

UCT GSB teaches the tools of change leadership

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Rapidly adapt or face becoming obsolete - this is the challenge business leaders are grappling with today in a tough global marketplace. To empower leaders with the knowledge and tools to lead change expertly, the UCT Graduate School of Business (GSB) will run an innovative course called Organisational Change Leadership this September.

According to James Gardener, the director of the course, it's vital that leaders today have the right abilities to drive change. "Agility, emotional intelligence, dealing with ambiguity and improvisation are the key elements to survival," said Gardener.

Gardener is well placed to lead the programme - he draws on ten years experience as a member of Royal Dutch Shell's leadership, learning and performance team which was tasked with developing and delivering organisational change interventions all across the world. He has been a guest lecturer on Rotterdam Erasmus International MBA programme, organisational development consultant to International Criminal Court in The Hague, and leadership development consultant to multi-nationals such as Honeywell, Arcelor Mittal, and Anglo American.

He added that the expertise imparted on the course has never been more relevant or more urgent. "Given the fluctuating state of the corporate environment, it is vital that leaders have the right skills to embrace change. Without these skills, people get hurt. The more I research the field, the more it rings true that all leadership is change leadership and that the generic skills of handling, understanding, listening to and motivating people successfully are fundamental to the management of change in organisations," said Gardener.

To assist in delivering the lessons for change leadership, Gardener has assembled a team of prominent leaders for the experiential and interactive programme.

The faculty includes Christophe Gillet, former Director of Business Innovation for Sony Business Europe and now a director of international consultancy Pentacle - he will share his practical leadership experience in multicultural environments and of transformational change management. This includes adapting behaviours and business cultures under fast growing uncertainty and managing 'foggy' projects.

Gillet said organisations cannot operate efficiently anymore on the same basis as before in terms of hierarchy, management, decision-making and teamwork.

"In today's complex and uncertain business environment, the consequences are that people often do not feel engaged, emotion often overcomes logic, traditional planning doesn't work anymore, budgeting processes are made obsolete, risk management becomes the main factor of success, and rigid strategies do not make sense - for leaders today 'doing what we've always done' does not mean, 'getting what we've always got'."

Robert Poynton, another of the programme's diverse team, is founder of On Your Feet, an innovative collaboration between business and the arts that develops team-work skills. Poynton has run workshops globally for clients such as the Said Business School (Oxford University), BBC, Orange and JWT amongst others.

Aimed at CEOs, MDs and functional heads in charge of change and transformation, Gardener said delegates will emerge with the confidence and courage of authentic leadership and will be rearing to implement their strategy as a change leader.

The UCT GSB Executive Education unit has a global top ten rating in 2005 and 2006 from the Economist Intelligence Unit, and in 2007 was listed by the International University Consortium for Executive Education (UNICON) - the leading global body for the advancement of executive education - as one of six leading business school innovators.

The UCT GSB course runs from 1 - 2 September. Contact (021) 406 1268 or .

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