PhD supervision –
Experiences & suggestions

DTU, October 28th, 2013
About me

- Graduated from DTU in the field Design & Innovation, 2010
- Worked as a consultant at Accenture Technology Consulting for 2 years
- PhD Student at DTU Management Engineering since February 2013
- Research area: Global Product Development and Decision Making
- Member of the DTU PhD association, arranging different academic and social activities
The PhD supervision challenge: How is it really going?

The vicious cycle

Not knowing what a PhD is really about

Making unrealistic plans

Not living up to your own expectations

Feeling of incompetence

Not getting relevant feedback

Not being honest with your supervisor

Low energy and poor working habits

Fear of not living up to your supervisors expectations

Can be broken through honesty, accept, understanding and support!

From: Mirjam Godskesen, The PhD supervision Process: Methods and Tools, 2013, DTU
Relationships

Master - Apprentice

Teacher - Student

Friendship (personal)

Colleagues
Feedback from PhD students at DTU:

- Majority of students see their relationship as a master-apprentice
- All students have had a formal discussion of expectations with their supervisors
- Some students think that they do not always get honest feedback on their work from supervisors

Source: Questionnaire sent to 10 PhD students at DTU, 2013
Suggestions for PhD supervisors:

• **Honesty**: Tell the student right away if expectations are not met.

• **Interest**: It is essential that the supervisor has insight / interest in the field the student is working in.

• **Deliverables**: Ask for specific deliverables, and agree on small tasks between each meeting. This makes larger tasks more manageable for the student.

• **Planning**: Encourage students to make realistic plans, and encourage them to “raise the flag” as soon as they feel they can’t keep the plans.
Questions