

Leading management expert to teach in SA

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"Much of the innovation industry talks recycled platitudes: the real secret is that innovation is more about business culture than it is about brainstorming ideas" - this is according to Professor Paddy Miller, a leading academic and management consultant in the areas of innovation, leadership and organisational change based at Spain's IESE Business School, who will be in South Africa this August and October to teach on one of the UCT Graduate School of Business' core management development courses.

Professor Miller has been a visiting faculty at Harvard Business School and Columbia Business School in the US and has authored and co-authored several books, most recently Mission Critical Leadership. He works internationally and this year has been involved in various roles with Abbott Pharmaceuticals, Rabobank, JTI and Lufthansa.

The Programme for Management Development (PMD), which he will teach on, is a flagship two-week UCT GSB general management programme for middle- to senior-level managers which runs three times each year. Miller is one of team of very high caliber instructors on the programme. The PMD has in-depth local knowledge and experience, and instructors like Miller bring an invaluable external global perspective. The PMD runs from 30 August - 12 September and again from 25 October - 7 November.

According to Miller, innovation is critical in our current global economy and says the challenge is for businesses to make innovation permeate the organisation.

He argues that the demands of a knowledge economy places tremendous pressure on organisations and society to utilise the brainpower that they have and that brainpower has got to be focused on innovation.

"We have to be creative and use all our capability. Part of the problem in business is in the way we have tackled innovation, the way we train it. If you look at most executive development programmes what they tend to do is create 'Brainstorm Island'. You go away for a few days and work out how you can be creative, we brainstorm - the problem is when you get back to work. There is a real challenge - how do I transition from Brainstorm Island back to the workplace? What we found is that the majority of managers have no idea how to transfer the ideas and creativity back into the workplace. The vast majority can't get that right," he explained.

He said that giving people the tools to manage creativity in the workplace is vital to making creativity sustainable.

"The problem goes very deep. The reality is that there may be processes or systems that impede creativity in an organisation. We have, in fact, designed many of our processes to prevent people from being inventive in fact, and any mistakes are punished. Whole cultures can limit and constrain innovation. In order to sustain the innovation in your organisation, you have to redesign the system - you need to become an 'innovation architect'."

"An 'innovation architect' realises that not only is he/she generating lots of ideas but also that the people around them are generating ideas - and then asks: 'How can I structure and design the creative workspace inside the organisation, outside the organisation, with my customers, with my suppliers, so that we can sustain innovation?'. So that it's about more than doing something for one week, one month etc. - it's about how you keep things going."

Miller added that he has found in his research that most middle managers, branch or divisional managers do not need training in generating more and more ideas themselves, what they need is being able to see a good idea and add something. To be able to say: "That's interesting - I think you need to talk to so-and-so over there and those two ideas would make a fantastic new process system or product."

“Your role as a leader here is to put those ideas together,” he said.

For details on the PMD course, contact 021 406 1268 or sms “PMD” and your email address to 31497. SMSs charged at standard rates.

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