



4,676: Consultant for a Day: Applying Management Theories to Solve Practical Problems

Subject information

ECTS-Credits: 2

Attached courses

Timetable	Language	Lecturer
4,676,1.00 Consultant for a Day: Applying Management Theories to Solve Practical Problems	English	de Jong Simon Barend, Raes Anneloes

Course information

Course prerequisites

A prerequisite for the course is that students will be able to attend all sessions of the course.

Course content

The aim of this course is to have students expand their knowledge on how to apply management theories to solve practical problems. More specifically, the aim is to stimulate learning in two key areas:

- 1) Increasing insight into theories regarding several important Human Resource Management (HRM) and Organizational Behavioral (OB) topics.
- 2) Acquiring skills on how to translate HRM and OB theories to (consultancy) practice by using consultancy methods, in particular workshops.

The field of management and organizational behavior is an active field of both research and practice. In terms of research, scholars aim to understand, explain, and predict the behavior of people and teams in organizations. Practitioners seek to apply these scientific theories to the daily practice of the workplace in order to optimize team work, increase motivation, manage diversity, etcetera.

The relationship between theory and practice is not always clear and is often challenging. There is therefore a demand for people who can 'speak both languages' and are able to effectively translate scientific findings to practice. Consultants often bridge the worlds of business and science by providing workshops to organizations, in which they address a specific topic and solve a particular problem.

In this course, students become 'consultants for a day' in order to apply, and expand, their knowledge regarding management theories and their consultancy skills. At the beginning of the course, several important topics from the field of organizational behavior will be addressed, such as motivation, teamwork, power differences, and diversity. The aim is to provide students with up-to-date knowledge on these topics and have them reflect on how these theories could be used to solve client issues. After this, an experienced consultant will provide insights into how to combine theory and practice and on how to use different workshop techniques.

Subsequently, teams of 2-5 students will be designated as 'consultant teams'. These teams will design and deliver an one-hour workshop addressing a problem related to one of the 'current topics'. The other students serve as 'organizational members' and are expected to actively participate. Each workshop will conclude with a discussion and reflection on the theory, methods, and the overall workshop. Hence, each team becomes an 'expert' in only one of the topics stated below (and as such only needs to study that literature).

Finally, students will write an essay in which they reflect on the value of their topic for practice. This essay contains the essential information of the workshop as well as 'lessons learned'. Given the depth and scope of the essay, students have to start writing in the beginning of the course and the first sections of the essay have to be handed in early on, as to provide them with early feedback. Students will receive a team grade on the essay, but also an individual grade on their own part in the essay. Students will receive a team grade on the workshop, but this might be adjusted if there are reasons to do so (i.e., clear under-/over-performance of certain individuals). Similar to a consultancy work setting, the expectations on the students are high and the course requires a good deal of independence and pro-activeness of students.

Overview of grading:

-Active participations is essential and will therefore be part of the grading (20%)

-Quality of the workshop, both in terms of content as well as presentation quality (30%).

-Essay (25% team part, 25% individual part)

Course structure

1. Introduction 1.
2. Knowledge: Current topics in HR management and organizational behavior
3. Consultancy: The art of combining theory and practice
4. Consultancy: How to use workshop techniques
5. Student workshop 1: Motivation (team 1)
6. Student workshop 2: Power differences (team 2)
7. Student workshop 3: Teamwork (team 3)
8. Student workshop 4: Managing diversity (team 4)
9. Student workshop 5: Top Management Teams (team 5)
10. Student workshop 6: Trust within teams (team 6)
11. Lessons learned: Reflections on the workshops and the course

Contextual Studies are considered part of **Contact Learning**; thus, taking part properly implies **regular attendance**. It is the students' own responsibility to ensure that there is **no timetable clash** between the courses they have chosen.

Course literature

Motivation

-Steers, R., Mowday, R. & Shapiro, D. (2004). The future of work motivation theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 29, 379-387

-Kark, R., & Van Dijk, D. (2007). Motivation to lead, motivation to follow: The role of the self-regulatory focus in leadership processes. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(2), 500-528.

Power differences

-Fiske, S. T. & Berdahl, J. (2007). *Social Power*. In A. W. Kruglanski & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Social Psychology: 2nd Edition: Handbook of Basic Principles* (pp. 678-692). NY: Guilford Publishing.

-Keltner, D., Gruenfeld, D. H., & Anderson, C. (2003). Power, approach, and inhibition. *Psychological Review*, 110, 265-284.

Teamwork

-Johnson, D. W. (2003). Social interdependence: Interrelationships among theory, research, and practice. *American Psychologist*, 58, 934-945.

-Van der Vegt, G. S. & Van de Vliert, E. (2002). Intragroup interdependence and effectiveness: Review and proposed directions for theory and practice. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 17, 50-67.

Managing diversity

-Jehn, K. A., Northcraft, G. B., & Neale, M. A. (1999). Why differences make a difference: A field study of diversity, conflict, and performance in workgroups. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(4), 741-763.

-Lau, D. C., & Murnighan, J. K. (1998). Demographic diversity and faultlines: The compositional dynamics of organizational groups. *Academy of Management Review*, 23, 325-340.

Top Management Teams

- Raes, A.M.L., Heijltjes M.G., Glunk, U., & Roe, R.A. (2011). The interface of the top management team and middle managers: A process model. *Academy of Management Review*, 36 (1), in press

-Simsek, Z., Veiga, J. F., Lubatkin, M. H., & Dino, R. N. (2005). Modeling the multilevel determinants of top management team behavioral integration. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(1), 69-84.

Trust within teams

- Langfred, C. W. (2004). Too much of a good thing? Negative effects of high trust and individual autonomy in self-managing teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47, 385-399.

-Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 20, 709-734.

Note: The literature is preliminary and subject to change, depending on, for instance, forthcoming articles and number of participants.

Course additional information

Information about the Examination

Examination type

decentral - Active participation (20%)

Examination aids

no regulation necessary

No rules for examination aids are required for this examination.

- For written examinations at home (term paper), courses without credits, etc., no specific rules for examination aids are required.
- The regulations of the University of St. Gallen and the rules of academic work (sources and aids must always be identified) are applicable in a subsidiary fashion.
- All written work must be accompanied by a declaration of authorship.

Question language: **English**

Answer language: **English**

decentral - Oral examination with presentation in groups (30%, 15 mins. + 10 mins per additional candidate)

Examination aids

no regulation necessary

No rules for examination aids are required for this examination.

- For written examinations at home (term paper), courses without credits, etc., no specific rules for examination aids are required.
- The regulations of the University of St. Gallen and the rules of academic work (sources and aids must always be identified) are applicable in a subsidiary fashion.
- All written work must be accompanied by a declaration of authorship.

Question language: **English**

Answer language: **English**

decentral - examination paper written at home (individually) (25%)

Examination aids

no regulation necessary

No rules for examination aids are required for this examination.

- For written examinations at home (term paper), courses without credits, etc., no specific rules for examination aids are required.
- The regulations of the University of St. Gallen and the rules of academic work (sources and aids must always be identified) are applicable in a subsidiary fashion.
- All written work must be accompanied by a declaration of authorship.

Question language: **English**

Answer language: **English**

decentral - Group examination paper (25%)

Examination aids

no regulation necessary

No rules for examination aids are required for this examination.

- For written examinations at home (term paper), courses without credits, etc., no specific rules for examination aids are required.
- The regulations of the University of St. Gallen and the rules of academic work (sources and aids must always be identified) are applicable in a subsidiary fashion.
- All written work must be accompanied by a declaration of authorship.

Question language: **English**

Answer language: **English**

Examination content

- Active participation in the sessions is essential and will therefore be part of the grading (20%)
- Quality of the workshop, both in terms of content as well as presentation quality (30%).
- Essay (25% team part, 25% individual part)

Exam-relevant literature

Students are expected to find the appropriate literature for their topic of the workshop/essay, and integrate it in a meaningful way.

Attention please:

We would like to point out to you that this fact sheet has absolute priority over other information such as StudyNet, faculty members' personal databases, information provided in lectures, etc.

When will the fact sheets become binding?

Information about courses: from the start of the bidding process on 27 January 2011

Information about decentral examinations: after the 4th semester week on 21 March 2011

Information about central examinations: from the start of the enrolment period for the examinations on 11 April 2011

Please look at the fact sheet once more after these deadlines have expired.