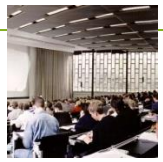
Management Skills

COLOGNE

WINTER TERM 2026/2027



University of Cologne

Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences

The Cologne WiSo-Faculty

Introduction

This **Management Skills Seminar** combines professional work assignments, real-world cases, and practical exercises. The practical exercises help to develop the confidence that is essential for speaking clearly, lucidly, and thoughtfully in diverse management scenarios.

The seminar also offers methods on how to tackle real business cases. Students will take on the perspective of a decision-maker by analyzing complex management challenges requiring them to evaluate options and find appropriate solutions. Participants will receive expert advice on how to handle challenging business situations.

We will also elaborate and discuss how to conduct effective online presentations and *virtual* business meetings. We will discuss how online meetings may differ from offline meetings.

Finally, and most importantly, this course also discusses the role of well-being and happiness in the context of a business culture. Employees pay more attention to the ethical behavior of companies. In response to this trend, firms have been increasingly investing into programs that promote, protect and restore mental health. We examine current ethical dilemmas and issues and discuss potential solutions. The need for action on mental health is indisputable and urgent and will be discussed in this course.

Course Description

Learning Objectives

- Understand theoretical aspects of communication
- Learn how to appear self-confident in management situations
- Handle questions and unexpected situations in an appropriate way
- Get insights into making persuasive pitches
- Get insights into ideal-typical processes of a presentation
- Understand to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information
- Train critical thinking
- Learn how to effectively conduct video conferencing
- Discuss corporate programs that may promote, protect and restore mental health
- Identify success factors of happiness and well-being in a business context

Evaluation criteria

- Preparation and presentation of a real world business case will be judged on the following criteria: presentation slides (incl. structure), content (i.e., solution of the case), voice (incl. articulation), and timing.
- Final seminar work
- Active participation in all exercises (incl. elevator pitches, simulated press conferences, etc.)

Typical Schedule (subject to change)

Day 1
9 .00– 10.30 Introduction
10.30 -12.00 ***Communication process***
12.00 – 13.00 Lunch Break
13.00 – 14.30 ***Difficult management scenarios***
14.30 –16.30 Presentation and case studies
16.30 –17.00 Exercises, reflection and feedback

Day 2
9.00-10.30 Introduction and repetition
10.30 – 12.00 ***Presentation skills:***
How to start & how to handle questions
12.00 – 13.00 Lunch Break
13.00 – 14.30 ***Pitches in business scenarios***
14.30 –16.30 Presentation and case studies
16.30 –17.00 Exercises, reflection and feedback

Day 3
9.00-10.00 Introduction and repetition
10.00- 12.00 ***Happiness: Manage your mind-set***
12.00 – 13.00 Lunch Break
13.00 – 15.30 ***Happiness: Manage your mind-set (teamwork)***
15.30 –16.30 Presentation and case studies
16.30 –17.00 Exercises, reflection and feedback

Day 4 (online)
9.00-10.00 Introduction and repetition
10.00- 12.00 ***Online presentations and virtual meetings***
12.00 – 13.00 Lunch Break
13.00 – 16.30 ***Seminar work preparation and discussion***
16.30 –17.00 Exercises, reflection and feedback

Pre Task (students receive an e-mail prior the course with more information)

There are several assignments that you have to prepare before our first meeting:

1. Please prepare 1-2 minutes in which you will present yourself. For this task, please present one object to the seminar participants which characterizes yourself or which facilitates your self-presentation. Try to make this speech as interesting as possible (include emotions, speed changes, tone changes, etc.)

2. Every one of you will receive an individual case study in a separate email (approx. one week before the seminar). Please prepare an (exact!) 4-minute presentation on the topic you have received.

   Please find below an example of a case:

   Your client, the CEO of a major cruise company, asks you to help him with an investment decision. He is currently investigation whether his company should launch a new luxury cruise ship with a capacity of 2000 passengers. The investment volume is 700 million. As an internal guideline, the company has set a 15% return on all major investments. Would you advise the client to invest in the cruise ship?

Lecturer: Assistant Prof. Dr. Samuel Stäbler

Prof. Dr. Samuel Stäbler (see www.SamuelStaebler.com) is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Marketing at the Tilburg School of Economics and Management.

Samuel's research interest and expertise focus on communication and media management. Furthermore, he studies the relationship between press media and companies. His research approach is empirical and quantitative, involving large databases and advanced statistical analyses.

For recent research results, he has been awarded with the 2020 AMA Don Lehmann Award (runner-up), 2019 GAMMA Doctoral Dissertation Award, the 2018 SMA Doctoral Proposal Award (runner-up), the 2014 Young Researchers' Award from the Federal Association of German Marketing and Social Researchers and the 2014 Max Weber prize for Business Ethics from the Institute of German Economy. Furthermore, he was finalist for the 2019 Researcher Award from the Federal Association of German Marketing and Social Researchers.

Samuel's work has been published in the *Journal of Marketing*, *International Journal of Research in Marketing, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Marketing Letters*, and *Journal of Advertising Research*. Samuel Stäbler has given presentations to companies and at academic conferences all over the world. Furthermore, he teaches marketing specific courses and supervises master theses at Master degree level. For his excellent teaching skills, he won the 2017 Junior Teaching Award of University of Cologne. Through studies and research stays abroad he developed intercultural skills and competences.