

New Program Uses Swiss Alps to Invigorate Innovation in Corporate Sustainability

A new, five-day open executive education program introduces experiential learning in the Swiss Alps as a way to reconnect business with nature – and breaks new ground for Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM).



The program *Innovation in Corporate Sustainability* uses the unspoiled, natural landscape of the Alps as the classroom to deliver an intense experiential learning journey for senior business executives; re-connecting them with nature in order to invigorate innovation in corporate sustainability. The program, which runs for the first time this fall, will teach participants how to develop a sustainability strategy for their organizations by identifying the objectives, stakeholders, barriers, and resources to do so.

Most companies routinely take steps to reduce carbon footprints and invest in eco-efficiency measures. Yet while companies are the main drivers of positive socio-economic change, scientific data indicates a worsening state of affairs. The situation of RSM’s program in a natural landscape, away from the normal office setting of most business activities, recognizes that the learning environment is critical for participants to be able to engage with the subject and so benefit fully. The program includes a series of short treks with naturalists and geologists.

Program director Professor Gail Whiteman said: “This kind of experiential executive education can really help to establish an emotional connection to the subject, which is the science of sustainability. There’s an emphasis on personal leadership, and we will also talk about paths to personal courage.” Prof. Whiteman is Ecorys NEI Chair in Sustainability and Climate Change at RSM, and also Professor-in-Residence at the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

Tutors

The program’s multiple learning approaches come from faculty tutors, seasoned executive and leadership coaches, experienced natural scientists and local guides. They create an experience of personal and collective learning with group discussions, individual coaching, self-reflection and the development of a Personal Sustainable Leadership plan. The learning program is led by Prof. Gail



Whiteman, and **Suzanne Wolff** . Suzanne was Managing Director of the Body Shop in the Benelux and Austria, and founded Good Company, the first consultancy firm for corporate social responsibility in the Netherlands in 1993. She serves on many non-executive and NGO boards such as WWF Switzerland and is founder of the Mirador Foundation which studies 'how and where to channel a contribution to increase the quality of life'.

The Innovation in Corporate Sustainability program from RSM is a five-day program which runs from Sunday, 30 September to Thursday, 4 October 2012 in Ferpecte, Val d'Herens, Valais, Switzerland. For more information, visit the program webpage or download the brochure.