

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

Dr. Joe McCune  
e-mail [jmccune@smlr.rutgers.edu](mailto:jmccune@smlr.rutgers.edu)

Spring, 2023  
848 445-1052  
Room 006 JLB - 7:20-10:00

**Course Objective**

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 be properly resourced and 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 client relations.

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.

## **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***

### **.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
- Develop capabilities to work and lead in a multicultural and diverse environment
- Work productively in teams, in social networks, and on an individual basis
- Develop cultural agility competencies
- Demonstrate lifelong personal and professional development skills

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

## **Evaluation:**

|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| <b>Exam I</b>  | <b>35 points</b> |
| <b>Exam II</b> | <b>35 points</b> |
| <b>Project</b> | <b>30 points</b> |

| Week | TOPIC   | READINGS   |
|------|---|--|
| 1    | <b>Consulting Model</b><br>Business consulting<br>Organizational consulting<br>The SHRBP consulting model<br>The 7 essential meetings<br>Consulting objectives (value & relationship)   | <b>Schein - <i>Process Consulting</i></b>                                |
| 2    | <b>Consulting Model</b><br>Why consulting efforts fail<br>Measuring consulting success<br>Effective consulting guidelines<br>The contracting process  | <b>Ulrich-<i>Why HR</i></b><br><b>Ulrich- <i>HR Effectiveness</i></b>    |
| 3    | <b>Client Relations</b><br>Dealing with difficult clients<br>Qualifying the client<br>Determining feasibility<br>Building a relationship<br>Conducting the Exploratory meeting  | <b>Schneider - <i>Customer Needs</i></b>                                 |
| 4    | <b>Organizational Diagnosis &amp; Sales</b><br>Data collection & analysis<br>Diagnostic models & tools<br>Tactical vs strategic diagnosis<br>Creating a project model & objective<br>Making a business case<br>Conducting the sales meeting | <b>Weisbord - <i>Diagnosis</i></b>                                       |
| 5    | <b>The Value of Corporate HR</b><br>The threat to corporate HR<br>Defining HR's value proposition<br>Determining HR's brand<br>PDF as model for corporate staff<br>Transforming the HR Department   | <b>Ulrich - <i>Strategic Partner</i></b><br><b><i>Why we hate HR</i></b> |
| 6    | <b>Contracting Skills: Negotiation Skills</b><br>Defining success<br>Barriers to negotiations<br>Planning for the negotiation<br>Interests, positions & tactics<br>Conducting a negotiation   | <b>Ury - <i>Barriers to Cooperation</i></b>                              |
| 3/1  | <b>EXAM I</b>   |  |

|                  |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|
| <p><b>8</b></p>  | <p><b>Facilitation Skills: Communication</b><br/> Communication errors<br/> Social Styles Assessment<br/> Improving the communication process</p>   | <p><b>Schwartz - <i>Facilitator Role</i></b></p>  |
| <p><b>9</b></p>  | <p><b>Facilitation Skills: Influence without Authority</b><br/> Basic vs development facilitation<br/> The facilitation process<br/> Depth of intervention<br/> Increasing personal power<br/> How to influence effectively</p>   | <p><b>Cialdini – <i>Influence</i></b><br/> <b>Cialdini – <i>Instant Influence</i></b><br/> <b>Cialdini – <i>Weapons of Influences</i></b></p> |
| <p><b>10</b></p> | <p><b>Facilitation Skills: Conflict Resolution</b><br/> The Thomas Process Model<br/> Conflict Resolution Styles<br/> How to mediate conflict<br/> <b>Facilitation Skills: Executive Coaching</b><br/> Advising goals &amp; process<br/> Giving feedback to a client<br/> The role of the executive coach</p> |   |
| <p><b>11</b></p> | <p><b>Facilitation Skills: Problem Solving &amp; Decision Making</b><br/> Barriers to problem solving<br/> Problem-solving models &amp; tools<br/> Common decision errors<br/> Improving decision making (e.g., Pugh Matrix)<br/> Facilitating a problem-solving session</p>                                  | <p><b><i>Nature of Judgment</i></b><br/> <b>McKinsey -<i>Decisions</i></b></p>  |
| <p><b>12</b></p> | <p><b>Facilitation Skills: Team Building</b><br/> The challenge of teams<br/> Requirements for effective team functioning<br/> Champion, leader &amp; facilitator roles<br/> Creating a project team<br/> Facilitating a new team start-up meeting</p>  | <p><b>Schwartz - <i>Team</i></b><br/> <b>Edmondson – <i>Psychological Safety</i></b><br/> <b>Edmondson- <i>Teamwork</i></b></p>               |

|      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| 13   | <b>Facilitation Skills: Project Management</b><br>Project Planning<br>Contract, Schedule, Responsibilities<br>Project implementation<br>Project management tools<br>Waterfall vs. Agile<br>Scrum basics & roles | <i>Cappelli- HR Goes Agile</i><br><i>Scrum –Guide US</i><br><i>Agile, Lean, Scrum &amp; Kanban</i><br><i>Leading Design Thinking</i> |
| 4/26 | <b>PRESENTATION</b>   |  |
| 5/3  | <b>EXAM II</b>  |  |

## 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/>

## **Special Needs and Accommodation**

“Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>”. For additional information, please visit the website of the Office of Disability Services at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students>.