

UCT GSB course unlocks business creativity and innovation

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The UCT Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB) is offering an inventive course this September that will challenge leaders to think outside the box and enable them to unlock unprecedented levels of creativity and innovation.



The course, called Creategy, harnesses the talents of artists and renowned business leaders and consultants, such as John Vlismas, one of South Africa's leading comedians, and Christophe Gillet, the former Director of Business Innovation for Sony Business Europe.

Jon Foster-Pedley, the director of the course and Senior Lecturer at the UCT GSB, said it is no surprise that in a business environment with uncertainty and constant change that many traditional approaches to doing business are no longer enough.

"If things aren't going well, doing the same thing over and over again is not going to help you get your business out of the doldrums. When the going gets tough, there are two things you can do. You can reduce your costs to hold the ship up during the storm. But more importantly, while you are doing that, you should do what you can to find new, successful and sustainable approaches so that the same thing doesn't happen again," he explained.

Foster-Pedley explained that unlimited access to markets and the free flow of information has created a highly-complex, fast-evolving and multidisciplinary business world that is a far cry from the systems that many business leaders were taught.

"Consider the following few startling examples: the top ten jobs that will be in demand in 2010 simply would not have existed in 2000, and the rate of technical information available to people will soon be doubling every 72 hours. Internet connectivity has completely changed the way people work, share ideas and pass on information. To operate and be successful in this challenging new world, business requires new perspectives, new ideas and new models."

The UCT GSB Creategy course is designed to allow for business people to break the mould and broaden their capacity to be innovation masterminds.

"The aim is to explore, share, excite and venture into the unknown in order to help business people arrive at the richest possible solution. Ultimately, it provides the tools to develop sustainable innovation," said Foster-Pedley.

The course harnesses the processes of creative people who are at the very front line of what it means to be innovative.

Foster-Pedley said that the creation of artistic acts involves emotional and imaginative engagement and result in actions, products and concepts that add real value. Tapping into the mind of artists is fascinating and of huge benefit for those who want to unlock their own innovation.

The international contingent is led by Christophe Gillet, former Director of Business Innovation for Sony Business Europe and now a director of international consultancy Pentacle and Robert Poynton, founder of On Your Feet which is an innovative collaboration between business and the arts that develops team-work skills for clients such as the Said Business School (Oxford University), BBC, Orange and JWT via improvisational skills.

The South African group includes John Vlismas, Mark Mitchell, head of music at Bishops School, and Dave Duarte, founder and director of Nomadic Marketing, a new-media marketing programme at the UCT GSB and co-founder of Huddlemind, a community driven social-media content and education company.

The course is aimed at people in both the public and private sectors, be they managers, professionals, entrepreneurs, or anyone “restlessly dissatisfied with most descriptions and practice of strategy”, according to Foster-Pedley. No prior formal business or strategy training is required.

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 Creativity Course runs from 1 - 5 September. Contact Junita on (021) 406 1323 or email .

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