

# CHAOS THEORY AARHUS

**Preface:** In the Danish city of Aarhus there’s a business school with a difference. Kaospilot puts its students in the thick of things from day one, teaching them to think creatively in real-life situations about how innovative businesses can change the way we live.

**School:** Kaospilot  
**Location:** Aarhus, Denmark  
**Founded:** 1991  
**Number of employees:** 20 in Aarhus, 10 in Bern  
**Number of premises:** 2 (Aarhus and Bern, Switzerland)

**Quote:** *‘There was no school in the world back then that could have taught us how to negotiate with the KGB. We asked ourselves what kind of education we could create to help us do what we were doing’*

“You won’t find any textbook assignments or auditorium-style lectures here,” boasts Christer Windeløv-Lidzélius, the principal of Kaospilot, as he strolls around the school’s stunning glass campus in a former industrial area of Aarhus’s port. Instead, students at this alternative business school learn by doing: taking on projects for big-name clients including Cisco, SAS, Carlsberg and Lego. “When students first arrive they are given two things: a key to the campus and a stack of business cards,” says Windeløv-Lidzélius. “They start building their networks from day one.”

Kaospilot is the brainchild of Uffe Elbæk, a prominent Danish politician and formerly Denmark’s minister for culture. Established in 1991, the school’s roots can be traced back to a Danish youth movement known as the Frontrunners, which organised a pro-democracy rock concert in Moscow at the height of the Cold War. “There was no school in the world back then that could have taught us how to negotiate with the KGB,” says Elbæk with a grin. “We asked ourselves what kind of education we could create to help us do what we were doing.”

Kaospilot now trains over 130 students from its home base in Aarhus and a sister school in Bern. At Kaospilot, however, learning isn’t confined to the classroom, let alone the country.

Each year the entire school jets off to tackle a pressing social issue overseas, in cities from Bogotá to Cape Town. These international projects, coupled with a 2005 decision to switch the language of instruction to English, have contributed to the programme’s soaring popularity abroad.

The school’s unique educational model is reflected by the entrepreneurial nature of its students. “Dissatisfied with the Chinese occupation, a student built a national football team for Tibet,” says David Storkholm, director of Kaospilot’s creative-leadership programme and a former student himself. “And for his final exam they played in a match against Greenland.”

Upon graduation, a host of opportunities in myriad sectors await the “Kaospilots”. Eva Kruse, school alumna and CEO of the Danish Fashion Institute, says: “Being a Kaospilot is a lifelong identity. It led me to where I am today.” — (M)

**Why you should come here:** Structured around a varied programme of creative thinking and group work, the Kaospilot style is perfect for those who want to go to business school but are concerned that a few years in the classroom might slow them down. It’s a training ground for entrepreneurs in the real world, not just for academic students.



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