Change Management

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Course aims and intended learning outcomes

The course aims at acquiring new skills and competences for understanding, facing, managing and leading the impact of rapidly changing organizations.

In the real world, the most carefully developed plans for change can, and often do, fail during the implementation phase. This affects the lives of managers and employees, and it is due to uncertainty: managers often cannot recognize change, predict how change can be deployed, as well as the effects it produces.

Students will understand, on the basis of the theory as well as of a huge quantity of examples and case stories, how inevitable is the change, how to approach a change management process in order to better control its dynamics and effects, as well as how to lead people to change.

Specific objectives of the course on Change Management are:

To understand what happens in the external scenario and how it acts as a driver for the change.

To know how to consider the organizational structures, the soft and hard methodologies, the culture and the leadership as key elements for the accomplishement of the strategies as well as a basis of the change.

Learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding of the processes and the projects of change, applied to specific organizations and to professional situations.

Applying knowledge and understanding to enterprises that are facing significant changes in the external and internal scenario.

Making judgements on when, why and how it is necessary to change along the life of a given organization.

Effective communication of the programs and the projects for the change, in order to convince the management of the organizations involved.

Understanding and managing individual reactions to the change situations, keeping under control the intellectual, emotional and relational side of everybody professional activity.

Course content

The course is divided into two main knowledge areas (modules).

Knowledge Area #1 (first module): Managing change (Prof. Giacomo Manara)
  – The nature of organizational change.
  – How change emerges in organizations.
  – How the organizational structures are combined with change.
  – Strategies of change and its communication.
  – Change readiness, enablers and obstacles to change.
  – Successful processes of organization change: hard and soft systems models for change.
  – Change implementation and its performance.
  – The digital disruption and its impact on the change processes.
  – The main drivers for the future changes.
  – Innovation and trends for the future.

Knowledge Area #2 (second module): Leading people to change (Prof. Francisco J. Lara)
– Social identity of the organizational system: how to investigate it.
– Individual dimensions of the change process.
– Individual reactions to the change process.
– Group dynamics in changing.
– The leadership of the change and the managers involved.
– Learning process, change, monitoring.

Reading list

For both attending and non-attending students:

G. MANARA (by), Change Management, Pearson Textbuilder, 2019.

F.J. LARA, Basic Approaches to Leadership, Palgrave McMillan, 2014.

Readings and other course materials available electronically via Blackboard online system.

Teaching method

Throughout the course a variety of teaching methods is used to encourage active learning. We combine formal and interactive teaching with projects, audiovisuals, role-plays, simulations, case histories, managers and entrepreneurs' speeches. Blackboard online system will be intensively used for uploading the materials as well as for interacting with students. Specific coursework assignments are requested to attendees. Coursework assignments may include writing essays and reports, as well as presentations of group projects.

Assessment method and criteria

For attending students, assessment is divided into the 2 knowledge areas:

The area #1 counts for the 60% of the total score, and is based on a combination of individual written examination (multiple choice questions and open questions), as well as group coursework assignments and project work delivery and presentation in class;

The area #2 counts for 40% of the total score, and the evaluation will be by assistance to class (10%), case study method in each class (50%) and a final business case presentation by groups (40%). The sum of all this parts will count for the 40% of the total score.

For non-attending students the final exam is composed of an individual written test or an oral exam; both of them are based on open questions on the program, and the written tests can include some multiple choice questions. The non-attending students must study the textbook and the case studies posted in Blackboard.

The evaluation criteria mainly used will be the following:
– solid possession of the theoretical contents as well as unitary view of the different topics, consistently correlated among each other;
– effective application of the learned contents and models to the case studies analyzed, presented and discussed;
– clarity, consistency and completeness in expressing ideas and contents.

Notes and prerequisites

A basic knowledge of management and company organization is required. Students, who may not have such preliminary knowledge, will have to acquire them through an individual study activity, so that they can effectively follow the course.