

SELECTED PROBLEMS: HR Consulting Skills: The Role of the Strategic HR Business Partner

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Course Overview

Dramatic changes in the business environment (e.g., increased competition, new technology) have provided the opportunity for HR Professionals to have a significant impact on their company's ability to compete successfully. To capitalize on this opportunity, HR professionals must move from a tactical, specialist or generalist role to become a **Strategic HR Business Partner**. This class covers the competencies needed by HR professionals to become more strategically focused and learn to "partner" with their internal clients to become value-added contributors and trusted advisors. These competencies include:

- ❑ **Partnering Skills.** Build effective client relations, prioritize multiple stakeholders, conduct client meetings, develop trust with clients, deal with difficult clients, and develop more effective, contracting, sales and negotiating skills
- ❑ **Diagnosis & Measurement.** Learn to use a structured diagnostic process to define the problem, collect and analyze data, and develop a feasible action plan linking project results to organizational strategic goals. Use of appropriate models (e.g., BSC) and tools needed to collect data that supports a compelling business case for your project
- ❑ **Facilitation Skills/Consulting Tools.** Learn to influence without authority, develop executive coaching/mentoring skills, facilitate interpersonal processes: conflict resolution/mediation, communication, problem-solving, and decision making
- ❑ **Facilitating Change/Project Management.** Develop, staff and manage organizational improvement project teams, overcome resistance and build commitment to projects, create and facilitate effective team structures and employ agile project management processes (e.g., scrum)

Course Objective

The first half of the class focuses on the knowledge and skills necessary to interact with a client, diagnose the problem and propose and sell an action plan that will have a positive business impact. The focus is on the actions necessary to help execute strategy and improve the effectiveness of the organization while developing positive relations with clients.

The second half of the class focuses on the knowledge and skills necessary for the SHRBP to facilitate interpersonal processes: communication, conflict resolution, problem-solving, & decision making and learn to influence without authority. Creating and facilitating project improvement teams will be emphasized.

Two assessments (Social Styles and Conflict Resolution Styles) will be conducted to provide students with a framework to better understand how they relate to others and suggest ways to adapt to different situations or types of clients, and a live organizational case will be presented.

| DATE | TOPIC | READINGS |
|------|---|--|
| 1/22 | Consulting Model Business consulting Organizational consulting The SHRBP consulting model The 7 essential meetings Consulting objectives (value & relationship) | Schein - <i>Process Consulting</i> |
| 1/29 | Consulting Model Why consulting efforts fail Measuring consulting success Effective consulting guidelines The contracting process | Ulrich-<i>Why HR</i> Ulrich- <i>HR Effectiveness</i> |
| 2/5 | Organizational Diagnosis & Sales Data collection & analysis Diagnostic models & tools Tactical vs strategic diagnosis Creating a project model & objective Making a business case Conducting the sales meeting | Weisbord - <i>Diagnosis</i> |
| 2/12 | Client Relations Dealing with difficult clients Qualifying the client Determining feasibility Building a relationship Conducting the Exploratory meeting | Schneider - <i>Customer Needs</i> |
| 2/19 | The Value of Corporate HR The threat to corporate HR Defining HR's value proposition Determining HR's brand PDF as model for corporate staff Transforming the HR Department | Ulrich - <i>Strategic Partner</i> |
| 2/26 | Contracting Skills: Negotiation Skills Defining success Barriers to negotiations Planning for the negotiation Interests, positions & tactics Conducting a negotiation | Ury - <i>Barriers to Cooperation</i> |
| 3/4 | EXAM I | |
| 3/11 | Facilitation Skills: Influence without Authority Basic vs development facilitation The facilitation process Depth of intervention Increasing personal power How to influence effectively | Cialdini – <i>Instant Influence</i> Cialdini – <i>Weapons of Influences</i> |

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|------|---|--|
| 3/18 | SPRING BREAK | |
| 3/25 | Facilitation Skills: Advising Skills/Executive Coaching Communication errors Social Styles Assessment Improving the communication process Advising goals & process Giving feedback to a client The role of the executive coach | Schwartz - Facilitator Role |
| 4/1 | Facilitation Skills: Problem Solving & Decision Making Barriers to problem solving Problem-solving models & tools Common decision errors Improving decision making (e.g., Pugh Matrix) Facilitating a problem-solving session | Nature of Judgment |
| 4/8 | Facilitation Skills: Conflict Resolution Barriers to conflict resolution The Thomas Process Model Conflict Resolution Styles How to mediate a conflict Inter-group conflict resolution techniques | |
| 4/15 | Facilitation Skills: Team Building The challenge of teams Requirements for effective team functioning Champion, leader & facilitator roles Creating a project team Facilitating a new team start-up meeting | Schwartz - Team Edmondson – Psychological Safety |
| 4/22 | Facilitation Skills: Project Management Project Planning Contract, Schedule, Responsibilities Project implementation Project management tools Waterfall vs. Agile Scrum basics & roles | HR goes agile Deciding between agile and lean Scrum Guide Leading design thinking |

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|-------------|---------------------|--|
| 4/29 | PRESENTATION | |
| 5/6 | EXAM II | |

Readings: All assigned readings are listed on the syllabus by topic and posted on Sakai

Evaluation:

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|----------------|------------------|
| Exam I | 35 points |
| Exam II | 35 points |
| Project | 30 points |

Team Assignment

Select a **consulting model** in which you are interested.

- Lean (Toyota Production System)
- 6-Sigma
- SCRUM
- Design Thinking (IBM)
- Lean Startup (GE)

Paper

Address each of the following areas:

- its history and how it was created
- how it defines **Success**
- explain its organizing **Model**
- the **Process** used to implement it
- the **tools** and how they are used
- the metrics used to **evaluate** its impact
- the resources, conditions and types of problems necessary for success

- Provide two **examples** of specific **companies** using the technique with **evidence** of its effectiveness
- Make a clear recommendation for using or not using the technique
- Cite all **references**

Team presentations

Should provide a clear recommendation for the use (or avoidance) of the tool and should include:

- brief **summary** of the history and background of the technique
- Use **SMPTE** to explain how it works
- **examples** of companies using the technique and the expected **value** it provides
- a **definitive judgment** of the usefulness of the approach and the conditions necessary for its successful implementation
- Presentation should be around 15 minutes

Academic Honesty and Code of Conduct

Students are expected to abide by Rutgers's Academic Integrity Policy and Code of Student Conduct. Acts of cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication or misrepresentation are not tolerated and will be dealt with according to the university policies and procedures. If you have doubts concerning committing a potential act of academic dishonesty, please contact the course instructor for advice. Moreover, you are advised to check the websites of the Office of Academic Integrity at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/> and the Office of Student Conduct at: <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/>

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Learning Goals

To develop conceptual understanding and skills related to: 1) building a strategic partnership with senior managers, 2) designing projects that link HR Department activities to the organization's strategic objectives and demonstrate measurable business impact, 3) developing and maintaining positive client relations, and 4) planning and managing projects to enhance the organization's capability and competitive advantage.

- Understand how to diagnose organizational problems using a structured diagnostic model

- Learn to develop and sell a proposal that will result in a measurable business impact
- Understand how to influence without authority and to develop trusting relations with clients
- Understand the application of organizational change theories, project management and facilitation skills to intervene effectively in problems facing the HR Business Partner
- understand how to design and implement HR consulting projects
- Develop skills in creating project teams and planning & implementing the project

SMLR Learning Objectives

IV) Theoretical Perspectives - Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the practical perspectives, theories and concepts in their field of study
- Evaluate and apply theories from social science disciplines to workplace issues

VI) Application – Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance

- Apply concepts and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work
- Understand the legal, regulatory and ethical issues related to their field
- Develop HRM functional capabilities used to select, motivate, and develop workers
- Understand the internal and external alignment and measurement of HRM practices

VII) Professional Development – Demonstrate an ability to interact with and influence others in a professional manner, and to effectively present ideas and recommendations

- Develop effective presentation skills appropriate for different settings and audiences
- Develop career management skills to navigate one's career
- Understand cultural differences and how to work in a multicultural environment
- Work productively in teams, in social networks, and on an individual basis
- Develop cultural agility competencies
- Demonstrate lifelong personal & professional development skills