STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC AFFAIRS & ADVOCACY

Introduction

This course introduces participants to the strategic communication approaches and practical tools required to build institutional credibility, influence stakeholders, strengthen public trust and effectively manage communication in complex and rapidly changing environments. Today, organisations operate under constant public scrutiny, with information moving rapidly across traditional media, digital platforms and stakeholder networks. Effective communication therefore requires a deliberate and integrated approach that connects institutional objectives with the expectations, interests and concerns of different audiences. The programme provides a comprehensive framework for strategic communication planning, stakeholder and audience analysis, public affairs, advocacy messaging, media relations, digital communication, reputation management and crisis communication. Participants will examine how organisations can develop clear and consistent messages, engage influential stakeholders, communicate evidence effectively and build constructive relationships with government, communities, media, development partners and the public. Particular attention is given to message development, communication channels, media engagement, digital advocacy, stakeholder communication, issues management and crisis response. Participants will also explore how strategic communication can support policy influence, organisational positioning, institutional reputation and long-term stakeholder confidence. Through practical case studies, communication exercises, media simulations and strategic planning, participants will develop the ability to design and implement integrated communication strategies that strengthen institutional reputation, influence key audiences, manage emerging issues and communicate with clarity, credibility and impact.

Course Objectives

- Develop strategic communication strategies.

- Align communication with institutional objectives.
- Analyse audiences and stakeholders.
- Develop persuasive advocacy messages.
- Strengthen media relations.
- Improve public-affairs engagement.
- Use digital platforms strategically.
- Manage communication during crises.
- Protect institutional reputation.

Course Modules

> Module 1: Strategic Communication Foundations
- Strategic communication concepts
- Communication and organisational objectives
- Communication functions
- Strategic communication planning

> Module 2: Audience and Stakeholder Analysis
- Audience identification
- Stakeholder segmentation
- Audience needs
- Communication priorities

> Module 3: Communication Strategy
- Communication objectives
- Key messages
- Communication channels
- Communication plans

> Module 4: Advocacy Communication
- Advocacy messages
- Evidence-based communication
- Storytelling for impact
- Persuasive communication

> Module 5: Media Relations
- Media engagement

- Press releases
- Interviews
- Media briefings

> Module 6: Public Affairs
- Government engagement
- Institutional relations
- Public-policy communication
- Reputation management

> Module 7: Digital and Social Communication
- Digital communication strategy
- Social-media engagement
- Online communities
- Digital advocacy

> Module 8: Crisis Communication
- Communication risk
- Crisis preparedness
- Crisis response
- Reputation recovery

> Module 9: Internal and Stakeholder Communication
- Employee communication
- Stakeholder updates
- Consultation communication
- Feedback systems

> Module 10: Strategic Communication Plan
- Communication assessment
- Strategic priorities
- Implementation plan
- Monitoring communication impact