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'NEED FOR CONSTANT SUCCESS BLOCKS ABILITY TO LEARN'

Speakers At Media Lab Europe's 7th Open_House Argue that Business Leadership is Dependent on an Ability to be Human Beings First and Employees Second

Media Lab Europe, the International Innovation Lab based in Dublin today hosted an Open_House on Learning. Drawing academics and organisations from across Europe, speakers including Kamille Friis and Peter Senge from MIT looked at the 'Learning Process' within individual organisations and ways of designing tools and environments that could transform the way we live and work.

Friis argued that in the western world most of us feel a great need for continuous success. Paradoxically, she said the fear of making mistakes can keep us from exploring areas outside what we think of as our "natural talents" and thus leave many of our resources unused. Unfortunately it is only when life presents a 'trigger' which sometimes manifests itself in terms of stress or ill health that we start to address untapped capabilities.

According to Friis, "Personalities are made up of cells, the more prominent ones being those we have been encouraged to develop from childhood. As we get older it is important that we start to balance these cells and become open to the ones we don't normally use. By doing this we expand the potential for learning and being creative, both as individuals and teams."

Peter Senge, author of *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation* spoke about human values in the workplace: namely vision, purpose, reflectiveness and systems thinking which he believes are needed if businesses are to realise their full potential.

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According to Senge, "Creating organisational environments for accelerated learning means creating work environments where people can be human beings first and employees second. How businesses governmental and non-governmental organisations do this in these frenetic and uncertain times defines the modern day craft of leadership."

Carol Strohecker, principal investigator of the everyday Learning Group at Media Lab Europe also addressed the audience. Details of her group's work can be found at <http://www.medialabeurope.org/research/everyday/index.html>.

ENDS.

Notes to Editor:

About Media Lab Europe

Leveraging the innovative and entrepreneurial operating model of the world-renowned MIT Media Lab, Media Lab Europe adopts an interdisciplinary approach to researching the ways in which new technologies expand human potential. Media Lab Europe's home is in Dublin where it was established two years ago as a 10 year joint venture between the MIT Media Lab and the Irish Government. 100 people work for the not-for-profit Research Institute, across seven groups and supporting areas. To find out more about Media Lab Europe please visit www.medialabeurope.org.

About Open_House

Open_House at Media Lab Europe is a series of monthly research driven forums for business and research professionals. Featuring some of the best minds from MIT and the Media Lab family, keynote speakers are also drawn from the worlds of business and academia. Attendees get the opportunity to immerse themselves in the future with global thought leaders, technology experts and Media Lab Europe researchers. Open_House also provides an opportunity for attendees to exchange views with other senior professional, envisage futures and gain insight to help share research and business directions.

About Open_House Speakers

Kamille Friis is the director of Human Design Group, a company, which focuses on supporting design and development processes in companies and organizations as well as provides graphical design and product solutions. Among the clients are

Novo Nordisk A/S, LEGO A/S, Montana Furniture A/S, Turner Corporation and FRESTA in the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A graduate from The School of Architecture in Aarhus, Denmark, Kamille majored in Industrial Design. She has worked for LEGO A/S as a concept developer and project leader for six years. For 1_ years she was stationed at MIT Media Lab in Boston, USA before starting her own company in 2001.

Peter Senge is a Senior Lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is also Founding Chair of the Society for Organizational Learning (SoL), a global community of corporations, researchers, and consultants dedicated to the "interdependent development of people and their institutions." He is the author of the widely acclaimed book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of The Learning Organization* (1990) and, with colleagues Charlotte Roberts, Rick Ross, Bryan Smith and Art Kleiner, co-author of *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization* (1994) and a fieldbook *The Dance of Change: The Challenges to Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organizations* (March, 1999), also co-authored by George Roth. In September 2000, a fieldbook on education was published, the award winning *Schools That Learn: A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares About Education*, co-authored with Nelda Cambren-McCabe, Timothy Lucas, Bryan Smith, Janis Dutton, and Art Kleiner.

Dr. Senge has lectured extensively throughout the world, translating the abstract ideas of systems theory into tools for better understanding of economic and organizational change. His areas of special interest focus on decentralizing the role of leadership in organizations so as to enhance the capacity of all people to work productively toward common goals. Dr. Senge's work articulates a cornerstone position of human values in the workplace; namely, that vision, purpose, reflectiveness, and systems thinking are essential if organizations are to realize their potentials. He has worked with leaders in business, education, health care and government.

The Fifth Discipline hit a nerve deep within the business and education community by introducing the theory of learning organizations. Since its publication, more than 750,000 copies have been sold. In 1997, *Harvard Business Review* identified it as one of the seminal management books of the past 75 years. There have been feature articles in *Business Week*, *Fortune*, *Fast Company* and other leading business periodicals regarding the work of Dr. Senge and his colleagues at MIT and SoL.

The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook (over 270,000 copies sold) was developed in response to questions from readers of *The Fifth Discipline* who wanted more help with tools, methods and practical experiences in developing enhanced learning capabilities within their own companies. *The Dance of Change* is based on more recent experiences of companies developing learning capabilities over many years, and the strategies leaders develop to deal with the many challenges this work entails. Dr. Senge has also authored many articles published in both academic journals and the business press on systems thinking in management.

The Journal of Business Strategy (September/October 1999) named Dr. Senge as one of the 24 people who had the greatest influence on business strategy over the last 100 years. *The Financial Times* (2000) named him as one of the world's "top management gurus." *Business Week* (October 2001) rated Peter as one of *The Top (ten) Management Gurus*.

Peter Senge received a B.S. in engineering from Stanford University, an M.S. in social systems modeling and Ph.D. in management from MIT.

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