

UCT course helps leaders steer strategies to success

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The UCT Graduate School of Business (GSB) will run an innovative course this October that will help leaders make a success of key strategies and bring their visions to life. The course, called Strategic Leadership through Coaching, is a first in South Africa in its innovative fusion of two disciplines – coaching and strategy – in order to target the problem many organisations have in turning strategies, such as organisational change initiatives, into results.



Janine Everson, Academic Director at the Centre for Coaching at the UCT GSB and the facilitator for the course, said many executives agree that while strategic planning is often given an organisation's full attention – normally with input from expensive consultants – when it comes to the implementation of such strategies, something goes wrong, leaving the organisation unchanged or, worse, halfway through a process.

“But great leadership is about implementing change as well as developing the strategies to adapt to change,” she said. “You can't have one without the other.”

The course exposes senior executives responsible for strategic implementation to focussed one-on-one coaching that develops their own personal leadership competencies and an approach to leadership which will help them become effective catalysts and drivers of change.

“This course is about strategic leadership, underpinned by one-on-one coaching support as the core in helping leaders to build their capacity to envisage, mobilise and drive organisations towards strategic change objectives,” said Everson.

“Delegates hone their leadership skills, becoming better able to foresee challenges, manage uncertainty in a constructive way and unlock the potential inherent in themselves and their colleagues.”

The addition of coaching into change management initiatives in particular is one proving of great value globally.

“Vodafone, for example, has implemented and demonstrated the effectiveness of a coaching initiative to facilitating a change process. The company used a coaching programme to enable management and employees to cope with a change in operating systems. Unilever is another company that has used coaching to great effect in recent years,” said Everson.

In the Vodafone case, she said, a research study noted enhanced performance within individuals, teams and the organisation as a whole, which was an indicator of the success of the model of cascading the intervention from the top down to management at all levels in different divisions.

“The researchers also noted that culture change does not happen instantaneously, but in stages. So there is no quick fix. With coaching, leaders are able to carefully guide their organisations from a stage of no commitment and even scepticism of change through to a stage where practices are embedded so that people at all levels within the organisation are involved in the change process, both formally and informally.”

These international studies are now been backed by local research that looks at the effects of coaching within the South African context.

The course runs from 15 - 19 October. For more information on the course call (021) 406 1268 or email .

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