

UCT business school develops project management masterminds

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The UCT Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB) is giving a new twist to a tried-and-tested business function this August with the launch of a course on strategic project management that organisers say will enable senior managers and project leaders to successfully create and execute projects that deliver maximum value - even in hard economic times.



According to Dennis Comninos, co-director of the course, the nature of project management has undergone major changes in recent times as businesses adapt to the pressures and challenges of the 21st Century economic environment.

“In today's turbulent business climate the ability to manage and achieve significant organisational goals has become a core skill for senior managers. Such success is normally driven through effective project management - from planning to execution - but with the business landscape of the 21st century undergoing unpredictable and rapid change, the classic approach to project management is no longer adequate,” said Comninos.

“This traditional approach, which emphasises achieving goals on time and within budget, is quite simply not applicable. The definition of project success is now evolving to encompass goals such as value-creation and real benefits realisation - rather than just adherence to timelines and costs.

In other words: the nature of the current economic climate means that long-term planning and rigid goals are out - while flexibility, prioritisation and strategic thinking are in where project management is concerned.

In addition, people and organisational culture are key elements that can make or break the success of a project today and Comninos and co-director Christopher van der Hoven will together show delegates how each can be exploited to its maximum potential to drive value and optimise profitability within an organisation.

The programme is aimed at senior level delegates who manage a portfolio of projects at a strategic level and is structured to be highly interactive and participatory with Comninos and van der Hoven leading class-based discussions based on their latest research and experiences from the past year.

The course directors bring substantial expertise together - Van der Hoven is a lecturer in Innovation at Cranfield School of Management in the UK, while Comninos is director of a number of companies specialising in project, strategic and human capital management consulting with over 29 years of project management experience covering strategic, IT, development, engineering and business projects.

According to Comninos, the parameters of project management are changing and those who stick to the traditional approach that emphasises tools and process are in danger of falling behind.

“Tools and processes, of course, remain important - but the emphasis has shifted and project management is fast evolving into a discipline that can bring real, valuable benefits to organisations operating in the ever-changing and unpredictable business world of today,” he said.

The course is being offered by the UCT GSB's Executive Education unit, which has a global top ten rating from the Economist Intelligence Unit, and was listed in 2007 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.

Strategic Project Management takes place from 25 - 29 August 2008 at the UCT Graduate School of Business. For more information, contact Dudu Mahlangu on 021 406 1268 or .

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