Creativity and Innovation are our only route out of the current crisis

Professor of Marketing at ESADE and holder of the Chair of Design Management at the school, Jordi Montaña is one of the key people behind the new *Beyond Pretty, Embracing Design Thinking* programme to be run in Barcelona from 8th to 12th June this year. An intensive programme designed and run by ESADE Business School and the California-based The Art Center College of Design, one of the world's leading design schools, the program aims to give decision-makers an innovation tool box. Jordi tells us about the key components of this cutting-edge programme that he's been helping to develop.

**Jordi Montaña**  
Holder of the ESADE Chair of Design Management
Why is it so important for companies identify and develop new business opportunities now?

I firmly believe that the only things that can help propel us out of the global economic crisis are creativity and innovation. Other economic stumbling blocks have been solved by going the extra mile, increasing productivity, but not by changing approach. This one’s different, we have to find new ways of working. It will change us, we’ll be different, and so we have to start thinking differently. Beyond Pretty, Embracing Design Thinking is designed to give companies the tools to make the most of this change.

So who is the programme aimed at?

The programme is geared towards CEOs, innovation managers and leaders of new businesses, as well as other professionals in charge of corporate strategy in general. Basically, it’s for anyone who’s in a position to ready their businesses for change.

What is this Design Thinking?

Design thinking is a process employed by cutting-edge design studios, whereby they gain a deep knowledge of the user and build on this to come up with creative ideas to solve existing problems or design new products and processes. This method can be successfully applied to the generation of business strategies and new business ideas.

What will participants get out of this programme?

The unique ESADE-The Art Center alliance brings together theory and practice from the areas of design and business and will equip participants with the tools they need to make the most of their investment in innovation and in turn help their business become positive elements of change. By the end of the week, participants will also have shared experiences and have a portfolio of ideas and strategies that they can apply in their businesses, helping them to enhance creativity and foster innovation.
During the programme, you’ll be looking a number of cases where companies have applied Design Thinking, could you give us an example of one of these? IDEO will be participating in the programme. One of the world’s most innovative companies, they systematically use Design Thinking to come up with new products, services and business ideas. Participants will get a first-hand account of the company’s route to success. We’ll also be looking at companies such as Hewlett Packard, Nestlé and other international organisations that have developed innovative strategies through Design Thinking.

The Beyond Pretty programme is run by ESADE Business School and The Art Center College of Design, tell us a little about how this alliance has worked?
Teachers from the two schools have worked together over the past year and a half to understand each others’ ways of thinking and come up with a programme that makes the most of our mutual strengths. Considering the difference in backgrounds, I have to say that the level of understanding and partnership between the two schools has been extraordinary.

Finally, who will be teaching the programme?
Professors from both schools will be teaching the programme: ESADE experts from the departments of Business Policy, Operations and Marketing, who have extensive knowledge and experience in creativity and innovation, along with specialists from The Art Center who have a great deal of experience in Design Thinking. Combining these thought leaders with participants from many different sectors and speakers from innovative companies, the programme looks set to be a hugely enriching experience.