

Strategic Communications & Decision-Making

Course Description

This advanced course explores how executive leaders use communication as a strategic tool to drive decision-making, align stakeholders, and lead through uncertainty. Blending insights from experience, theory, and high-stakes case studies, participants will examine how messages influence perception, risk-taking, trust, and organizational action. This course emphasizes leadership communications, narrative framing, and decision agility.

Course Objectives

- Evaluate how communication impacts strategic decision-making.
- Apply communication frameworks to complex, ambiguous scenarios.
- Craft narratives that inspire action, alignment, and confidence.
- Manage high-stakes communication during inflection points, crises, and complex strategic decisions.
- Leverage storytelling and data to drive clarity and consensus.

Weekly Topics & Readings

Week	Topic	Key Activities
1	Communication as Strategy	Self-assessment of leadership voice and decision style
2	Framing Decisions & Risk	Messaging exercise using gain/loss framing and bias awareness
3	Leading with Vision Under Uncertainty	Simulation: Communicate a bold decision with limited data
4	Cognitive Bias and Influence	Reading on heuristics; identify bias traps in past decisions
5	Communicating with Senior Leadership	Executive memo writing and mock investor Q&A
6	Strategic Storytelling	Group workshop: Build and pitch a high-impact executive narrative

7	Communicating Change & Transformation	Develop messaging for a restructuring or rebrand scenario
8	Navigating Organizational Politics	Case study on internal alignment; stakeholder strategy mapping
9	Crisis Messaging and Strategy	Flash-crisis simulation with board/external response plan
10	Trust, Transparency, and Ethical Messaging	Debates and reflection on reputation vs. disclosure
11	Final Briefing + Decision Challenge	Present strategic comms plan for a complex decision
12	Course Reflection & Executive Toolkit	Build a personal comms playbook and feedback session

Grading Breakdown

- Executive Memos & Exercises – 25%
- Stakeholder Strategy Project – 20%
- Crisis Simulation – 20%
- Final Decision-Making Briefing – 25%
- Participation & Engagement – 10%

Required Materials

- *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman (excerpts)
- *Made to Stick* by Chip & Dan Heath
- Harvard Business Review case packets, sample memos, and executive briefings (provided via LMS)

Optional Readings

- *Decisive* by Chip & Dan Heath
- *Leadership on the Line* by Ronald Heifetz & Marty Linsky
- *The Art of Thinking Clearly* by Rolf Dobelli