



Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™

How a new paradigm of Development for leadership is reshaping the future of Leadership Development.

03

SERIES ONE | PAPER 3

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The Leadership Development industry is having to revisit not just its methods but its core assumptions and principles. A fourth frontier is now emerging, as a new paradigm of development emerges in a new epoch.



Introduction

Welcome to the third paper in Series One.
It's great to have you on this journey with us.

Series One's four papers introduce **Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™**. They discuss new contexts that are making new approaches relevant for the leaders of today and the future. These are our reflections on a new global epoch¹, paradigm of development, and frontier of the LD consulting space², and we suggest leadership wisdom is now a must-have solution.

In these papers we are presenting **Leadership Wisdom in Action™** as a core solution and deliverable as part of any well-differentiated leadership development portfolio.

If you haven't yet read the first papers in this Series, please do. Each 25-minute read offers important background context for the threads of this discussion, so they make sense to you.

The two previous papers suggest the nature of leadership development is changing as the world transitions into a Fourth Industrial Epoch. This global shift is affecting institutions and organisations of all sizes everywhere. The implications are thus significant for us all, and especially for those who lead, for Leadership Development consulting, and for future LD approaches – and that is what this third paper in Series One will briefly discuss.

In particular, in this paper we will discuss two specific implications of this global shift: *how the paradigm of Development in leadership is shifting, and what this means for Leadership Development as an industry*. We will discuss what we see emerging, why it matters, and how to constructively meet and help to shape this emerging future. In short, we discuss a new paradigm of Development and a new frontier of LD consulting.

Paper 1

Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™

Introducing a new perspective on transforming leadership.

Paper 2

Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™

How a new Global Epoch is reshaping the landscape of Leadership.

Paper 3

Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™

How a new Paradigm of Development is reshaping Leadership Development.

Paper 4

Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™

The Unity of Leadership and Development as a new maxim for LD in the Fourth Epoch.

¹ See Paper 2 for an introduction to the Fourth Epoch, epochal transition, and their impact on LD consulting.

² 'LD' in this paper means Leadership Development.

Framing ‘Development’ in a new epoch

The word ‘Development’ isn’t straightforward. It has multiple meanings and applies to many different phenomena.

The ‘development’ of an organisation, country, or product isn’t like the development of a human being, leader, or team of leaders. In this paper, we will look at how leaders, Leadership Development professionals, and the LD consulting industry help leaders to develop (so we focus here on individual, and not organisational or team development)¹.

Paper 2 discussed how Global Epochs (huge shifts in industry and thus society) affect Leadership. They influence how development is seen and the LD approaches we take with leaders. Epoch transitions are industry-driven. The LD consulting industry responds. As we saw in the second paper, the ability to respond is variable and isn’t always effective. Leaders, professionals, and the consulting industry’s ability to respond can’t be taken for granted. It must be worked on, accomplished, and reviewed. And, at best, it goes two steps forward, one step back...

So, with some exceptions, industries lead epoch shifts and we respond as best we can. In its response, LD consulting offers its own kind of leadership – thought leadership – back to industries on how to develop leaders. Thus, the relationship between industry and LD consulting evolves. How we frame

Development, the approaches we take, and our stances are all part of this evolution⁴.

The meaning of ‘Development’ for leaders

Papers 1 and 2 looked at Four Contexts and Four Epochs, respectively. Context is what leaders live in and must respond to, and it is thus a major driver of their experiences and development. Context forces can be internal and/or external in origin. The first paper set out our Four Contexts of Transformation™ context model describing how virtually any context pressure can offer leaders an opportunity for development and natural transformation in their life and leadership – offering a fresh perspective on ‘transformation’ for leaders.

The second paper set out four Global Epochs (similar to Industrial Revolutions) that are massive societal, industrial, and global contexts to which leaders, industries, and the LD consulting industry must find ways to respond.

This third paper sets out and discusses Four Paradigms of Development™ in leadership and how this connects to the contexts and epochs described in Papers 1 and 2. It opens a reconsideration of how ‘development’ can be understood and addressed in the Fourth Epoch.

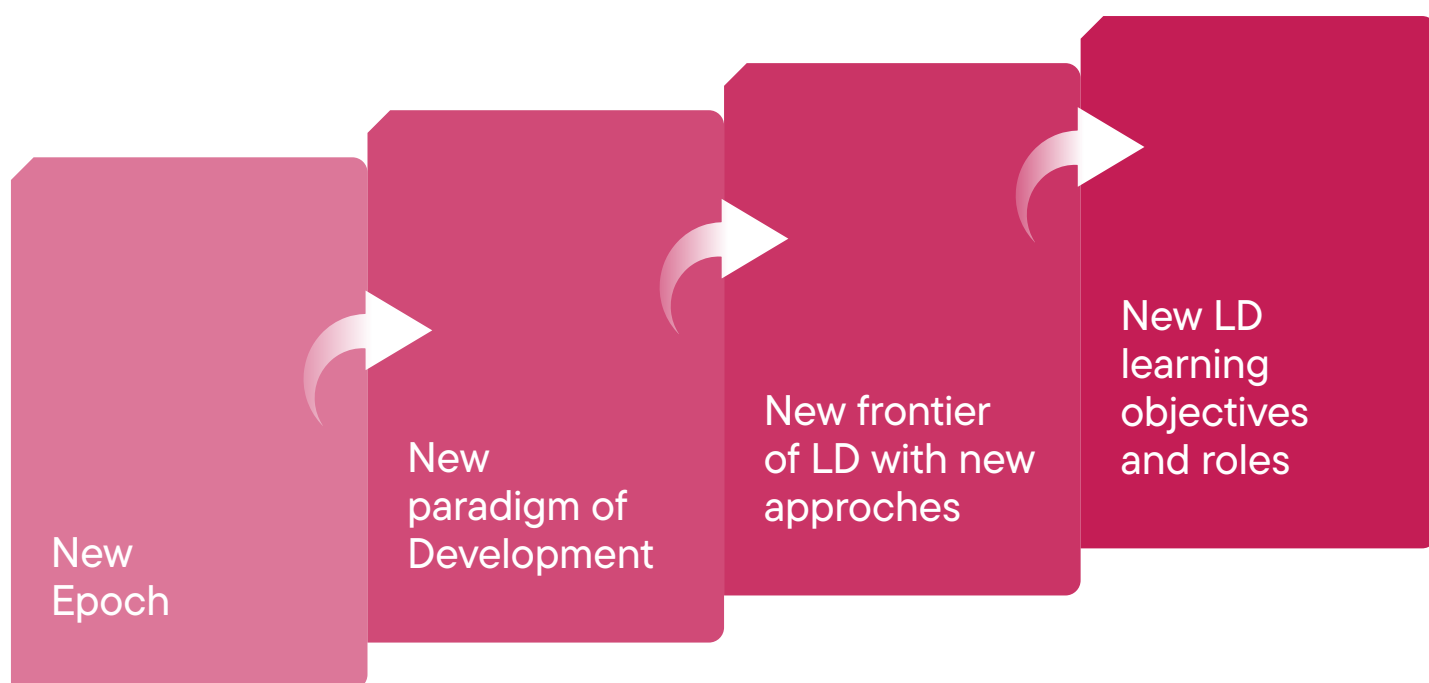
³ Organisational and team development aren’t our focus here, but our experience is that organisations can sustainably *transform* only as far as their leaders are able to *develop their own relationship to transformation*.

⁴ Our approach of Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™ (WBLD) is part of these developments.

An epoch shift always leads to a new paradigm of Development for leaders, which in turn informs a new frontier of Leadership Development which is made up of important new LD approaches, learning objectives, practitioner roles, and practices. These will be discussed.

So, new epochs inspire new paradigms of Development, which inspire new LD approaches, opening new ways for leaders and professionals to further develop their life and leadership which enables thought leadership to evolve in the LD industry and among its practitioners. The flow enables the work of the LD industry and practitioners to remain fit for context.

Figure 1: How Global Epoch shifts influence Leadership Development consulting



Each new Epoch inspires a new Paradigm of Development and a new Frontier for the Leadership Development industry.

The Four Paradigms of Development™

We see four ways to frame the development of leaders. Each could be called a ‘paradigm’ – a set of assumptions and beliefs that form a perspective – an entire way of looking at a topic (in this case, the topic of developing effective leadership in organisations).

Paradigms are not simply right or wrong. Like theories, they are just more or less useful. A paradigm is like a set of tectonic plates that bend and buckle until the next major, disruptive shift. They inform approaches and ways of thinking, feeling, and working.

Having discussed shifting epochs in a previous paper, let’s now look paradigms of Development and their implications for LD approaches adopted by HRDs, leadership consultants, and consultancies. Different paradigms can co-exist, so LD professionals must be intentionally aware of them. How they work with these paradigms influences the what, how, why, relevance, and impact of the approaches they take in their work.

Figure 2: How each new Global Epoch and paradigm reshapes LD consulting and its approaches

Global Epoch*	First	Second	Third	Fourth
New Paradigms of Development	Ad Hoc Paradigm	Skills-Based Paradigm	Capacity-Based Paradigm	Human-Based Paradigm
New frontiers of LD Consulting	First Frontier	Second Frontier	Third Frontier	Fourth Frontier
Key Examples of LD approaches:	Self-Driven & Neutral	Technocratic, & Horizontal	Agile, Adaptive, & Vertical	Wisdom-Based, & Embodied
Core Learning Objectives	<i>Learn how to learn</i>	<i>Develop essential competencies</i>	<i>Expand desirable capabilities</i>	<i>Lead your own development journeys</i>
LD Expert’s roles	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Instruct & Practice</i>	<i>Train & Facilitate</i>	<i>Guide & Accompany</i>
Leader’s Discovery	<i>Potential/Resilience</i>	<i>Confidence/Skill</i>	<i>Adaptability/Agility & Capability</i>	<i>Transformative Aptitude to Lead Your Own Growth</i>
Risk if overused	<i>Blind spots</i>	<i>Certainty</i>	<i>Dependency</i>	<i>Self-Absorption</i>

Brief outline of the major paradigms, with examples of LD approaches in each one.

01. Ad Hoc

The first paradigm of Development is ad hoc learning.

Trying out your Leadership

Here, development is erratic and spontaneous. It relies on a leader's character and instinct to drive their own leadership growth. They fend for themselves. Surprisingly, this paradigm still dominates Leadership Development. Most organisations invest almost zero funds per leader in leadership development – it is self-taught. There's no system. LD approaches informed by it can be called Neutral⁵, as developments might happen organically or not happen at all (it may even roll backwards... who knows?).

Leaders are chosen to lead based on charisma and/or track record. They go as far as their momentum, natural ability, and staying power take them. This is typical in early test-and-learn phases of a leader's career as they discover their potential. They 'learn how to learn'. Over-relying on this paradigm can be corrosive and even anti-developmental. On the other hand, even many experienced leaders still haven't quite 'learnt how to learn'...

02. Skills-Based

The second paradigm focuses on essential skills

Structuring your Leadership

These are not management but leadership skills – such as listening, conflict resolution, building morale, cohesion, shaping expectation or alignment, and helping people develop. The LD approaches it informs are called Technocratic, Technical, and Horizontal. Their main aim is Leadership Competency: consistent and reliable execution; progressive improvement; task attainment; and business goals, for example.

Our LD role is to instruct and impart knowledge for skilful, reliable, and consistent execution. It creates confidence: 'I can do it'. But overusing this paradigm can be anti-developmental, giving a false certainty that any challenge is a problem; just find the right skill and you'll fix it.

⁵ It could also be called a 'Neglect Approach' to the development of people's leadership.

03. Capacity-Based

The third paradigm focuses on key Capacities

Resourcing your Leadership

We all have capacities – to think, feel, act, and so on. Using them better makes us more capable. Surpassing skills development (second paradigm) means growing and using capacities to build capability. Leading in complexity takes skill and, more than this, your ‘use of self’ (capacities)⁶.

LD approaches within this paradigm have been called Agile, Adaptive, and Vertical. The latter states development goes through pre-defined stages – each linked to specific capacities – so you identify your stage (they last for years) and are trained in the best capacities to make progress⁷. Developing leadership like this is slow, gradual work.

One rationale for it is that self-awareness (both structured and flexible) makes you more effective at leading complex (e.g., unfamiliar, unpredictable, non-linear) challenges such as managing stakeholders or leading large systems. The LD role is to train you in ‘the required’ capacities for more adaptable and/or agile leadership so that ‘I, and we, can change the game we’re in’.

Overusing this paradigm can bring an over-reliance on secret sauce offers and dependency on outside experts. Until now, the third paradigm has been state-of-the-art in Leadership Development (sure, the first or second paradigms have their place, but the third is often positioned as the ‘hot ticket’ of thought leaders).

04. Human-Based

The fourth paradigm can be described as Human-Based

Living your Leadership

It focuses on an innate aptitude that is unique to you and universally human – the aptitude to develop yourself by, first and foremost, cultivating your relationship to your own growth. In adults, Learning and Awareness are two results of this aptitude for development. They are relevant to how you live and grow. Your innate aptitude for development can empower you to ‘grow as you go’. That is, development becomes an end in itself (a journey), not just a means to an end (a result)⁸. In the new epoch, leading your own growth is crucial because it makes it faster, deeper, relevant, more energising and alive, so you can catch up, keep up, shape up, and step up.

This paradigm is spacious for human differences (and for the other three paradigms). It alters the entire logic of LD work. No ‘secret sauce’ or must have capacity is prescribed or cultivated using outside expertise. Leaders are helped to identify their own focus, relevant to themselves and their context. They learn to build an authentic journey to develop the areas they choose, leading their own growth in their own way and pace, to fit their own setting and role, updating it as life changes. Thus, leaders can choose to use outside expertise but are less dependent on it. Using their innate aptitude, they can grow and transform their leadership and choices in unique ways. In the fourth paradigm, that is what Development can mean – naturally accessing transformation in ways that are unique to you.

⁶ Capacities are like muscles that empower capabilities, and capabilities exercise capacities. In this paradigm, leaders focus on cultivating very specific capacities and capabilities that are prescribed for them by an expert.

⁷ A contentious assertion made by its proponents, but not necessary the view of the authors of this paper.

⁸ This is an important principle and differentiator, which is discussed in detail in Paper Four of this series.



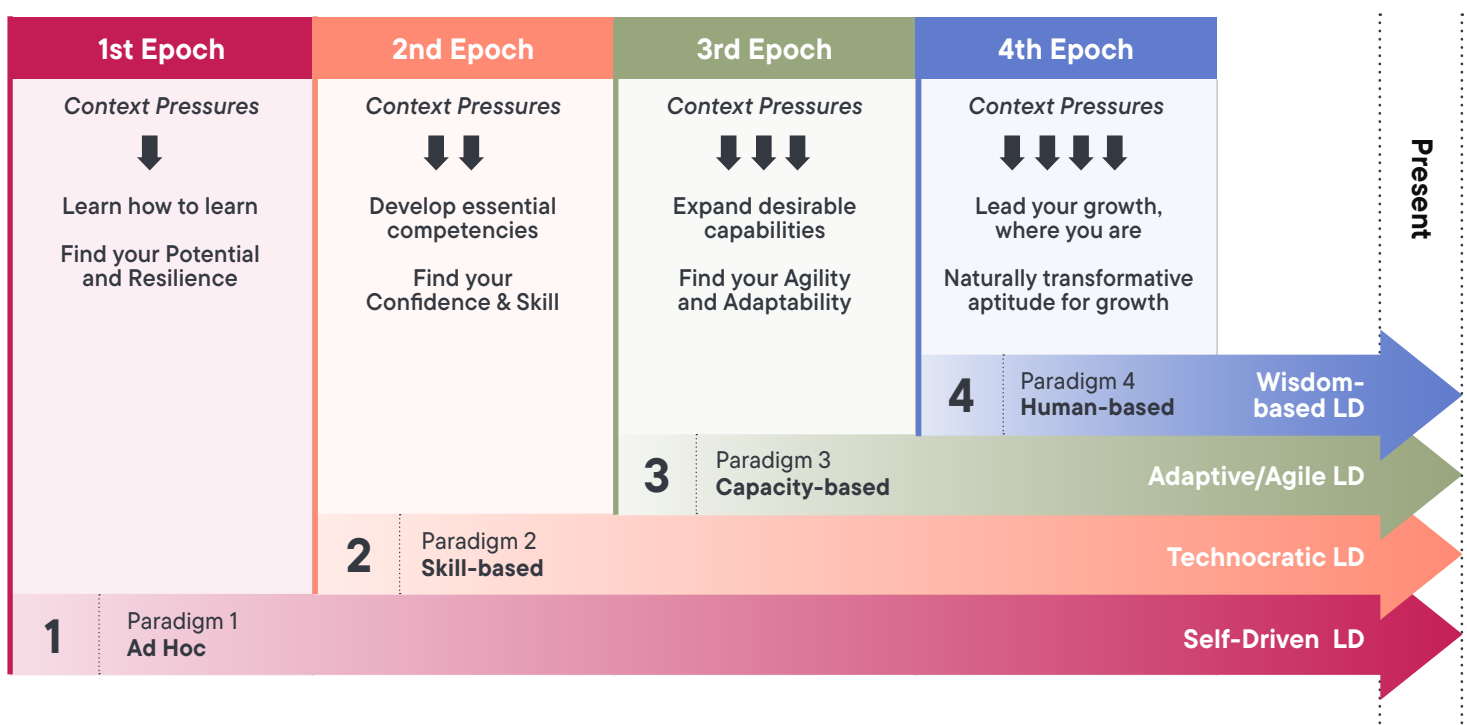
Summary

Shifts of epoch have led to new paradigms of development (and these now co-exist). These in turn lead to new frontiers in LD consulting as new approaches evolve with new principles and logics. This involves LD practitioners extending into new ways of being and acting. Moreover, leaders themselves will also be influenced by all four paradigms during their career – not one at a time but all of them throughout their working life.

The fourth paradigm is somewhat new, still emerging, and taking shape. It implies that development (just like wisdom) is intrinsically part of your relationship to being human. You don't just learn it; you are born with it as a core aptitude. Unlock it, and you can develop almost any attribute, skill, capacity, or capability you need in simple and authentic ways. Thus, you're freer and more empowered to grow in rapid, relevant, authentic, and transformative ways that alter your journey through life and leadership. This is part of a new, humanising Fourth Frontier.


New paradigms of Development inspire new approaches to Leadership Development

Figure 3: How the Four Paradigms of Development™ inform distinct approaches to LD



In summary, then, CFL's pioneering approach is rooted primarily in the Fourth Paradigm and is called Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™. This human-based paradigm focuses on an innate, universal human aptitude for learning and growth, harnessing it to lead in more alive and generative ways. We call this aptitude Leadership Wisdom in Action™ (see Series Two). As a *Homo Sapiens* - wise human - each of us (and all of us) have this golden key for our own development. Finding and

deepening your relationship to this aptitude is another way of saying *developing a more empowered relationship to your own unique growth and transformation*. In the Fourth Epoch and its transition, we believe this relationship is now an indispensable leadership resource. In other words, we say that Leadership Wisdom and WBLD are part of a new frontier in LD consulting that will increasingly reshape the industry.



In the fourth paradigm, the LD role is to accompany leaders as human beings who have an aptitude for development. It isn't about training them in the 'best' capacities but helping them lead their own growth.

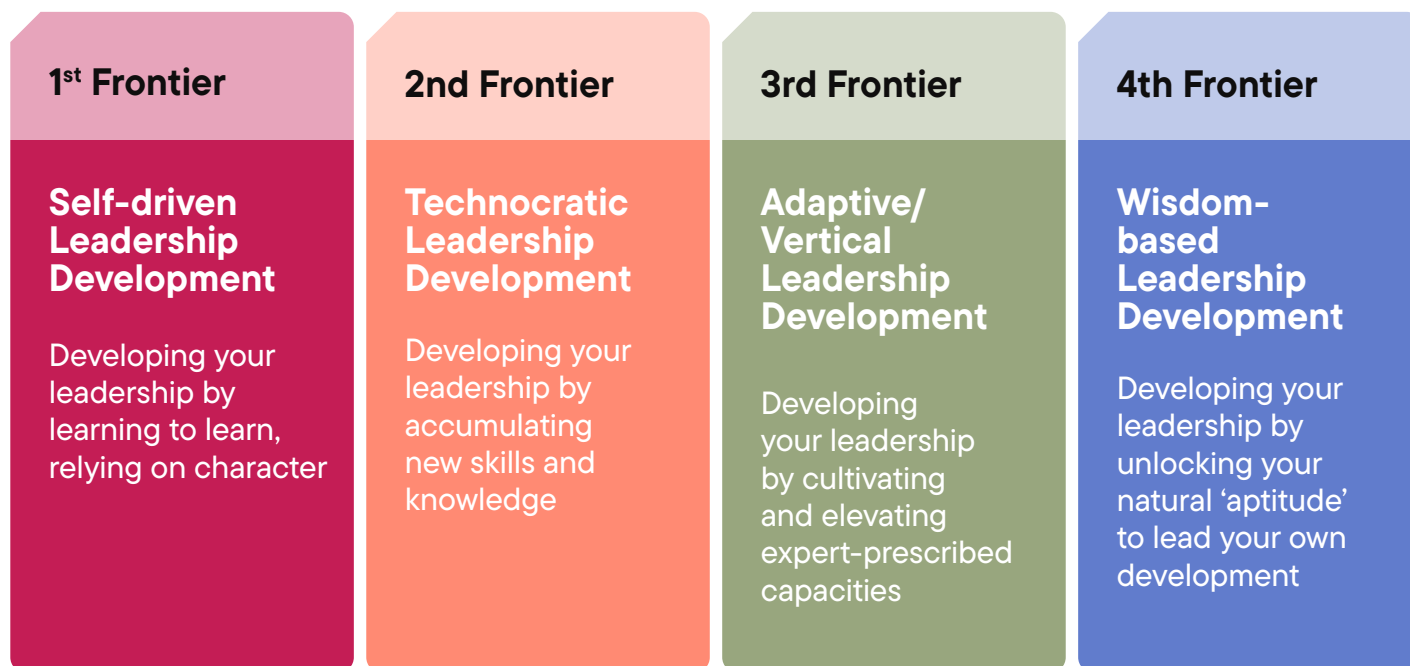
Four frontiers of ‘Leadership Development’ consulting

Figures 2 and 3 connect Four Global Epochs⁹, Four Paradigms of Development, and some key LD approaches. These new approaches form part of a new frontier in LD consulting (Fig. 4).

Changes in today’s world open radically new leadership landscapes and pressures on LD consulting to deliver results. In response, a new frontier of LD consulting is being shaped with new kinds of thought leadership and new approaches. They will grow in relevance as conventional thinking loses its edge. Earlier paradigms and approaches are still useful but are older responses to previous epochs.

Thus, we can describe Four Frontiers of Leadership Development™. The fourth and most recent of these frontiers doesn’t contradict the others but can potentially revitalise, reframe, and refocus them for our unprecedented and challenging times. It does this, in part, by seeing all three prior paradigms from a more radically human-based perspective. Let’s discuss the four frontiers now.

Figure 4: Four Frontiers of LD Consulting™ and four Approaches to Leadership Development



⁹ See Paper 2 for an introduction to the major Global Epochs we refer to in our papers.

New Human-Based approaches to Leadership Development at the Fourth Frontier

- ▶ **Leaders today lead in a world that is accelerating in pace, is exponentially more diverse and complex, and faces multiple ongoing crises and chaotic dynamics.**
- ▶ **We are in a new epoch of unprecedented pressures on leaders that are *always-on-and-in-relation*ship, creating complex opportunities as well as stress, overwhelm, and burnout.**
- ▶ **Leaders now need to identify, build, and lead their own growth at pace so they can catch up, keep up, shape up, and step up in both their roles and lives.**

When leadership contexts transform as rapidly and unpredictably as they do today, it makes sense to adopt an approach in which **any** attribute, skill, capacity, or capability can be a target for rapid authentic self-driven growth. Narrow pre-set capacities are too generic and limited to address the range and scope of problems leaders face today. Instead, approaches must enable leaders to access and use their innate wisdom for growth and transformation in their leadership. This is what our work at the fourth frontier of Leadership Development looks like.

Figure 5: The Four Frontiers of Leadership Development™



As a new frontier of LD takes shape, it builds on the previous ones (which don't fade away).

Thought Leadership in LD consulting means finding new, relevant ways to help diverse leaders across the globe who must handle unprecedented pressures and issues, transforming them into growth and aliveness. In our experience, and based on quantitative participant data and feedback we get, WBLD makes a real contribution here. In a recent programme with very senior leaders, 81 per cent of leaders experienced major changes in their understanding of transformation. This is critical in the Fourth Epoch, so we suggest this type of approach will inform and inspire the emerging fourth frontier of Leadership Development.

However, any such grand claim must be scrutinised carefully: what is really new here? Scepticism is healthy because ‘ground-breaking’ claims are all too common in the LD space. This series of papers is intended to openly ‘show our working out’ as we make a detailed case for a Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™ approach at the Fourth Frontier of Leadership Development™. This approach draws upon a deep understanding of the Fourth Epoch pressures and the potential for leaders within a Human-Based paradigm of Development,

a fresh Leadership Companion stance, and universal yet personal ‘core aptitude’ called Leadership Wisdom in Action™. These are vital if leaders are to unlock to enjoy natural transformation in their life and leadership. Our pioneering approach works across all Four Paradigms of Development™ thus extends and includes all that has gone before. It represents part of a new frontier of LD consulting. Yet it is not a panacea. It is simply our way to contribute to a new chapter in the Leadership Development industry’s story; a chapter that is being written right now and seems to be evolving rapidly as we enter a new epoch.

So, Series One so far has set out a fresh conceptual frame for our approach – Four Contexts of Transformation™, Four Global Industrial Epochs, Four Paradigms of Development™ (in leadership, specifically), and Four Frontiers of Leadership Development™ consulting. This frames CFL’s thought leadership and shows why Leadership Wisdom in Action™ is crucial.

Let’s give an example of how this high-level thinking translates as real change on the ground.

81%

of leaders experienced major changes in their understanding of transformation.

Vignette

Petra

Petra, an experienced HR Director in a global corporation, had taken numerous intensive (and expensive) leadership development programmes, to test them for peers and for herself.

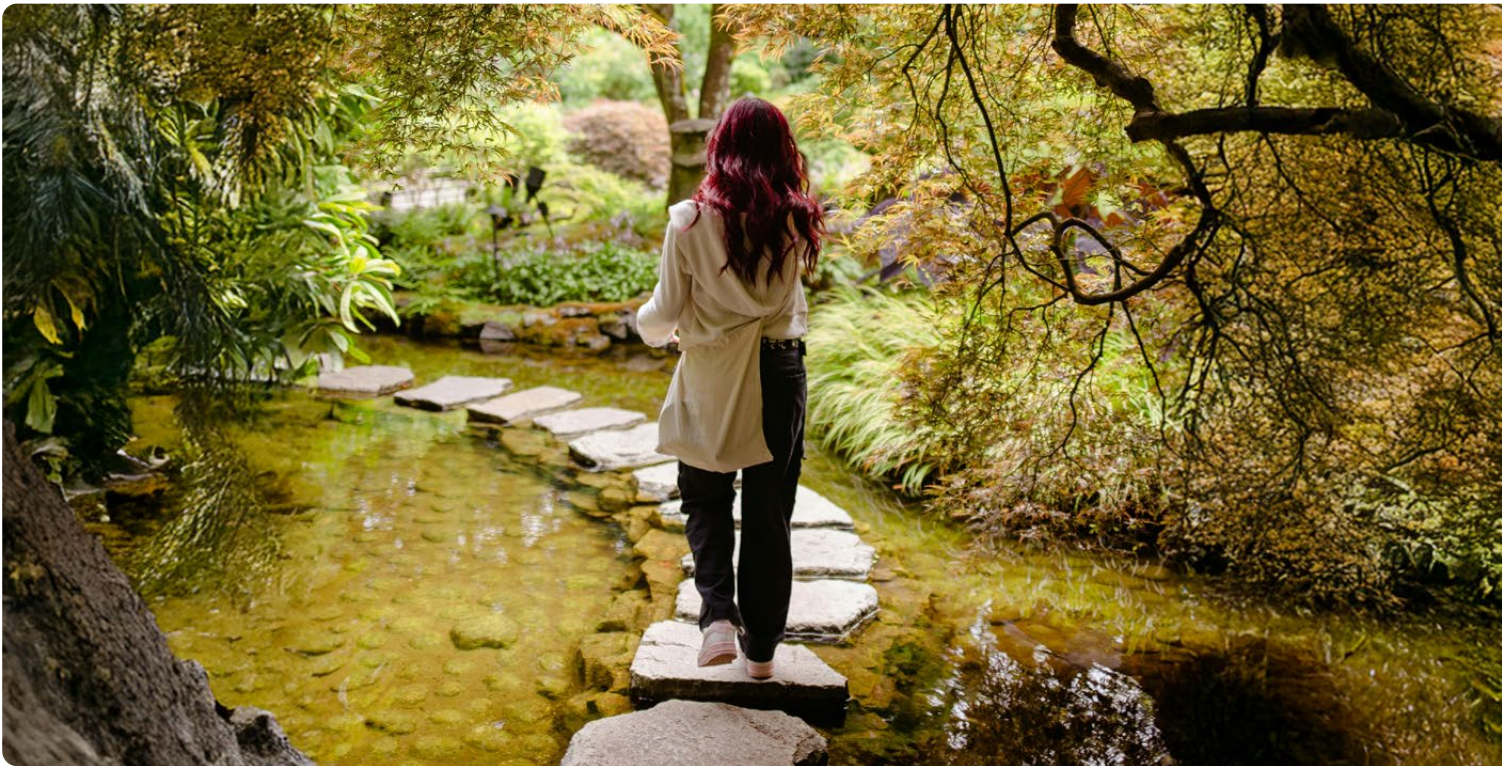
Petra's current challenge as a leader was a crossroads in her career. Her personal situation was thankfully stable, but she was not satisfied in her work role. She felt stuck. She knew there was potential to unlock in herself and her organisation but couldn't clarify how. With so many options, what to choose? She felt disorientated, second-guessing herself and her motivations. So, despite performing well she carried a frustrated, burnt-out feeling inside.

Petra was introduced to us and took one of our flagship WBLD two-day programmes with two facilitated, follow-up, small group 90-minute sessions online. After day two, Petra described it as the most powerfully transformative programme she had ever experienced. Moreover, she had found clarity about her next step. How? We had not provided her with a new 'secret sauce' capacity, capability, or concept. We had not blinded her with science. We had not established new spiritual practices. What did we do? Support Petra to take her own simple steps to find her own authentic pathways to growth, aligned to her leadership objectives. She also learned how to transform a challenge into a journey. She experienced how truly advanced responses to complexity are more elegantly simple than complicated.

In her own way, Petra accessed resources she already had but didn't know how to use in her context. In just two days, she went from stuckness in a global role in a transforming organisation to a sense of liberation, confidence, and deep clarity. Follow-up meetings confirmed that she had successfully negotiated new ways to contribute. For Petra, the outcome was transformative for her because the process of growth (the journey) came from her. Outcome and process were fully aligned. The capacities she worked on were her choice. Our framework provided clarity, safety, and a container of mutual support to also learn from colleagues. Petra didn't need deep pain or trauma work, months of coaching, or sexy new ideas.

Wisdom-Based Leadership Development is self-evidently an authentic way to develop an authentic relationship

It took two days, a relevant approach, and the development of her own real relationship to her own transformation, fit for her own context. We continue to be available as leadership companions on her journey, but Petra is the one building and leading her path of leadership development. She experienced it not only as transformative but as a fundamental 'unlock' of her own transformative power – to grow and develop in her life and leadership.



Petra's story illustrates the fact that a Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™ (WBLD) approach doesn't tell you (or any other leader) which capacities to develop and then train you in them, nor label you and invite you to improve by better managing your 'label'. It won't assume that development is generic, has one shape for all, or is known better by an outside expert or model you hardly know than by yourself and those closest to you. WBLD is self-evidently an authentic way to develop a fresh authentic relationship to transformation. Aligning both process and outcome makes the journey simple, natural, rapid, and reliable.

In contrast, Second and Third Frontier approaches apply someone else's knowledge to tell you what your Development means for you as a leader and person. It locks in a fixed focus and defines your own unique development in generic terms. Definitions are pre-set for you. Their map; you must follow. This hardly aligns for naturally authentic growth in leadership. Process and outcome don't fit. It locks in misalignment, which will not work well in the Fourth Epoch and the

transition we are all in. It will create more work, require more effort, and diverge from what exactly you need in your uniquely transformative context.

You must learn to find and lead your own development, rather than following some expert's map. Learn how you walk your territory. Your life? You lead it! This makes you a person and a leader. It makes you human. Learn about how you lead your life and work. Whatever you don't yet see about it, a Fourth Frontier approach will help you to explore effectively.

'Development' no longer needs to be a a product you 'buy and apply' when you can naturally 'grow as you go'. Self-led and embodied development creates growth paths no one else can direct or sell to you. They connect you more deeply to your life and potential. So, our Fourth Frontier approach brings new levels of relevance, empowerment, agency, learning, and dignity to leadership by empowering you to access and use your own Leadership Wisdom in Action™.

How is the Fourth Frontier of Leadership Development distinct?

What differentiates the third and fourth frontiers of LD? How are they different? We have already noted that the fourth frontier and its deeply human-based paradigm can easily and effectively integrate the paradigms and approaches of the other three frontiers.

Among many things we could say about the new frontier, are three key distinctions: in the role of the ‘expert’, in the focus of the ‘leader’, and the in nature of their working relationship and shared journey. Let’s briefly look at all three.

The LD Expert’s Role (as a catalyst)

At the Third Frontier, LD consulting offers mass capacity development to lead in complexity. Large quasi-customised programmes deliver key models and the pre-defined ‘required’ capacities. A first-epoch production-line mentality is in evidence here: leaders get on, get a dose of prescribed capacity, and get off. The expert leads a bit like a doctor; as a trusted advisor dispensing the active dose. It is a strongly expert-led view underpinned by an expert-based logic.

The Fourth Frontier looks somewhat different. As the Fourth Epoch presents a diverse, rapid, often-overwhelming, information-overloading, globally inter-related, always on in real time environment, we require new LD approaches framed by a new paradigm of Development.

When using Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™, the Leadership Companion doesn’t dispense wisdom but helps leaders to access their own innate wisdom, enabling them to develop in almost any area. Natural self-driven development of this kind creates confidence and liberates energy. Their unique journeys unlock their potential and are powerfully resourcing and inspiring. A Human-Based paradigm and WBLD approach help leaders trust they’ve got what it takes to navigate their own growth paths and develop in ways they need to in a fluid context.

The Leader’s Focus (as a person)

At the Third Frontier, leaders (faced with the limitations of ‘technical’, ‘technocratic’ and ‘horizontal’ approaches to LD) want, need, and seek out greater agility and adaptability in their leadership. They want to learn how to bring a new mindset and skillset to their roles. In response, powerful methods, models, and insights are offered to leaders in training sessions, which they can apply to their work (at CFL, we draw upon such models – they have a place).

The Fourth Frontier requires leaders to develop their inner resources in a more flexible way. It means you get to choose which attribute, skill, capacity, or capability you will focus on, and you get to build your own development journey with it in an authentic, context-specific way.

No 'generic' silver bullet will ever let you catch up, keep up, shape up, and step up in the Fourth Epoch. You must choose. The new epoch isn't a problem if you can surf its pressure waves for yourself and thus transform your experience and leadership journey. The fourth frontier of LD is about accessing and deepening your own aptitude (and drive) to grow and transform. This is your leadership wisdom – a living process that is part of who you are. You can orientate towards, expand, and enjoy its many benefits for you personally and professionally. Crucially, it will empower you to proceed on your journey with less control but more power – your own transformative power. It is a vital resource in the Fourth Epoch.

The Nature of the Work & Journey (as a relationship)

At the Third Frontier, LD consultants act as trusted advisors, going beyond skills-teaching and creating confidence. They train leaders to develop a required set of key capacities. Leaders are told which ones to grow, the capabilities that should result, why they will help, how to cultivate them, how to practice them, and how to embed them all in context. It is reassuringly expert-driven LD consulting.

It may be reassuring, but the Fourth Epoch requires leaders to lead their own development (in ways that work for them) of attributes, skills, capacities, capabilities they know they need. Giving them pre-set goals, pre-defined prescriptions, method-to-outcome formulas, and generic theory can be reassuring, but it cannot empower leaders to lead their own growth authentically, in their own ways, at their own pace.

And yet this is crucial and is one of the hallmarks of the emerging Fourth Frontier of the Leadership Development industry. In a Fourth Epoch where process and outcome coalesce, authentic leadership requires authentic development pathways. Only these yield sustained transformations.

The LD practitioner stance is to guide, accompany, and catalyse but not direct a leader's journey. The focus is the leader's own focus; the path, process and outcomes are their own too; the journey's rationale is theirs; the challenges are also their own. It is non-linear, unpredictable, and emergent – so the process aligns well with today's pressing contexts and outcomes.

No 'generic' silver bullet will ever let you catch up, keep up, shape up, and step up in the Fourth Epoch. You must choose.

This is how leaders can unlock their transformative power to meet the constantly transforming complexities, imperatives, and opportunities of the Fourth Epoch. Thus, the Fourth Frontier of LD can support natural, authentic, co-emergent, relevant growth that is fit for context today and for the future. The vignette about Petra (above) helps illustrate how our pioneering approach is highly effective in even highly complex organisational settings.

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process and outcome coalesce,
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The LD Value Proposition is shifting in a new Epoch

In this paper, we are saying that a new epoch opens a new frontier of LD informed by a new paradigm of Development.

A new epoch challenges our industry to revisit not only its methods but its core assumptions and principles too – its thought leadership, in other words. The other three frontiers remain active and valid of course, but by themselves they will struggle increasingly to address the emerging hyper-complex challenges of today and tomorrow.

A version of the age-old story of the ‘lost key on a dark road’ helps elucidate a key point of contrast between approaches at the Third Frontier and Fourth Frontier, respectively:

Paul drops his key leaving home. He returns home in darkness; he can't see. One street lamp is lit, far from his house. Where does he look for his key? By the lamp where he can see. Soon he gives up, applying force to break into his own home...

The Third Frontier sees LD as one big ‘street lamp’ – a source of illumination that might not get you into your specific house, but it gives you a clearly defined area to explore and even ‘feel closer to getting home’ in the dark. What a Fourth Frontier approach does is hand you your own torch to find your own key to get into your own home. Third frontier assumptions can make this sound crazy, unrealistic, or extremely expensive.

A mass-production mindset of generic industrial product delivery still seems to dominate the Third Frontier (even if this is not always discernable). However, this is arguably dehumanising, less-than-transformative, and thus less relevant than new approaches will become as the Fourth Epoch settles ever more deeply into leadership landscapes around the world.



Everything that we have said so far points to one clear fact about the LD industry. The value proposition of LD is rapidly morphing at a new frontier. Older logics of the Third Frontier deploy simple, repeatable, predictable, expert-based formulas that typically go like this:

- 1** Someone else creates and justifies a shortlist of the ‘best’ capacities or capabilities that leaders like you ‘need’ or ‘should grow’ (sometimes based on a prior theory or some research).
- 2** An expert uses this to label a leader’s personality or a key capability they ‘should have’ using an assessment tool, creating a more tailored (but still general) prescription.
- 3** The expert builds a good training experience to specifically inculcate those capacities and links each one to specific capabilities ‘all leaders need’ in complex times.
- 4** Niche versions will add pieces of advanced science or spirituality to be leading edge.
- 5** Participants follow. What do they bring? Their own ‘experience’ of the given process.
- 6** The expert tries to show the training has created measurable change.
- 7** Rinse and repeat. Generic ‘development’ for leadership can thus be mass-produced.



In the Third Epoch, the above was an optimal response, fit for context and in tune with industrial and social values. *It still has a place.* But how ‘fit for context’ is it in a hyper-complex Fourth Epoch world? There are various shortcomings already evident:

- ▶ In an increasingly differentiated, diverse human world of work, ‘one-size-fits-most’ solutions look less and less applicable. *They are a forced, uninspiring fit.*
- ▶ Imposing new, complex, often unfamiliar models, data and theories adds extra work to leaders often already drowning in data overload. *This is not a compassionate fit.*
- ▶ The approach starts from an abstract theory or skill, not from the unique human beings in the room; *a poor transformational fit for outcomes in the Fourth Epoch.*
- ▶ It requires people to find extra time or energy (while burning out or under pressure) to apply new prescribed actions they didn’t devise. *This is a poor energetic fit.*
- ▶ It assumes ‘transformation’ is rare and must be achieved, not a natural phenomenon. *This is not a good theoretical fit (and is often incorrect).*
- ▶ It assumes transformational outcomes are complex, hard work, and are reliant on advanced expert theories. *This is not a pragmatic fit and isn’t always true.*
- ▶ It assumes those outcomes cannot be ‘created’ without expensive and hard-to-access expert input. *Not a good budgetary fit (and may be incorrect).*

Third Epoch paradigms and third frontier LD approaches are used because we can see them, not necessarily because they are our best response to the challenges of today or tomorrow. Many third frontier LD approaches are a limited fit for today’s leadership landscape as a Fourth Epoch emerges and we navigate this transition.



Effective LD consulting of the future requires us, today, to invest in and expand the Fourth Frontier of LD. The best and most relevant LD approaches of the future will address and resolve all the major problems listed, with:

- ▶ A design that explicitly meets the great individual differences participants bring.
- ▶ A simple approach without complex new models, theories, and scientific jargon.
- ▶ The person as the starting point; not ‘applying’ what a theory tells them to do/think.
- ▶ An approach that works with what participants already do, live, and lead, so their development work is relevant, contextual, and energy liberating (not ‘more work’).
- ▶ People learning to see development as something personal, natural, and their own.
- ▶ Inherently aligned personal, leadership, and organisational objectives for rapid lasting and transformational results in any context, even under great pressure.
- ▶ Humanising leadership journeys that deeply personalise leaders' choices and their results and empowers them to lead their own growth on an ongoing basis.
- ▶ A baked-in sensitivity to inter-generational differences within leadership cadres.
- ▶ A strong foundation to more authentically grow key attributes, skills, capacities, capabilities, or other resources identified by the leader as relevant and important.

Differences that make a difference

For the Fourth Frontier of LD to respond well to the emerging Fourth Epoch and its transition, it must demonstrate relevant, well-integrated solutions to the core challenges. The approaches that do this best will be the ones that ultimately help to reshape both the frontiers of the evolving LD industry and what ‘Leadership’ means.

The table below highlights some of the changes that are already taking place from the perspective of Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™.

Figure 6: Defining the new 4th frontier approach to LD consulting

Shortcomings of Third Epoch LD approaches in the Fourth Epoch	Attributes a new LD approach must demonstrate to be ‘fit’ for the Fourth Epoch
➤ Generic solutions don’t match an increasingly differentiated, diverse human world of work.	➤ A design that explicitly meets individual differences that participants bring.
➤ They rely on new, complex, and often unfamiliar models, data, and theories.	➤ A simple approach without complex new models, theories, and jargon.
➤ The approaches start from an abstract theory or skill, not the human beings.	➤ The person is the starting point, not the theory and its narrow prescriptions.
➤ They require extra energy (under pressure) to apply new actions you didn’t devise.	➤ Works with what you are already doing/ living for continuity and ease.
➤ They assume ‘transformation’ is rare and must be achieved, not natural process.	➤ Helps people find transformation is a personal, natural, ongoing process.
➤ They see transformational outcomes as complex, hard work, and expert-led.	➤ Aligns personal, leadership & organisational transformation for relevant, rapid, and lasting results.
➤ They chase narrow outcomes with expensive, brief, and hard-to-access expert input.	➤ Humanises by empowering you to lead your own growth as you go, as you are.
	➤ Inherent sensitivity to inter-generational differences within leadership cohorts.
	➤ More authentic pathways for growth of chosen attributes, skills, capacities, etc.



In the Fourth Epoch, **transformation** is endemic and constant. Thus, it is imperative that leaders learn what this means and how to harness its potential and power. Doing so means understanding one's own development and, crucially, how process and outcome coalesce in leadership development journeys. For example, LD approaches must *empower self-empowered leadership... offer authentic paths to grow authentic leadership... help leaders develop their own relationship to development... nurture a transformative understanding of their own transformation... grow to lead their own growth... and so on.* These brief examples hint at how the Fourth Epoch and a Fourth Frontier of LD require new ways for leaders to develop.

It is no longer constructive for experts to dictate and drip-feed the shape of development to leaders as if they own all the relevant expertise. Such a doctor-patient ethos (even with the best coaching or facilitation skills in the world) is too slow, energy-draining, and inaccurate in a chaotic and exponential epoch and leadership landscape. Time, space, and energy are just too precious now. You need your own simple ways to find and address your own development needs, to nurture your own growth at *your own pace, in your own authentic ways, as you are.* You need to learn to build and lead your journeys – just like Petra did in two days. It takes a little front-loaded support and resource (a catalyst¹⁰), but the result is leadership not just in name but in real growth, development, and transformation as alive and contextualised trajectories. This is a strongly aligned, relevant, radical value proposition for LD in a new global epoch. It needs to be experienced directly to be properly appreciated.

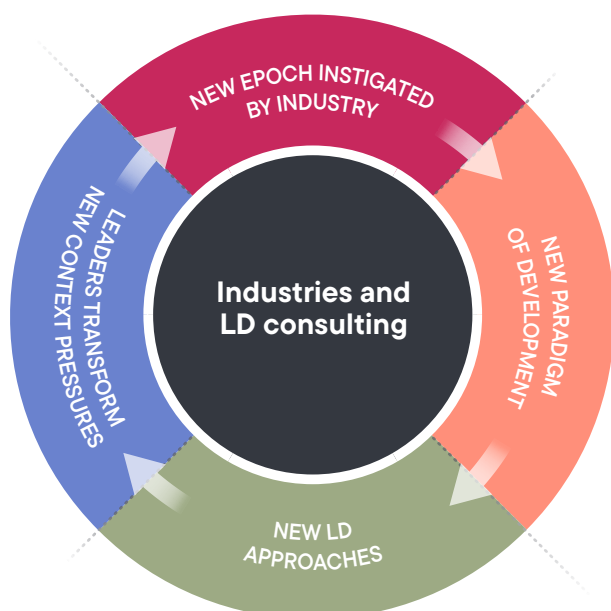
For the new frontier of LD to respond well to the emerging Fourth Epoch and its transition, it must demonstrate elegant, well-integrated solutions to key challenges.

¹⁰ One of the ways we describe the Leadership Companion stance or role is as a guide and 'catalyst'.

Summary: so, what's new for LD?

In this paper, we have discussed Four Paradigms of Development™ and the Fourth Frontier of LD™ to illuminate what is changing (and still needs to change) in our Fourth Industrial Epoch. In every new epoch, new paradigms of development have emerged demanding new kinds of thought leadership, and shaping how LD responds to help leaders grow in more relevant ways. LD consulting helps leaders to navigate the profound shifts that key industries have initiated.

Fig 7. Global Industries and LD consulting – an evolving inter-relationship




But the Fourth Epoch isn't like the others: at its core is **Transformation**. This changes everything because leaders developing their own relationship to transformation is a radical new horizon. It demands a Human-Based paradigm of development, and results in a more humanised and humanising leadership ethos both in individual leaders and within entire corporate cultures.

As we will discuss in the next paper, a first step is to understand that Development must be seen as something synonymous with Leadership – not something leadership does, but what it IS.

Our next paper discusses a maxim that often arises in conversations about Leadership Wisdom: **leadership is development, development is leadership** – they are now two sides of one coin. In our view, this change is already taking place and will continue.

It has major implications. Some of them have been introduced in this paper. Development must go beyond a limited and occasional activity, driven by experts, and become part of any leader's everyday reality, capability, and activity. Its scope needs to be as wide as they are as a person, not limited to the interest, skill, or imagination of a coach, facilitator, or programme. Leaders might still wish to use expert resources at times, but they will certainly need to unlock their own potential to lead their own growth first.

We are excited you are joining us as we explore the leadership landscape that makes a Wisdom- Based Leadership Development™ approach compelling and relevant. See you soon for paper 4.



Time, space, and energy are too precious. You need your own simple ways to find and address your own development needs, to nurture your own growth at your own pace, in your own authentic ways, as you are.

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The first Leadership Wisdom series presents Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™ as a relevant and compelling perspective on leadership, team, and organisational development today – it is not only fit for purpose, but also fit for today's context.

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How can we serve you?

Companions For Leadership (CFL) has a diverse team of highly experienced leadership companions working globally at the frontiers of leadership development.

A new kind of Leadership & Organisational Development is needed that is fit for today's hyper-complex contexts – by being more energising, relevant, human, and powerful. This need informs our visionary Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™ approach for leaders and organisations of the future. Our pioneering approach is simple and accessible, rapid, and transformative for leaders today, even in the most demanding environments.

We are delighted to offer a well-differentiated portfolio of flagship programmes and bespoke support for leaders & organisations at a national, regional, and global level.

We empower Leadership Wisdom in Action™ a business-critical leadership aptitude for leaders and organisations to find and develop which is helping reshape the frontiers of our industry.

Get in touch

Discover how CFL can help you unlock energy, potential and transformation in yourself, your teams, and/or organisation.



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Lasse is a specialised consultant in culture change, leadership development, team building and executive coaching. He has devised a number of transformation and culture change projects, strategy & refocusing workshops, coach the coach programmes. Lasse is an appreciated keynote speaker in the field of leadership and change. His ability to engage an audience with his authentic style and story-telling ability has led him to speak around the world including with and for the Mexican Government and top leaders in the Attorney General Office.



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Cyril is a recognised global C-Suite consultant and executive coach on organisation/people transformation, transition & sustainable performance. For over 15 years, he has supported and worked with leaders and executive teams of multinational companies with business operations in complex multicultural and multidisciplinary environments. He champions self-discovery and continuous learning, embodying his philosophy of “collaborative action based on collective wisdom.” Cyril has created various successful leadership models and frameworks to support top executives to find their X-factor in order to better care and dare, rehumanising leadership and empowering their organisations to sustainably transform while performing.



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A clinical and coaching psychologist, supervisor, researcher, and innovator in the leadership development space, and formerly a director and owner of the first ‘adult vertical development’ company, Philip leads innovation to empower transformation in Human and Leadership Development. As the (ageing) industry paradigm is so strongly rooted in applying someone else’s system to your own development, Philip works to build new, truly integral, inside-out approaches – essential in today’s accelerating, exponential world – and brings these to clients.

The fourth paradigm is Human-Based. It focuses on an innate aptitude that is unique to you and universally human (a developmental aptitude to grow yourself). Learning and awareness are results of this aptitude in action. It allows you to ‘grow as you go’, so you can both Perform & Transform™.





Companions for Leadership is a pioneering leadership consultancy committed to making the world of organisations wiser, truly daring and caring for the whole. With a community of progressive and wisdom-based Leadership Companions, CFL supports large-scale leadership and culture interventions throughout organisations.

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