

UCT Graduate School of Business launches change management course

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The UCT Graduate School of Business has teamed up with Christophe Gillet, a renowned organisational change expert and former head of business innovation for Sony Europe, to launch a new course to help organisations make the necessary changes to survive and thrive.



*Organisational change expert,
Christophe Gillet*

According to data released by Statistics SA on 26 May, South Africa's economy slumped in the first three months of this year, pushing the country into recession for the first time since 1992.

Gillet said that with the inability to predict what's ahead, coupled with the general reluctance to change within most organisations, the way forward, and surviving, is intrinsically difficult to map out and execute.

"In light of this current state of affairs, most companies are doing very little - this has been the most common response from businesses worldwide. These organisations live in hope that if they sit tight and watch their costs, the good times will roll by again and they'll survive the recession intact," said Gillet.

This strategy, he argued has little merit as it does not create a stronger, more competitive business. "Following a strategy based on hope, businesses are often left weakened and weathered and face the danger of becoming obsolete," he said.

Gillet recommends that leaders rethink the organisation and change the way they do business.

"This is absolutely necessary for companies that are now considering their long-term success. Evolving requires innovation and change - leading change in a recession is a challenging job and it calls on leaders to shift up a gear and innovate in the way that they lead," he said.

He explained that the new UCT GSB course, called Organisational Change Demystified and running from 31 August - 1 September, is designed for experienced managers facing the challenges of organisational change, in which ambiguity, complexity and resistance to change are key factors.

Gillet said the course has been designed to give practical, workable solutions to deal with change successfully - and not to discuss it on a purely academic level.

"The course will offer a practical set of tools that are simple to understand and easy to use to ensure that delegates can actually think and act differently when they return to the office.

"We will develop a non-conventional way of thinking about change to address 'hard' (processes) and 'soft' (people) issues in relation to organisational change," he said.

Complex and uncertain, this new climate for many South Africans is a tough one to lead in, he added.

“It, however, can also be a launch pad, an opportunity to break from the old and renew an organisation. This calls for leaders willing to see their roles in a new way and willing to step up to face the challenges of today.

“Innovation cannot exist in companies that are paralysed by the complexities of the world, and neither can it exist with paralysed leaders.”

Gillet is now a director of international consultancy Pentacle and will share his practical leadership experience in multicultural environments and of transformational change management. Pentacle clients include global firms such as Dell, T-Mobile, Cadbury Schweppes, Microsoft, Airbus, Total, Danone, and Heineken.

For more information, contact Junita Abrahams on 021 406 1323 or SMS 'Change' and your email address to 31497.

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