide feedback that helps others revise
- Revise and edit their own writing for clarity and cohesiveness
- Motivate readers, audiences, or team members
- Persuade readers, audiences, or team members to adopt specific courses of action or points of view
- Initiate and manage successful negotiations with individuals or groups
- Design effective PowerPoint slides to accompany presentations or negotiations
- Deliver PowerPoint presentations effectively

Each module will build upon the concepts introduced in the first module about strategy and use a combination of teaching methods to encourage participant involvement and group interaction.

Instructors will use PowerPoint presentations and readings to introduce some ideas, along with large group discussion, small group exercises, case studies, and simulations. Exercises and assignments will be related to participants' workplace challenges or assignments in other classes. Thus, course participants will gain experience in transferring skills and applying key concepts to new situations. In addition, students will submit written material each week and

receive individualized feedback from their peers. Since course participants are all professionals with considerable work experience, this feedback will underscore the authentic nature of the assignments. Students will receive feedback on assignments from the faculty.

Week-by-week description of the course:

Week 1 Understanding and Using Communication Strategy

This module presents project managers with the key concepts of communication strategy.

- What makes for a good communication strategy?
- What makes an email message, a report, a proposal, or a presentation effective?
- What communication devices get people's attention and motivate them to act?
- What delivery channel should a writer use?
- How is an effective document structured?

After working through several group exercises based on case studies, participants will analyze a strategic communication situation from their own workplace.

Assignment: Produce a piece of actual workplace writing – a substantial email, memo, proposal, or similar piece. Write a cover memo outlining the document's strategy.

Week 2 Writing Effective Documents and Emails

What motivates people to act? This session will review the theory and research of persuasion in business and teach participants how to use specific persuasive strategies to achieve business goals. In this session participants will learn about persuasion frameworks of Cialdini, Conger, and Fogg. Some class time will focus on delivering arguments orally. In class, students will outline the strategy for their persuasive proposal and begin drafting.

Assignment: Produce a persuasive proposal in the form of any one of the following: Memo, email, or conversation (but must show a written script). Write a strategy cover memo.

Week 3 Using Persuasion to Get Results

What motivates people to act? This session will review the theory and research of persuasion in business and teach participants how to use specific persuasive strategies to achieve business goals. In this session participants will learn about persuasion frameworks of Cialdini, Conger, and Fogg. Some class time will focus on delivering arguments orally. In class, students will outline the strategy for their persuasive proposal and begin drafting.

Assignment: Produce a persuasive proposal in the form of any one of the following: Memo, email, or conversation (but must show a written script). Write a strategy cover memo.

Week 4 Presenting Data Effectively

In this session, students will learn how to efficiently and persuasively use visual tools such as graphs, tables, and diagrams. A well-structured graph, table, or diagram is a powerful communication tool, conveying important information at a glance. Creating and critiquing these information displays are key skills that managers need to master.

The segment will address the following issues: (1) when to use a table, graph, or diagram and what type/format to use; (2) how to organize, design, and highlight an information display for quick comprehension; (3) how to use common software (Word, PowerPoint, Excel) to quickly create the best-looking and clearest information displays. Interactive exercises will include challenges in selecting and designing the best information displays, as well some basic exercises using common software.

Assignment: Produce one table and one graph from your workplace information according to best practices. Be prepared to present it to the class. Come to the next class with a PowerPoint presentation topic.

Week 5 Producing Compelling PowerPoint Slides

In this session, students will learn best practices in creating effective PowerPoint decks. Topics covered include:

- Creating introductory slides that focus and engage the audience using the SCQA format
- (Situation, Complication, Question, Answer)
- Designing the deck with the intent both to present and to leave behind
- Using a sequence of talking headlines to develop logical flow from slide to slide
- Establishing a single focused message per slide using talking headlines
- Applying the appropriate level of detail per slide
- Creating coherence by having all elements of the slide relate to its focused message
- Going beyond bullet points with tables, graphs, diagrams, conceptual visualizations

Assignment: Produce a set of 5-8 PowerPoint Slides on a work related issue. Write a 1-page cover memo outlining the strategy for the PowerPoint Slides.

Week 6 **Delivering an Effective Presentation: Part 1**

In this session, students will concentrate on delivering a brief 5-minute stand up presentation to the audience, with their PowerPoint slides. They will learn to apply key principles behind effective oral delivery, including best practices in vocal quality, body language, and audience interaction, and they will make one practice presentation. The focus will be on:

- Establishing an authoritative and credible stage presence
- Reading audience cues
- Managing and controlling audience interaction-handling Q&A

Assignment: Revise the set of slides as needed.

Week 7 **Delivering an Effective Presentation: Part 2**

In this session, each student will deliver a final presentation. Presentations will be digitally recorded and reviewed.

Assignment: Readings on negotiation

Week 8 **Conducting Fruitful Negotiations: Basic Concepts**

In this session, students will learn basic concepts and strategies for negotiating, including:

- BATNA
- Bargaining zone
- Positions vs. Interests
- Fixed Pie (Distributive) vs. Expanded Pie (integrative)
- Concessions with and without value

Students will conduct two short case study negotiations.

Assignment: Read Chapters 7 through 10 of Bargaining for Advantage

Week 9 **Conducting Fruitful Negotiations: Making the Negotiation Process Work**

In this session, students will conduct a large scale negotiation case over the entire course session, using Shell's 4 step negotiation process. Students will methodically work through each step, preparing a bullet point list for each part, which the instructors will review and critique.

- Preparing a strategy
- Exchanging Information
- Opening and Making Concessions
- Closing and Gaining Commitment

Assignment: Prepare a one to two page analysis of on an actual workplace negotiation, either one that has been completed or one planned for some future time.

Week 10 Applying Negotiation Strategies in the Workplace

In this session, students will each present their findings from their analysis of their workplace negotiation. The final portfolio will include revisions of the following three writing deliverables, together with a reflective cover memo on reasons for revisions and what will be done differently in communicating in the workplace.

- Workplace email/memo
- PowerPoint slides
- Persuasive proposal

Grade Determination:

Consistent & thoughtful work throughout the quarter	20%
Weekly feedback to classmates	20%
Class participation and contributions	20%
Final portfolio of revised assignments	40%

Text:

Readings will include key portions of texts, such as:

- M. Munter, *A Guide to Managerial Communication*
- J. Conger, *The Necessary Art of Persuasion*
- R. Cialdini, *Harnessing the Science of Persuasion*
- J. Williams, *Style*
- R. Sedlack, B. Shwom, and K. Keller, *Graphics and Visual Communication for Managers*
- R. Fisher, B. Ury, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating to Agreement Without Giving In*
- G. R. Schell, *Bargaining for Advantage*
- L. Thompson, *The Mind and Heart of the Negotiator*

NOTE: This course description explains the essence of the material covered. Canvas is the best source for the most up-to-date information about specific details for any given offering of the course.