Organizational Communication and its Social Context
C40.9065-002
Fall 2010 - Prof. Crawford
Wednesday 1:30-4.15 pm; Room: Siena

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Phone: +39 055 5007 312
Email: belinda.crawford@nyu.edu

Office Hours:
Wednesdays 4:15-5:15 pm and by appointment. Additional office hours will be announced.

Required materials:

1. *Organizational Communication and Its Social Context*
Custom edition for Stern: C40.0065, issued by McGraw Hill's Learning Solutions, available only in the NYU bookstore (the Fall 2009 version).

2. *Guide to Managerial Communication*


5. Additional readings can be accessed via Blackboard (BB) or by links on the course outline.
Course objectives: why are you here?
Effective communicators take the lead in the workplace, and much of your future success in business depends on your ability to manage communication effectively. In this course, you’ll build on your existing knowledge and learn new methods and techniques for reaching business audiences. As part of the Social Impact of Business Core, this course will provide the theoretical fundamentals in communication, apply communication strategy to oral and written business assignments, and focus on how organizations communicate to their varied internal and external stakeholders.

Course basics: teams, readings, Blackboard
Reflecting the use of teams in the business world, a significant part of this course is based on teamwork and team assignments. You’ll be assigned to teams early in the course, and we’ll discuss the rights and responsibilities of the teams in class. Each team will need to meet on average once a week outside of class. In addition, this course requires two team meetings with the professor. Details will be explained in class.

Course materials will be managed by Blackboard. PowerPoint lectures, handouts, etc. that are available in electronic form will be posted to Blackboard. You’ll be directed to post assignments to specific Blackboard locations, unless paper versions are needed for classwork.

To do well in this course, you need to:
- Complete all individual and team assignments on time, graded and ungraded
- Follow the specific assignment requirements in this course outline
- Participate in class discussions
- Contribute to team assignments

Participation guidelines:
Participation is a key factor in this course – which includes being prepared for class discussions, being on time for class, and attending class regularly. The course involves many in-class activities, which can’t be made up. Be prepared to discuss assigned readings. Participating in your team is also required, and poor team participation will result in lower grades. Participation also includes timely posting to Blackboard where required. Late assignments, lack of preparation for class discussion or presentations, or more than two absences during the semester will result in a lower grade. As in any professional situation, explain any absence to me in advance or as quickly as possible; an email is appropriate.

Laptops are not permitted to be opened unless specific directions are given. Cell phones must be turned off.

Integrity
Integrity is critical to the learning process and to all that we do here at NYU Stern. All students are expected to abide by the NYU Stern Student Code of Conduct. A student’s responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
• A duty to acknowledge the work and efforts of others when submitting work as one’s own. Ideas, data, direct quotations, paraphrasing, creative expression, or any other incorporation of the work of others must be clearly referenced.
• A duty to exercise the utmost integrity when preparing for and completing examinations, including an obligation to report any observed violations.

Please see www.stern.nyu.edu/uc/codeofconduct for more information.

Plagiarism
Representing the ideas of others as your own is plagiarism, whether accidental or by design. Do not plagiarize. A few helpful links: “How to Avoid Plagiarism” from Northwestern University <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html> and “What is Plagiarism?” from Indiana University <http://www.indiana.edu/~college/plagiarism/index.shtml>.

There are numerous role-playing assignments in this class. Yet while you may assume the role of a corporate player, you may not assume their words, blogs, or web site ideas as your own. All references need to be cited or explained. Please ask if you need more clarification.

Document assignment guidelines:
How your documents are prepared and delivered is very important. Follow these guidelines explicitly:

1. All assignments must be submitted in a format that is compatible with MSWord. You are responsible for submitting all work in a format that can be read and evaluated.

2. Most documents and visual aids will be submitted by posting to the Assignments area of Blackboard. Please note the due date and time for the assignment; late submissions will result in a reduced grade.

3. Business documents assigned for this course should follow standard business style (single-spaced, no indented paragraphs, double-spacing only between paragraphs etc.) rather than standard academic style (double spaced with indented paragraphs.) Please use a minimum of 10 point font size.

4. When you submit an assignment or an attachment, always include your first and last name (as well as your team number when appropriate) in the file name (Example: MarlonSalazarTeam2Assignment 3.doc) Please include your name as an identifying footer on each page of the document.

Written assignments will be returned as promptly as possible with comments.

Assignments and grading:
At NYU Stern we seek to teach challenging courses that allow students to demonstrate differential mastery of the subject matter. Assigning grades that reward excellence and
reflect differences in performance is important to ensuring the integrity of our curriculum.

In core courses, our faculty have adopted a standard of rigor for teaching where:

- 25-35% of students can expect to receive A’s for excellent work
- 50-70% of students can expect to receive B’s for good or very good work
- 5-15% of students can expect to receive C’s or less for adequate or below work

Note that while we use these ranges as a guide, the actual distribution for this course and your own grade will depend upon how well each of you actually performs in this course.
**Calendar of assignments and due dates**

To track your grade throughout the semester, use the column (grade) to the right of the column with the available points per assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Value in Points</th>
<th>Your Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Business Document Analysis</td>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Best Team Experience</td>
<td>Class 3</td>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>3. Benchmark Team Presentation on Walmart</td>
<td>Class 4</td>
<td>5 team</td>
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<td>4. Team Goals</td>
<td>Class 4</td>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Due Sept 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Business Document on Walmart case</td>
<td>Classes 4-5</td>
<td>10 indiv</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Final doc. due Oct. 3</td>
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<td>6. Team Presentation 2: Company Profile</td>
<td>Class 8</td>
<td>5 team</td>
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<td>7. Threaded Discussion and Email Update on Issues to Professor</td>
<td>Classes 8-9</td>
<td>5 team</td>
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<td>Due Oct. 24, Nov.3</td>
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<td>8. Team Presentation 3: Strategic Issue Response</td>
<td>Class 10</td>
<td>5 team</td>
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<td>9. Quizzes</td>
<td>TBA (2)</td>
<td>10 indiv</td>
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<td>10. Final Presentation</td>
<td>Class 14</td>
<td>10 team</td>
<td>15 indiv</td>
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<td>11. Final Individual Document</td>
<td>Due Dec. 16</td>
<td>15 indiv</td>
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<td>12. Participation: attendance, class discussion, video reviews, teamwork</td>
<td>Throughout the semester</td>
<td>10 indiv</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>100 points</td>
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- Individual grades - worth 70 points, and
- Team grades (meaning all team members get the same grade for a given assignment) - worth 30 points
## Organizational Communication / Professor Crawford / Fall 2010

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week # Date</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignments Due</th>
<th>Writing/ Speaking Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREWORK</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read course outline and IBM and Internet text (see below) for first class</td>
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<td>Announce via email by Sept. 1</td>
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<td><strong>WEEK 1:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Wed. Sept. 8</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to the course; Making the case for communication in a complex global marketplace; Models of Communication; aspects of theory</td>
<td>IBM Global Student Study on Change: Inheriting a Complex World 2010 [<a href="http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/ceo/ceostudy2010/futur(leaders.html">http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/ceo/ceostudy2010/futur(leaders.html</a>](<a href="http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/ceo/ceostudy2010/futur(leaders.html)">http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/ceo/ceostudy2010/futur(leaders.html)</a> (download full report)</td>
<td>Assignment 1: Bring in a one-page business document from any organization and be prepared to answer the question why you selected it for this class. By Sunday, Sept. 12, 11 pm submit your response to the two questions on BB/Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Class 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fri. Sept. 10</strong></td>
<td>Communication Strategy: Introduction to Corporate Communication/AIM model Stakeholder theory: Discussion of Walmart case</td>
<td><em>OC text - Communicating Strategically</em>, pp. 1-18</td>
<td>Assignment 2: Reflect on a best team story and be prepared to share it with your new team. Submit a short summary of the story to BB/Group Pages/Discussion Board after class.</td>
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<td><strong>Class 2</strong></td>
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<td><em>Guide to MC - chap. I</em></td>
<td>Assignment 4: After presentation, teams meet with professor to review video.</td>
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<td>(make-up day for Italian holiday on Wed. Dec. 8)</td>
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<td><em>OC text - The Corporation and its Stakeholders</em>, pp. 19-39</td>
<td>Assignment 4: After presentation review,</td>
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<td><strong>WEEK 2:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Wed. Sept. 15</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to teams, meeting and listening Appreciative inquiry Presentation Delivery Techniques</td>
<td>“21st century Teamwork” <a href="http://kn.theiet.org/magazine/issues/0918/21st-c-teamwork-0918.cfm">http://kn.theiet.org/magazine/issues/0918/21st-c-teamwork-0918.cfm</a>; <em>Guide to MC – chap. VII</em></td>
<td>Teams for the semester will be assigned in class today. Teams meet to work on first presentation (Assignment 3)</td>
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<td><strong>Class 3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>WEEK 3:</strong></td>
<td>Team Benchmark Presentations on Walmart Intro to business writing strategies; Plain</td>
<td><em>Guide to MC - chap. II and Appendix A</em> <em>SEC - pp. 1-10</em></td>
<td>Assignment 3: After presentation, teams meet with professor to review video.</td>
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<td><strong>Wed. Sept 22</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Class 4</strong></td>
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<td>Week # Date</td>
<td>Class Topic</td>
<td>Reading Assignments Due</td>
<td>Writing/ Speaking Assignments Due</td>
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<td>English</td>
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<td>post a suggested team goal to the Group Pages Discussion Board on BB by Sunday, Sept. 26, 11 pm.</td>
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<td>WEEK 5:</td>
<td>Class 6 Strategic Corporate Communication Business Research Techniques</td>
<td><em>OC text</em> - An Overview of the Corporate Communicative Function, pp. 131-152.</td>
<td>Teams decide which company they will choose for future assignments. In-class research activity. Bring at least 1 laptop/team.</td>
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<td>Wed. Oct. 6</td>
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<td>WEEK 6:</td>
<td>Class 7 Strategic Corporate Communication: Managing Issues Presentation Techniques revisited; Handling Question/Answers; Using Visual Aids</td>
<td><em>OC text</em> – Managing Public Issues, pp. 71-90</td>
<td>Time allowing, teams will meet in class to plan upcoming presentation (Assignment 6).</td>
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<td>WEEK 7</td>
<td>Class 8 Informative Team Presentations: Company Profile Strategic Corporate Communication: Managing Issues</td>
<td><em>OC text</em> – Internal Communications, pp. 111-130</td>
<td>Assignment 6: Team Presentations; Submit corporate research form, presentation planner and slide deck online before class. After presentation, teams meet with professor to review</td>
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<td>Wed. Oct. 20</td>
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<td>Week # Date</td>
<td>Class Topic</td>
<td>Reading Assignments Due</td>
<td>Writing/ Speaking Assignments Due</td>
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<td>WEEK 8:</td>
<td>Fall break, Oct. 25-Nov. 1, 2010</td>
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<td>WEEK 9:</td>
<td><strong>Wed. Nov. 3</strong></td>
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<td>Class 9</td>
<td>Team Dynamics</td>
<td><em>OC text</em> – External Image, Internal Identity, pp. 41-53.</td>
<td><strong>Assignment 7: Part A</strong></td>
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<td>Persuasive Team</td>
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<td>Threaded discussion about issues that affect your company posted to discussion board on Group Pages by Sunday, Oct. 24, 11 pm.</td>
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<td>Presentation Planning</td>
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<td>Strategic Corporate Communication: Managing Issues</td>
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<td>WEEK 10:</td>
<td><strong>Wed. Nov. 10</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Assignment 7: Part B</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 10</td>
<td>Persuasive Team</td>
<td><em>OC text</em> – Identity, Reputation and the Functions of Corporate Communication: A Strategic View, pp. 55-69</td>
<td>After class (by 11 pm), team must e-mail Prof. a message about issues the team has chosen for upcoming presentation.</td>
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<td>Presentations: Strategic Issue Response</td>
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<td>Teams will conduct a mid-course peer assessment.</td>
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<td>Strategic Corporate Communication: Managing Issues</td>
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<td>WEEK 11:</td>
<td><strong>Wed. Nov. 17</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 11</td>
<td>Corporate communication and investor relations:</td>
<td>Readings will be posted on BB</td>
<td><strong>Assignment 8:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>conference calls</td>
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<td>Team presentations. Submit presentation planner and slide deck online before class. After presentation, teams meet with professor to review video.</td>
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<td>WEEK 12:</td>
<td><strong>Wed. Nov. 24</strong></td>
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<td>In-class listening and discussion activities</td>
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<td>Practice with Q/A: Team Impromptu</td>
<td><em>OC text</em> – The Community and the</td>
<td>Teams meet out of class to work on final</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week # Date</td>
<td>Class Topic</td>
<td>Reading Assignments Due</td>
<td>Writing/ Speaking Assignments Due</td>
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<td>Corporate Communication and its Social Context: CSR and Social Impact</td>
<td>Corporation, pp. 91-110</td>
<td>presentations</td>
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<td>Class 12</td>
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<td>Submit planners for final presentation by Friday, Nov. 26, 11 pm.</td>
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<td>WEEK 13:</td>
<td>Preparation for final team presentations</td>
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<td>Teams will work on final presentations, coaching with the professor</td>
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<td>Wed. Dec. 1</td>
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<td>Class 13</td>
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<td>WEEK 14</td>
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<td>Wed. Dec. 8</td>
<td>No class – Italian holiday</td>
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<td>WEEK 15:</td>
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<td>Wed. Dec. 15</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM Final team presentations and class wrap-up</td>
<td>Assignment 10: (bring copy of slide deck and presentation planner)</td>
<td>Assignment 11: Submit by Thursday, Dec. 16, 11 pm via BB</td>
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<td>Class 14</td>
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<td>Assignment 10: (bring copy of slide deck and presentation planner)</td>
<td>Assignment 11: Submit by Thursday, Dec. 16, 11 pm via BB</td>
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<td>Date TBA</td>
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<td>Assignment 11: Submit by Thursday, Dec. 16, 11 pm via BB</td>
<td>Assignment 10: (bring copy of slide deck and presentation planner)</td>
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<td>Class 15</td>
<td>NYU in Florence Academic Lecture Series (Topic: TBA)</td>
<td>Assignment 11: Submit by Thursday, Dec. 16, 11 pm via BB</td>
<td>Assignment 10: (bring copy of slide deck and presentation planner)</td>
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Assignment 1: Business Document Analysis

Task:
Locate and bring a business document to class #2.

Details:
- Locate any one-page business document that interests you from any company. It can be a part of a CEO letter in an annual report; another section of an annual report; an announcement / policy change / memo from their workplace; a full-page ad from a specific company, and so on.

Write and post to BB/Assignments a brief response to the following 2 questions:
- Why was it written and who is the intended audience?
- Which model or models of communication factored into its creation—whether intentionally or not?

Deliverable: A Word document of no more than 150 words that answer the two questions. Post your comment on BB/Assignments by 11 pm, Sunday, Sept. 12. Make sure your file is labeled with your first name/last name.
Assignment 2: Best Team Experience

In class #3 you will be meeting your team for the first time. This is the team you will be working with throughout the rest of the course. As preparation for getting off to a strong start, you will be participating in an Appreciative Inquiry exercise in class.

Task:
Reflect on a team experience where you performed at your best. It can be any team from a work or school project or volunteer experience. Capture the essential elements of that experience and be prepared to share it with your new team in Class #3. What was it like? What were your strengths in the team? How did the team operate? What descriptive adjectives characterize your performance? Try to be as specific with the details as you can.

Deliverable:
After class #3, submit a Word document to BB/Communication/Group Pages/Discussion Board that summarizes your best team experience. It should be limited to 250 words and exhibit what you have learned about communication strategy, specifically, AIM. You will address the document to your Professor.
Assignment 3-4: Background for Walmart Case

Walmart once again has its eye on New York City. After failed attempts to build stores in Queens and Staten Island, the mega-chain is now considering Brooklyn as a prime target for entering the City. The past attempts to open stores in Queens and on Staten Island were squashed by opposition, including labor unions trying to block the non-union store from entering the market, and activists who took issue with the companies labor and business practices. Walmart officials have been in contact with the Related Company, developer of the Gateway II retail development, located in the Jamaica Bay area of East Brooklyn. Click on this link to view map of the area: Gateway Center Phase II 409 Gateway Drive, Brooklyn, NY 11239

Now that the first major Chicago Walmart has been approved, the potential for a NY location is even stronger. According to the Wall Street Journal (June 25, 2010,) “Walmart also is quietly exploring expansion in other large American cities as it seeks to jumpstart its U.S. sales growth, which has been sluggish for four consecutive quarters after spiking up at the start of the recession.” Some of its internal business planners are convinced that a major NYC location would give Walmart a significant boost in its corporate image – something that is much needed after their legal battles with labor and new public concerns about overseas suppliers.

Mayor Bloomberg has publicly welcomed the possible arrival. “People that live in this city are going outside the city to shop at Walmart,” said Mayor Bloomberg at a press conference recently. “So, if they’re going to shop at Walmart, they might as well live here, they might as well have the jobs here and the tax revenues here.”

Not everyone agrees. “The Mayor and I have a slightly different opinion on Walmart,” said City Council Speaker Christine Quinn at the press conference. “And I obviously want as many new jobs and new businesses in New York City as we possibly can. I think it’s important to be supportive in soliciting businesses that are of a particular standard, and I don’t think Walmart meets that standard.” Quinn has made her position clear, joining union activists for a rally at New York City Hall.

But anti Walmart community groups have also raised their voices. One of these, New York Communities for Change, a city-based non-profit organization, organized a protest to highlight charges leveled against Walmart for its treatment of employees. “We’re not opposed to development,” said Jonathan Westin, an organizer for New York Communities for Change, a city-based non-profit. “We just want stores that will pay people fair wages and treat the community the way it should be treated.”

And to make matters worse for Walmart, the biggest sex discrimination lawsuit in history was recently filed against the company. In December 2008, Walmart agreed to pay $640 million to settle 63 lawsuits dealing with nationwide violations of wages paid and hours worked. Right now, Walmart faces the largest class action suit in US history for gender discrimination. “I understand that many New Yorkers are still struggling trying to find work in this economic climate, but we need to be in support of good, sustainable jobs,” Christine Quinn said. Walmart “leads the way in the worst worker-related litigation in the
country, and if they plan to do business in New York City they better get ready for a fight.”

Yet, Walmart has tried to convince the public that its approach to retailing has changed significantly. The company is among the strongest proponents of sustainability operations, insisting that suppliers adapt to its new “green” standards: the impact of this force has been considerable. The company also just announced that it will support its employees with a college degree program. According to the New York Times of June 2, 2010, “The partnership with American Public University, a for-profit school with about 70,000 online students, will allow some Walmart and Sam’s Club employees to earn credits in areas like retail management and logistics for performing their regular jobs.”

Even the standard big-box model has been reconsidered: Walmart may be amenable to building on a reduced scale. According to the Wall Street Journal, April 27, 2010: “Chief Executive Mike Duke stated, in the introduction to the company's annual report last week, that U.S. growth will be fueled by ‘innovative new formats’.” It is one of several recent statements by Walmart declaring that its U.S. expansion will center less on its warehouse-sized Supercenters and more on far smaller urban stores.” And company officials have examined the possibility of integrating local merchants into their stores as subleased occupants. However, the first Chicago Walmart is planned to be a megastore of 145,000 square feet.

In mid-June of 2010, the Chicago City Council approved the first of what is projected to be five Walmart stores in a city that had rejected the company’s proposals in the past. But is not clear whether this decision makes things easier for Walmart in New York. Dorian T. Warren, a professor in Columbia’s political science department says, “New York has so much more density of, especially, small businesses, and I think the City Council is much more unified ideologically against Walmart than the Chicago City Council is.”

Walmart made several important concessions in Chicago, including a basic wage higher than the minimum per hour that signaled its willingness to reach out to groups that oppose its presence. "This is historical," said Chicago Alderman Edward M. Burke. "For the first time, the world's largest retailer has engaged in dialogue with opponents.” However, New York opponents to Walmart, from unions to local residents, have made their position clear. “This is New York; this is not Chicago,” says Stuart Appelbaum, president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union. “They've got a long way to go before they would be welcome here.” In Brooklyn, Pat Purcell, assistant to the president of UFCW Local 1500, said recently that after the Related Companies’ land use process, “Walmart was never, ever mentioned once anything about the entire land-use process. The area cannot sustain a Walmart, a Target and a BJs. In this area, it’s a job killer; it’s just the wrong use.” And grassroots local opposition is gaining headway. Given Walmart’s recent success in Chicago, can they duplicate their strategy to win over New York City stakeholder groups?
Assignment 3: Team Presentation on Walmart Case

Although the project has gone through the initial approval process, many potential obstacles remain with various stakeholders. Walmart needs to manage its support and monitor potential objections. To do this, they need to communicate strategically to a range of stakeholder groups, both pro and con.

Some stakeholder audiences include:

1. Regional Plan Association
2. Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce
3. NYC Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU)
4. Manhattan Institute
5. NYC Neighborhood Retail Alliance
6. Living Wage NYC
7. NY City Council
8. Local NYC media
9. Community Preservation Corporation, NYC
10. Communities for Change NYC

Task: To prepare a team presentation for your boss, the VP of Walmart’s Corporate Communication Division. Your team has been tasked to prepare a strategy for communicating with your assigned stakeholder group. You need to consider your specific stakeholder group’s range of interests and concerns and offer a strategy for communicating with them. Use the AIM model to help you as you construct your plan-- both for the stakeholder group you’ve been assigned, and also your boss, the VP of Corporate Communication who needs to be convinced that your strategy will work.

Audience: The Vice President of Walmart’s Corporate Communication department and other peer staff members of the department.

Intent: You decide!

Message: You decide!

Deliverable: A team presentation lasting 10 minutes, with 2-3 minutes afterwards for questions; each team member must speak. No PowerPoint bullet slides are permitted, but you may use PowerPoint to show projected photographs, maps, charts or illustrations.

Follow-up: Each team will meet with the professor to review the presentation.

Evaluation: The team will be evaluated on effectiveness of AIM strategy.
Assignment 4: Team Review of Walmart Presentation

Each team will meet with the me to review both content and delivery style in the presentation benchmark.

Over the course of the semester, you and your team will be doing a series of presentations which will be graded for both the substance of the material presented and your presentation delivery. Like this one, the presentations will be videotaped, and we’ll review those together. Just watching yourself on video will be extremely helpful and you’ll also be able to watch how you interact with your teammates. I will work with each of you to set both team and personal goals for improvement so that you can track your progress over the term.

Afterwards our review, the team should reach consensus on several of the goals.

**Deliverable:** Submit one short team document, no more than 200 words, to BB/Group Pages/Discussion Board that states the goals of the team.
Assignment 5: Business Document on Walmart Case

**Assignment objectives:** This assignment will serve several important purposes. First, it will give you an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of purpose, audience, and organization in business documents. Second, the assignment will encourage you to examine arguments from multiple perspectives. Third, you will receive feedback on your current writing skills as they apply to business writing as well as suggestions about areas needing improvement.

**Task:**
For the writing assignment, you will switch roles so that you now represent the stakeholder group you previously analyzed. Assume the following:
1) The VP of Corporate Communication gave the presenting team the green light to contact the stakeholder group.
2) The Walmart team met with the stakeholder group, presented its point-of-view and there was considerable discussion afterwards.
3) In the aftermath, the stakeholder group met, and has asked you (remember, you are now a member of that group) to respond to Walmart to the presentation in writing and for the record.

As a member of the stakeholder group, you have been asked to write to Walmart to respond to the presentation you heard. You have many different options: find an appropriate person at Walmart and communicate exactly why your group supports Walmart’s viewpoint – or why the group opposes it. You may ask for a meeting with a specific Walmart executive, presenting your group’s views and explaining why a personal meeting is necessary. Based on your group’s reaction to the presentation, you may make demands or state conditions that must be met to gain your support. And, of course, there are many other options.

Your first draft will be peer reviewed in class to make sure that your writing is clear, appropriate for your reader, and persuasive. After receiving feedback, you can re-write, edit, make changes and then submit your revised draft to Bb.

**Audience:** Your audience is the executive at Walmart to whom you are writing.

**Intent:** You decide

**Message:** You decide

**Deliverable 1:** Your document (1 and ½ pages maximum), which could be a short report, an email or letter. It should address some of the following points, in whatever order makes the most sense for your audience, your intent and your message:

- State your recommendations or suggestions to Walmart-- consider appropriateness and feasibility
• Clarify why your perspective is important and how it reflects the viewpoint of your stakeholder group
• Support your ideas with specific facts and details
• Include and embed an illustration, diagram or chart to give a visual example that illustrates your ideas
• Discuss how your ideas could be implemented, and why they will benefit Walmart
• Indicate how you will follow up with the reader

**Deliverable 2:** At the end of the document, write a brief memo to your professor explaining your choice of audience and strategy.

**Submit your document (both parts) to BB/Assignments by October 3. Make sure you label your file with your first/last name.**

**Important Reminder about Plagiarism:** Cutting and pasting from any existing written materials, online or printed, including a website, without attribution constitutes plagiarism. If you include text from existing materials, it must be attributed. If you fail to do this and your plagiarism is discovered, you will receive an F for the assignment.
Assignment 6: Team Informative Presentation: Company Profile

Task: For the rest of this semester, your team will work together to prepare and deliver a set of presentations concerning the corporate communication strategies of a selected firm. For future presentations about your firm, you will present as members of the company’s corporate communication department; however, for this assignment you are presenting as yourselves to all the other teams. Tell the class what specifically interests your team about this company.

Your team presentation should inform the class about the most important aspects of the company. Use the corporate worksheet from class to research interesting and useful company data. Your presentation should include basic information, such as:

- The size of the company: locations, employees, revenue, etc.
- Primary competitors
- Overall state of the industry
- Company mission or goals (as stated on corporate website or annual report)
- Brief financial summary
- Products and services
- Any special features of this company

In addition, this assignment should describe the company’s communication practices:

- What messages does the company emphasize?
- How does the company communicate its CSR, sustainability and/or environmental issues?
- What is the company’s brand promise?
- What are the company’s publications?
- What channels are employed?
- How frequently do messages on these topics go to which audiences

The assignment should incorporate the use of credible information sources, appropriate media resources, and information about the C-suite of the team’s company.

Hint: Organize your content for the effective delivery; do not use the above as a chronological checklist.

Your objective: Craft an interesting informative message about your company and provide a context for the class to understand your later presentations.

Your intent: “As a result of this communication the audience will specifically do, think or say: ______________.”
**Time limits:** Maximum 15 minutes for the presentation, followed by 2 minutes for questions. *You must share the speaking time equally.*

**Visual aids:** Use minimal visual aids; avoid using dense text slides. Think visually, not verbally on your slides. Consider necessary slides that enhance. One person from the team must post slides on Blackboard /Assignments *before* class time on presentation day so that slides can be retrieved from BB, and not from email or other accounts. It’s useful to have a back-up copy on a flash drive.

**Deliverables:** Submit both your completed Presentation Planner (found on Blackboard / Course Documents) and your completed corporate data sheet in class before your presentation. Also hand in a printed version of your slide deck, printed in a 3 slide/page format for grading.

**Evaluation:** This assignment is worth 5 percent for your team which includes teamwork and quality of information; 5 percent for individuals based on delivery.
Assignment 7: Team Discussion on Company Issues

Part A--Threaded Discussion
Task: For this assignment, each team member identifies a specific issue that concerns the team’s company and posts his or her thoughts to the team. This post will be a preliminary step towards selecting the content for the persuasive presentations on the company that your team will deliver in class 11.

Your objective: In your individual post, your goal is to inform the rest of your team about an issue that is critical to the company. Note that you are uncovering an emerging public issue that you determine will soon affect the company (if it isn’t already!). You are not looking for day-to-day operational business problems stemming from competitive challenges or product marketing. Your issue will undoubtedly involve the interests of one or more concerned (or soon to be concerned) stakeholder groups.

Post to your team in the “Group Pages” (Blackboard / Communication) describing the issue and its importance as well as why it would be interesting to the class. Since this assignment is in electronic format, you need to be concise and clear.

Engage in a stimulated persuasive exchange with your classmates by responding to a minimum of 2 posts to help the team come to consensus on the issues.

Deliverable: As stated, your individual post should be submitted to Blackboard Communication / Group Pages.

Evaluation: Your individual posts count for your Participation grade.

Part B--Email Update on Issues to Professor
Task: As a result of class discussion and the exchange of posts earlier, your team should have a good sense of which stakeholder-driven issues it wants to talk about in the upcoming presentation. For this assignment, the team will jointly compose one e-mail message that will clarify which issues have been chosen.

Your objective: To inform the professor about the chosen issues and to justify the team’s choices.

Format: Consider the best way to prepare an effective short document that is sent by e-mail and keep in mind the principle of “high skim value”.

Deliverable: Send the e-mail directly to the professor.

Evaluation: This document will be evaluated as a team grade based on a combination of analysis, structure, and format.
Assignment 8: Team Persuasive Presentation: Strategic Issue Response

Task: For this presentation, your team will prepare a persuasive presentation concerning the primary issues facing your chosen company. As we discussed in class, how an organization responds to issues relates directly to stakeholder relationships. Assume that your team comprises the task force that has been assembled by the Senior Vice President of Corporate Communication. The SVP wants your team to analyze the primary issues facing the organization and which groups are pushing these issues. The SVP also asks the team to recommend a course of action that will address the issues and the relevant stakeholders. Keep the AIM model in mind as you prepare your recommendations and consider the appropriate communication channels to use.

Your objective: To persuade your audience that your issue-response plan will be strategically sound and tactically address critical stakeholders.

Time limits: Maximum 15 minutes for the presentation, followed by 2 minutes for questions. You must share the speaking time equally.

Visual aids: Use visual aids, but avoid using dense text slides. Think visually, not verbally on your slides. One person from the team must post the slides on Blackboard/Assignments by the deadline announced in class.

Deliverable: Submit your completed Presentation Planner (found on Blackboard/ Course Documents) in class before your presentation.

Evaluation: Evaluation: This assignment is worth 5 percent for your team which includes teamwork and quality of information; 5 percent for individuals based on delivery.
Assignment 9: Quizzes

Although most people don’t enjoy taking quizzes, they do provide you with an assessment of how effectively you’ve absorbed and comprehended assigned readings and class discussions.

There will be two quizzes, each worth 5 percent. They will be short and will be announced in advance but I strongly recommend that you stay up to date on all assigned readings.
Assignment 10: Final Team Presentation

**Task and Audience:** The CEO of your company has publicly committed the firm to “high performance with high integrity” to maintain a positive social impact. Your team from Corporate Communication has already addressed the range of issues facing the company and how it should respond. Your presentations to the SVP of Corporate Communication have been forwarded to the C-Suite (CEO, CFO, CIO, etc.) of the company. As a result, the CEO requests a status report and assessment of how the firm presents itself to its multiple stakeholders.

For this presentation assignment (20 minutes), your team should choose only 1 of the following options:

1. How effectively is the company communicating its CSR initiatives or sustainability focus to major stakeholder groups? How does the company support its overall image as a socially responsible firm? Make sure that your measure of effectiveness incorporates how well these initiatives support the company’s overall mission and strategic plan. Consider the channels used and the frequency of messages to 3-4 market or non-market stakeholder groups.

2. Over the past 2-3 years, how has the company communicated its positive social impact identity visually? By reviewing images and design used in corporate logos, brochures, media/print advertising, and investor relations documents, assess how well the company presents an image consistent with its mission and strategic plan. Consider the specific audiences that the company is communicating to publicly: are the messages consistent? How valid are the channels used? You could consider comparing your company to 1-2 others in the same industry.

No matter which option you choose, you should incorporate the following points:

- Your audience is the CEO and other members of the C-suite. What information will be most effective in supporting your position to them? Be aware of what they can be expected to know.
- The company’s communication mix probably includes both strategic and responsive communication. Provide examples of each to demonstrate effectiveness.
- What recommendation/s would you make to enhance communication of the company’s strategy and mission to stakeholders?

**Visual aids:** Submit the PowerPoint file to BB by the announced deadline.

Hand in 1 copy of your PowerPoint slides printed as 3 slide/page handout format. Use a cover sheet that clearly identifies your team and all the speakers.
Assignment 11: Final written document

Task: Each team member needs to develop a document to address one specific stakeholder of the company you have been working on this semester. Choose from the list of market and non-market stakeholders identified in Organizational Communication and Its Social Context; select a specific “named” group if desired (and applicable). Before beginning this document, team members need to meet to make sure that each person is addressing a different stakeholder. With more than a dozen stakeholder categories to choose from, this should not be a problem. Your document can be a report, a memo or a letter.

For your document, choose one of the topics listed below:

- Inform the stakeholder group about a recent CSR step the company has taken and discuss why it is important from the company’s perspective and how it can affect that group
- Explain how the company’s existing strategic communication initiatives are relevant and beneficial to the specific stakeholder group
- Using one of your team’s strategic communication recommendations from the final presentation, explain how this communication will affect the specific stakeholder group

Deliverable 1 and Learning Objective: Your final document should be in business style and no more than 2 pages. This assignment gives you the chance to demonstrate your mastery of organizing information effectively in a business document. Your document will be evaluated using the criteria that we have studied all semester: organization, format, Plain English, readability, document design, etc. Check the evaluations of your other documents this semester so that you can demonstrate your improvement.

Deliverable 2:
In addition to your document, attach a short cover memo addressed to the professor that explains your communication approach with this audience; use enough detail to explain completely. Follow the business structure detailed throughout this class. At a minimum, be sure you:

- Define your intended audience
- State your intent in a single declarative sentence
- Explain why you have chosen this particular document type (memo, letter, report, etc.)
- Explain how your approach will facilitate your intent
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