

UCT GSB course teaches the art of negotiating

Issued by [UCT Graduate School of Business](#)

15 May 2008

The UCT Graduate School of Business (GSB) this June runs a short-course that teaches the art of successful negotiating.

According to Barney Jordaan, Director of the course Negotiating for Long-term Results, it is the distillation of years of experience in negotiation and addresses an important shortfall in skills development in the field and offers expertise that can be applied to any role that involves striking deals.

“When one looks at the situation in South Africa with regards to the current wage negotiations in progress, it is but one example where great negotiation skills can make a tremendous difference,” said Jordaan.

“Media reports have said there are ‘signs of an impending winter of discontent’, and that ‘wage negotiations are once again almost certain to be protracted this year’. South Africa can ill afford protracted conflict in this area - this could hit workers, businesses, growth and development hard in a year that has seen tough times already.

“Beyond this labour related context, there are many other areas where ability to negotiate well can yield great benefits such as in business and investment deals and contracts, in sales, in mergers and acquisitions, at board level and in the legal arena,” he said.

Jordaan said that the UCT GSB course combines both theory and practice and uses a host of relevant real world case studies. Delegates will explore different approaches to negotiation in detail and learn how to advance their interests in a co-operative manner.

“One of the biggest challenges facing people involved in negotiation today is that there is a persistence of an outmoded view that they can only win if the other side loses. While this may result in a deal, the deal itself is often not the best one that could have been obtained but worse still, the relationship that was supposed to be maintained or established is strained or is destroyed altogether.

“This is a skin that must be shed. Sustaining success today is heavily dependent on sustaining relationships - with clients, employees, suppliers and shareholders for example in business,” he said.

The UCT GSB course, which runs from 11 - 13 June, will also help negotiators to develop cultural savvy - South Africa is a country that has a diversity of cultures and this necessitates that negotiators here are more attuned than in perhaps most other countries to the unique challenges this may pose to achieving a successful negotiation.

“Hence, negotiators need a high-level of Cultural Intelligence or ability to function effectively in a culturally diverse environment. Cultural Intelligence consists of a cognitive, physical and motivational component - it requires a negotiator to become aware of their behaviour and to increase their level of motivation when negotiating in a culturally diverse environment,” said Jordaan.

In addition, the course will provide insight into mediation, which is rapidly growing as a means to resolve disputes both in South Africa and globally.

According to media reports, mediation is gaining ground as an alternative to costly court battles that clog up the court system, freeze huge sums in drawn out cases and often provide only limited relief.

“More and more people are realising that fighting head-on is not the only option, whether in the courts, the factory floor or

on the streets,” said Jordaan.

He adds that the signs are that negotiation is becoming increasingly critical area for managers, business owners and businesses to become highly skilled in. “To date many people have seen the skill of negotiation as a by-the-way capacity in relation to finance, strategy and other traditionally important skills. This will soon no longer be the case.”

The course is being run 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.

For more information on the course, contact Dudu Mahlangu on (021) 406 1268 or email .

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