



RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

SHAPING OUR FUTURE

Professor Martha Maznevski urges participants to invest in people leadership

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At IMD, part of responsible leadership involves developing people in an ethical way. But in a complex environment and with countless external demands, how can executives find the time to lead people in their workplace?

This was the main question addressed by Martha Maznevski, IMD Professor of Organizational Behaviour, during her Responsible Leadership Summit session held earlier today.

She noted that as the business environment has become more complex, organizations in general have followed suit rather than simplifying.

Professor Maznevski outlined the importance of simplifying key organizational messages (structure, processes, mission, etc) in order to amplify its ability to respond and create opportunities. Amplifying involves enhancing people's capabilities for systems thinking and collaboration, increasing informal networks and empowering people to make their own decisions.

"The leader's role is to create direction and meaning and to encourage autonomy," she said. "This requires clarity, curiosity and courage."

For Professor Maznevski, clarity involves taking every interaction with someone as an opportunity to explain the direction and expectation in a two-way dialogue. By being curious about people, a leader can better enable individuals. It also helps create open-mindedness and humbleness, both important for letting go of control and encouraging autonomy. As for courage, good empowering leaders are always a bit uncertain about their own skills and the risks they are taking, but have confidence in the strength of principles and the people they work with.

"In leading for tomorrow, executives must utilize their most complex resource – human beings," concluded Professor Maznevski. "Humans, if given the right encouragement and environment, have incredible capacity to find opportunity in complexity. It is a leader's responsibility to create those conditions and provide the necessary encouragement. Investing in such actions will create the time for performance."