Strategic Public Relations and Corporate Communications Course

21 – 25 December 2026
Vienna (Austria)



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Ref: 3269_291328 **Date:** 21 – 25 December 2026 **Location:** Vienna (Austria) **Fees:** 5200 GBP

Public relations and corporate communications define how organisations manage information exchange, protect institutional standing, and build alignment with external stakeholders, internal workforces, and oversight bodies. This one-week course equips senior external affairs practitioners and institutional spokespersons to audit reputational vulnerabilities and produce a ten-stage strategic public relations planning blueprint. Delegates examine disclosure models, stakeholder journeys, and crisis escalation protocols across diverse commercial and civic sectors.

Introduction

This expert-level course examines organisational disclosure and stakeholder engagement through the Barcelona Principles 3.0 for communications measurement, the PRSA Code of Ethics, and standard issue-lifecycle models. Public relations and corporate communications require senior practitioners to balance brand positioning against regulatory transparency, workforce dialogue, and media scrutiny. Training takes place through rigorous case inspection walkthroughs and scenario stress-testing, evaluating real-world communications breakdowns and cross-border briefing challenges. Delegates master the governance, research methods, and operational structures needed to steer corporate affairs teams through high-stakes institutional visibility.

Course Objectives

- Distinguish between corporate public relations and transactional marketing promotions to align communications with enterprise governance priorities.
- Apply the Barcelona Principles 3.0 metrics framework to evaluate audience sentiment, institutional credibility, and campaign outcomes.
- Compare defensive crisis responses against proactive issue management to mitigate enterprise exposure before reputational contagion spreads.
- Select appropriate disclosure channels and narrative formats across workforce segments, commercial partners, and institutional investors.
- Interpret research findings from perception audits to calibrate external messaging and correct stakeholder misconceptions.
- Justify resource allocations across press protocols, digital channels, and executive engagement programmes using verifiable outcome data.



Target Audience

- Corporate affairs directors responsible for enterprise positioning who must decide how to balance commercial messaging with institutional accountability.
- Heads of internal communications seeking workforce cohesion who must choose between centralised channel control and open employee advocacy.
- Senior media relations managers leading press offices who must evaluate interview risks and select spokesperson briefing strategies.
- Investor relations and financial PR officers tasked with market disclosures who must judge narrative alignment during regulatory reporting.
- Public affairs advisors managing regulatory exposure who must decide how to position leadership during contentious political proceedings.

Course Outline

Day 1: Institutional Alignment and External Affairs Architecture

- Corporate Identity vs Operational Image: Differentiating Organizational Reality From Public Perception
- The PRSA Ethics Framework: Applying Professional Disclosure Standards To Corporate Affairs
- External Reputation Architecture: Establishing Community Goodwill As A Neighbor Of Choice
- Executive Counsel Dynamics: Guiding C-Suite Leaders On High-Visibility Policy Announcements
- Corporate Affairs Governance: Structuring Functional Responsibilities Across Dispersed Global Teams

Day 2: Internal Stakeholder Engagement and Workforce Narrative

- Internal Dialogue vs External Broadcast: Differentiating Employee Messaging From General Publicity
- Stakeholder Journey Mapping: Tracking Information Flow Across Diverse Employee Tiers
- Enterprise Storytelling Architecture: Designing Cohesive Narratives That Reinforce Institutional Purpose
- Employee Brand Advocacy: Setting Operational Safeguards For Workforce Social Media Use
- Executive Briefing Protocols: Drafting High-Trust Briefings For Cross-Functional Leadership Alignment

Day 3: Issue Identification, Risk Escalation, and Mitigation

- Emerging Risk vs Acute Incident: Classifying Reputational Threats Across Operational Timelines
- Perception Recovery Protocols: Deploying Corrective Communication Following Operational Failures
- Influencer Mapping Techniques: Segmenting Sector Analysts, Commentators, And Civic Regulators
- VIP Engagement Programmes: Building Structured Coalitions With Key Industrial Decision-Makers
- Political Exposure Monitoring: Handling Sensitive Interventions Within Public Policy Arenas



Day 4: Multi-Channel Media Relations and Financial Disclosure

- Press Protocol vs Direct Publishing: Balancing Newsroom Engagement With Owned Channels
- Crisis Playbook Architecture: Assembling Rapid Response Playbooks And Escalation Trees
- Financial PR Operations: Structuring Disclosure Calendars For Investor Briefings And Transitions
- Protocol For Diplomatic Visits: Managing Formal Delegations And High-Profile Ceremonial Events
- Cross-Border Narrative Alignment: Coordinating In-Country Briefings Across Multinational Operating Units

Day 5: The Strategic Planning Framework and Measurement Practice

- Formative Research vs Evaluative Research: Sizing Market Realities Before Setting Objectives
- The Ten-Stage PR Planning Sequence: Structuring Enterprise Campaigns For Measurable Impact
- Outcome Metrics Deployment: Applying Barcelona Principles 3.0 To External Affairs Initiatives
- Stakeholder Engagement Toolkits: Assembling Tactical Collateral Across Digital And Print Formats
- Final Plan Finalisation: Completing The Strategic Public Relations Planning Blueprint

Skills You Will Gain

- Issue lifecycle analysis
- Stakeholder journey mapping
- Barcelona Principles measurement
- Crisis escalation architecture
- Press protocol design
- Executive briefing formulation
- Ten-stage campaign planning

Why Attend This Course

- From intuitive messaging and fragmented outputs to structured external affairs governance rooted in the PRSA Code of Ethics.
- From uncoordinated stakeholder outreach to mapped information journeys that segment internal staff from external regulators.
- From reactive damage control during emergencies to systematic crisis playbooks backed by clear escalation trees.
- From vanity press clippings to an auditable ten-stage strategic public relations planning blueprint that demonstrates business value.



Conclusion

Public relations and corporate communications serve as the disciplined apparatus through which organisations articulate institutional truth, preserve stakeholder trust, and navigate societal expectations. This course establishes clear boundaries between commercial promotion and institutional affairs, reactive damage control and proactive risk monitoring, and vanity exposure metrics and verifiable business outcomes. External affairs heads, corporate communications leads, and senior press officers operating at this expert level gain the analytical instruments needed to protect enterprise legitimacy across challenging media environments.

Course FAQs

What is public relations and corporate communications?

Public relations and corporate communications is the strategic practice of directing an organisation's external engagement, internal workforce dialogue, and media posture. It aligns institutional policies with stakeholder expectations, ensuring transparent disclosure, protecting organisational standing, and fostering enduring trust across civic, regulatory, and commercial audiences.

What is the difference between corporate identity and operational image?

Corporate identity refers to an organisation's enduring values, governance ethos, and internal reality, defined by leadership and operational conduct. Operational image represents the transient external perception held by stakeholders at any given moment, which may fluctuate based on media coverage, market disruptions, or public disclosures.

Which measurement standards does this communications course follow?

This course follows the Barcelona Principles 3.0, established by AMEC for communications evaluation. It rejects discredited advertising value equivalency metrics in favour of outcome-based assessment, tracking changes in stakeholder awareness, trust, advocacy, and institutional credibility using verifiable qualitative and quantitative benchmarks.

Is this communications course suitable for senior corporate affairs leads?

Yes. The curriculum addresses experienced corporate affairs practitioners, external relations heads, and senior spokespersons who formulate policy-level messaging. It focuses on risk escalation, cross-border disclosure challenges, executive counsel, and institutional reputation architecture rather than introductory press writing mechanics.



What will delegates produce during this public relations course?

Delegates produce a complete ten-stage strategic public relations planning blueprint. This operational document details formative research findings, risk escalation matrices, segmented stakeholder journeys, core messaging architecture, and an auditable evaluation framework aligned with the Barcelona Principles 3.0.

