ADVANCED COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR HIGH POTENTIALS: Accelerating your promotion schedule post graduation

Mid-Semester Module – Spring 2015

Schedule:
Tuesday, 2/24: 1:00 – 5:00 PM
Wednesday, 2/25: 1:00 – 5:00 PM
Thursday, 2/26: 1:00 – 5:00 PM
Friday, 2/27: 1:00 – 5:00 PM

Brandon M. Smith
Adjunct Instructor, Goizueta Business School
Founder, The Workplace Therapist, LLC
404.403.6903
brandon.smith@emory.edu

Description:
This course equips you to maximize your impact in your job within the first year post MBA. Whether it is defining expectations with your manager, creating and managing “your brand” or requesting and receiving constructive feedback from your manager, this course will equip you with the essential communication skills you must possess in order to be recognized as a high potential in your first year post graduation. You will learn the precise methods, tactics and strategies critical to communicating to key decision-makers and navigating organizational politics in ways that maximize understanding and facilitate action. We will explore what managers expect, how to most efficiently utilize their time, and how to constructively say “no” when the time comes.

Learning Objectives:
- Understand and apply techniques to clarify and manage expectations with managers
- Assess and synthesize the culture present in any given organization and incorporate that knowledge into your communication strategy
- Practice and apply interpersonal communication techniques related to negotiating salary, setting performance expectations, seeking feedback, effective executive questioning, and setting boundaries
- Applying the concept of “pre-wiring” strategically to multiple settings, organizations and industries
- Understand and plan for the life pressures that accompany high potentials and how those vary based on gender
- Devise a High Potential growth plan for your first 5 years post graduation
How This Course Fits Into Your Communication Development As A Professional:

This course provides you with the fundamental communication skills necessary to maximize your impact and accelerate your promotion schedule within your organization.

Required Text

1. Study.net – necessary for all HBR articles and cases

Assignment

Manager Interview – What Does It Take To Be a High Potential? The focus of this assignment is to learn first-hand how a manager of your choice identifies High Potentials. Consider the following questions in your interview:

- What do you look for in a High Potential?
  - What are the particular behaviors you look for?
  - What are the particular values you look for?
- What is unique about High Potentials in your company / industry that may differ from other environments?
• What are the top 3 things I should do in my first year post graduation to excel and position myself as a high potential?
• What are the top 3 things I should NOT do in my first year post graduation? What are the common derailers you see?
• What were some of the best decisions you made in your career that you might be willing to share with me?
• Any missteps you made along the way that you might want to share as well?

Be aware of what he / she consciously communicates… and what he / she does not consciously communicate. Beyond how he / she answers the questions, you can tell what is valued in a place based on what is said and not said as well as “how” it is said.

You will be expected to:

Part 1 - Conduct an interview with a manager (over the phone is preferred but e-mail would be acceptable with approval of the instructor) with a manager of your choice. Choose your interviewee wisely! This is a great opportunity to network and getting to know a potential stakeholder by framing it as a class assignment.

Part 2 - Devise takeaways and actionable steps for Year 1. Based on his / her responses, what are your takeaways? Put those takeaways into a plan format in which you outline what you plan on doing, when, and how you plan on assessing the impact of those tactics.

Your report should be 2-4 pages double spaced and include your interview in a separate appendix.
# Preliminary Class Schedule (subject to change based on our discussions):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class #</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Readings For Class</th>
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| TBD  | 1       | Welcome, policy, and objectives  
Getting Recognized in a New Organization: Challenges and Opportunities  
Defining Your Brand  
- Determining your leadership brand in your first year  
- Telling your story | **Read:** WSJ – “Why Learn and Grow On the Job? It’s Easier To Feign Infallibility” (To be distributed during class)  
**Read:** HBR – “Five Questions About Interviewing Your Prospective Supervisor”  
**Read:** HBR CASE – “Jack Thomas”  
**Read:** Harvard Management Update – “Five Steps to Building Your Personal Leadership Brand” |
| TBD  | 2       | Industry Panelists  
- “What does it take to be seen as a High Potential?” | N/A |
| TBD  | 3       | Managing Expectations and Managing Your Boss  
- Effective questioning techniques: seeking clarity and specificity  
- Managing expectations  
- Recognizing and stating assumptions  
- Frequency of communication and content  
Difficult Conversations Practicum  
- “No-Fault Formula”  
- Defining performance expectations with your manager  
Guest Speaker: Randy Hain, Managing Partner, Bell Oaks Executive Search  
- Current state of the job market today  
- Best practices for High Potentials  
- Common missteps in your first year  
- Creating a High Potential plan | **Read:** HBR – “Managing Your Boss”  
**Read:** HBR – “How Can I Do a Better Job of Managing Up?” |
| TBD  | 4       | Managing Life Demands as a High Potential  
- Gender differences and tradeoffs – what it means to be a high potential female / male  
- Leveraging your gender / ethnicity as a high potential  
- Acknowledging mistakes – when, how, and to whom?  
- What are the benefits of apologizing? What are the risks?  
- Saying “No”  
Difficult Conversations Practicum  
- Acknowledging mistakes / Apologizing  
- Saying “No”  
- Ending relationships | **Read:** WSJ - “Deloitte Tries a Different Sales Pitch for Women” (To be distributed)  
**Read:** HBR – “The Power of Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why”  
**Read:** HBR – “The Art of the Apology”  
**Read:** HBR – “Staying with No”  
ASSIGNMENT DUE |
About the Instructor

Brandon Smith

Brandon Smith is an Adjunct Instructor at the Goizueta Business School at Emory University and a founding Principal of Core Growth Partners, a consulting firm specializing in leadership development and strategic corporate culture building. With extensive experience in both executive development and corporate growth, Brandon’s expertise lies in the following domains:

- Leadership development and professional growth
- Navigating organizational politics
- Influencing others
- Managing stakeholder relationships
- Team alignment


Brandon’s recent teaching includes courses in leadership communication, advanced management communication, professional communication, leadership development and strategic culture management. Brandon teaches and coaches in the full-time MBA program, Evening MBA program, Executive MBA program and Executive Education. Brandon also serves as a frequent contributor to STRATEGY magazine in areas of leadership, culture, and strategy and is the co-host of the weekly radio program on Georgia Public Radio where he specializes on navigating workplace and career challenges for listeners across the region.

Brandon Smith is also the founder of [www.theworkplacetherapist.com](http://www.theworkplacetherapist.com) – a resource dedicated to eliminating dysfunction at work, improving workplace health and restoring a sense of optimism, focus and productivity in the workplace.

Academic Background

Brandon received an undergraduate degree from Vanderbilt University with a concentration in communications and team dynamics. His graduate work includes a M.S. in counseling from Georgia State University as well as a M.B.A. from Emory University's Goizueta Business School.