

# SOVEREIGN OR SERVANT?

CROSS FERTILIZING 20 APPROACHES TO DEVELOP A ROBUST LEADERSHIP STYLE

RON MEYER  
RONALD MEIJERS



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# LEADERSHIP AGILITY

## DEVELOPING YOUR REPERTOIRE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES

Ron Meyer  
Ronald Meijers

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# THE DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

**To lead** is to get others to move in a certain direction. A **leader** is someone who has the ability to mobilize and motivate others to follow, not because they have to, but because they want to. While a leader might also have the formal authority to demand obedience, it is the informal power to stimulate, convince, pressure, seduce, inspire, sway and encourage that makes people *want* to follow.

**Leadership** is a license that is earned, not a position that is assigned. Someone can be appointed to a management job, with a number of responsibilities to fulfill and a linked set of formal powers to ensure that employees comply. But to achieve a license of leadership, a person needs to win the trust of people and have the ability to *influence them to follow voluntarily*.

Hence, **leaders are not necessarily the boss**. Leadership and management should not be confused. Not all managers have the personal authority that allows them to strongly influence others. Nor should all leaders be sought amongst the ranks of management, as some staff and operational employees can also hold significant sway over other people in an organization.

**Nor are leaders necessarily heroes**, which is another frequently propagated misconception. Leaders are generally not the superhumans capable of single-handedly saving organizations and delivering other-worldly performance. More down-to-earth, leaders work through people, using their authority to rally support and build effective teams, making them more *organizers* than heroes.

In the same vein, **leaders are not necessarily prophets** either. Leaders are often portrayed as requiring almost clairvoyant abilities to foresee the future and predict the safest way to the promised land. However, in practice, leaders are often equally uncertain about the future as their followers, yet find ways to chart a course forward nonetheless. As such, leaders should be seen more as *strategists* than as prophets.

**Nor are leaders necessarily gurus.** When we hold up examples of leaders we admire, these often tend to be of the highest possible ethical caliber, often leading us to conclude that only the most principled of people can be effective leaders. Yet, in reality, people are also willing to trust and follow individuals, without a superior moral compass, as long as they agree

with the purpose. If people believe in what the leader stands for, they will buy in, making the leader more a *sense-maker* than a guru.

In short, **we should not turn leaders into idols**, making leadership an exceptionally Herculean ability, only attainable for the most gifted on the planet. Leadership is a quality that most mortals can develop and many already exhibit, at various levels of competence. It is inspirational to look to *role models* for guidance, but disempowering to idolize the concept of leadership into something beyond our grasp.

# DEALING WITH LEADERSHIP PARADOXES

**Leadership tensions** are situations where leaders need to do two contradictory things at the same time. These conflicting demands, pulling the leader in opposite directions, are what make leadership inherently difficult. Some leaders see these tensions as dilemmas, requiring an ‘either-or’ choice between the opposite demands, resulting in lopsidedness. These leaders tend to lean over to one side at the expense of ignoring the other. Other leaders view the tensions as trade-offs, requiring a ‘neither-nor’ compromise between the opposite demands.

Yet these tensions can also be seen as **leadership paradoxes**, whereby the opposite demands seem contradictory, but can be combined in innovative ways. Viewing a leadership tension as a paradox challenges the leader to find a way to get the *best of both worlds* – a *synthesis* of the two sides.

**Leadership styles** are the way leaders deal with each leadership paradox. For each leadership paradox two archetypical styles can be identified, each emphasizing one of the opposite sides of the paradox.

**Double helix** is the name given to the process of taking two opposite styles to create a third style at a higher level. The first step is to have a thorough insight into the value and limitations of one’s own style (the *thesis*). Secondly, one needs to develop an equally deep understanding of the opposite style (the *antithesis*).

Then it will be possible to embrace the existence of the paradox and to search for ways of creatively combining the two leadership styles to shape a third, more robust, style – the *synthesis*.

In the following pages, **10 key leadership tasks** will be introduced, with their underlying leadership paradoxes and leadership styles. These 10 tasks are found on 5 different dimensions.

The first two tasks deal with the role of leadership at the level of *individuals* (the leader as **coach**), while the second pair of tasks are concerned with the role of leadership at the level of *organizational units* (the leader as **organizer**). The third set of tasks deal with the role of leadership in the area of *strategy* (the leader as **strategist**).

The fourth duo looks at the relationship between leadership and *mission* (the leader as **sense-maker**). And finally the fifth set deals with challenges in the area of leadership and *self* (the leader as **role model**).

We invite you to use the **leadership profiler** at the end of this booklet to identify your preferred styles and to consider whether you are equally skillful at all of them. We hope you accept the challenge to broaden your repertoire of leadership styles, so you can rapidly and gracefully switch between them depending on the leadership situation in which you find yourself. This is **leadership agility** – the ability to *flexibly switch* between leadership styles you already master, along with the ability to *adaptively learn* new leadership styles, all in *quick response* to the shifting circumstances encountered.

# INTERPERSONAL STEERING

Interpersonal steering is about making sure that others behave according to plan. Key question is how the leader should actually get people to do what is intended.

## PARADOX OF ACTIVITIES & CONDITIONS

Activities include all forms of work directly contributing to organizational performance. Leaders want to directly supervise that these activities are carried out in the right way and that any mistakes are immediately corrected, in order to ensure that the planned results are achieved.

A **SUPERVISORY LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes the importance of activities and steering performance directly

Conditions are the circumstances indirectly conducive to organizational performance. Leaders want to create conditions that empower people in the organization to achieve the planned results themselves, without anyone telling them exactly what to do.

A **FACILITATIVE LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes the importance of conditions and steering performance indirectly.

	<b>SUPERVISORY LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>	<b>FACILITATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>
Emphasis on	Tasks over conditions	Conditions over tasks
Motivating people by	Accompanying them in action	Creating favourable circumstances
Control should be	Hands-on and directing	Arm's length and nudging
Orientation towards	Showing personal involvement	Giving freedom to act
Basic attitude	Trust is good, control is better	Control is good, trust is better
Core quality	Directly improving performance	Empowering people
Intended impact	Deliver as agreed	People take ownership
Underlying conviction	Stay close for the best results	Make way to bring out the best
Guiding principle/motto	You can count on me!	I'm counting on you!
Preferred tools	Real-time performance reports	Self-evaluation systems
Common pitfall	Performance depends on the leader	Leader doesn't know the tasks



# INTERPERSONAL FEEDBACK

Interpersonal feedback refers to the ability to affect the performance of people.  
Key question is how the leader can mobilize people to do their best.

## PARADOX OF CHALLENGE & APPRECIATION

Challenge is about pointing out that there is a gap between what is possible and what is currently being done. Leaders want to make sure the upside potential is captured and that continuous efforts are made to achieve the best possible performance level. Therefore they need to be critical and not easily satisfied.

A **DEMANDING LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes challenge, by confronting people with the improvements that need to be made.

Appreciation is about showing recognition of people's contributions and capabilities. Leaders want people to recognize their talents and feel confident that they will succeed. Therefore leaders need to be positive and assume that people are committed to giving their best.

An **ENCOURAGING LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes appreciation, by expressing confidence in the ability to move forward.

	DEMANDING LEADERSHIP STYLE	ENCOURAGING LEADERSHIP STYLE
Emphasis on	Challenge over appreciation	Appreciation over challenge
Motivating people by	Pointing to potential improvements	Praising current capabilities
Influencing by	Being critical & dissatisfied	Being positive & satisfied
Orientation towards	Building aspiration	Building confidence
Basic attitude	People will grow if challenged	People will grow if appreciated
Core quality	Pushing people out of comfort zone	Showing acceptance and trust
Intended impact	Inspiring the urge to do better	Inspiring conviction you'll do well
Underlying conviction	People are easily self-satisfied	People need positive feedback
Guiding principle/motto	You can do better!	You are doing great!
Preferred tools	Comments ('the stick')	Compliments ('the carrot')
Common pitfall	Overstretching & stress	Understretching & complacency

# ORGANIZATIONAL COMPOSITION

Organizational composition is about selecting people and getting them to work as a team.  
Key issue is determining how tightly the team should pull together.

## PARADOX OF UNITY & DIVERSITY

Unity is about having a tightly knit group of people, sharing common ideas, goals, values and practices. Leaders want to have a homogeneous group so they can build a sense of mutual understanding and belonging, thereby facilitating communication, cooperation and commitment within the team.

An **INTEGRATIVE LEADERSHIP** style focuses on unity, by combining like-minded people into a cohesive team.

Diversity is about having an open community of people, bringing in different ideas, goals, values and practices. Leaders want to have a heterogeneous group, as different people and practices can complement each other, and crossfertilization can enhance innovation, learning and organizational adaptability.

A **FEDERATIVE LEADERSHIP** style focuses on diversity, by combining a rich variety of people into a complementary team.

	<b>INTEGRATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>	<b>FEDERATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>
Emphasis on	Unity over diversity	Diversity over unity
Orientation towards	Homogeneous, tightly knit team	Varied, loosely knit group
Leader needs to	Build cohesion & joint identity	Shape an open community
Motivating people by	Creating a sense of belonging	Valuing differing qualities
Basic attitude	Shared worldview beneficial	Variety of worldviews beneficial
Core quality	Aligning people	Harnessing complementarities
Intended impact	Enhanced team cooperation	Enhanced adaptability & learning
Underlying conviction	Consensus determines success	Constructive conflict is vital
Guiding principle/motto	All for one, one for all	Let a thousand flowers blossom
Preferred tool	Induction programs	Diversity programs
Common pitfall	Cult-like conformity	Lack of any shared identity

# ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

Organizational decision-making refers to the way choices are made in an organization. Key question is how the leader should structure this process.

## PARADOX OF DIRECTION & PARTICIPATION

Direction is about setting the course of action for the organization. Leaders want to ensure that decisions are taken on time and that they steer the organization in a clear direction. This requires leaders to take the responsibility of judging the variety of views and determining the way forward.

An **AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes the importance of direction, by structuring decision-making top-down.

Participation is about setting the course of action together with people in the organization. Leaders want to ensure that decisions are broadly supported and will be swiftly carried out. This requires leaders to structure a transparent process that allows people to give their input into the decision-making.

A **DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes the importance of participation, by structuring decision-making bottom-up.

	<b>AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>	<b>DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>
Emphasis on	Direction over participation	Participation over direction
Motivating people by	Giving clarity	Offering involvement
Decision-making should be	Top-down	Bottom-up
Orientation towards	Making decisions	Facilitating decision-making
Basic attitude	Leaders need to decide	Teams need to decide together
Core quality	Fast decision-making	Swift implementation
Intended impact	Maintain focus	Build commitment
Underlying conviction	Good decisions will be accepted	Acceptance requires involvement
Guiding principle/motto	The buck stops here	What do you propose?
Preferred tools	One-on-one sparring	Team meetings
Common pitfall	Management by dictatorship	Management by committee

# STRATEGIC GOAL-SETTING

Strategic goal-setting is about determining the main ambition for the organization.  
Key question is how grand and specific this ambition should be.

## PARADOX OF IDEALISM & REALISM

Idealism is the desire to want something great.

It is the drive to set goals beyond the organization's current abilities. Leaders want to set such stretching goals to encourage people to think big and to give them the leeway to come up with innovative ways of creating a dramatically better organization.

A **VISIONARY LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes the importance of idealism, by outlining a challenging long-term ambition.

Realism is the level-headed mindset of wanting something attainable. It means setting goals that fit with the current abilities of the organization. Leaders want to set objectives that are SMART – specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic and time-bound – to encourage people to take focused action and to achieve predictable results.

A **PRAGMATIC LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes the importance of realism, by setting feasible targets for people to meet.

	<b>VISIONARY LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>	<b>PRAGMATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>
Emphasis on	Idealism over realism	Realism over idealism
Motivating people by	Outlining inspiring vision	Setting specific targets
Goals should be	Broadly defined and stretching	Narrowly defined and feasible
Orientation towards	Unlocking potential	Doing the possible
Basic attitude	Think big	Get it done
Core quality	Creating a desire	Creating certainty
Intended impact	Accomplishing the impossible	Achieving predictable results
Underlying conviction	Stretch brings out the best	Feasibility brings out the best
Guiding principle/motto	I have a dream!	Keep your feet on the ground
Preferred tools	Presenting a BOLD vision	Using SMART targets
Common pitfall	Unrealism feeds unreliability	Feasibility feeds mediocrity



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY-SETTING

Strategic priority-setting is about directing the resources, energy and attention of the organization. Key question is how much emphasis should be placed on optimizing the current activities and creating new opportunities.

## PARADOX OF EXPLOITATION & EXPLORATION

Exploitation is about getting the best out of the current organization. Leaders want to ensure the efficient and effective functioning of the organization by focusing people on using, maintaining and extending the existing capabilities, infrastructure and client base.

An **EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes the importance of exploitation, by focusing on optimising the existing organization.

Exploration is about looking for new opportunities. Leaders want to rejuvenate the organization by focusing people on challenging the existing business model, searching for innovative ideas and approaches and coming up with new avenues for qualitative and quantitative growth.

An **ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes the importance of exploration, by focusing on creating the future organization.

	<b>EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>	<b>ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>
Emphasis on	Exploitation over exploration	Exploration over exploitation
Orientation towards	Optimizing the current organization	Creating the future organization
Leader needs to	Keep people focused	Keep people open-minded
Basic attitude	Let's run the business	Let's reinvent the business
Core quality	Getting results (harvesting)	Building potential (sowing)
Intended impact	Efficiency and effectiveness	Innovation and rejuvenation
Motivating people by	Delivering on promises (execute)	Offering possibilities (experiment)
Underlying conviction	Continuity requires stability	Continuity requires disruption
Guiding principle/motto	Build on your strengths	Grab the opportunity
Preferred tools	Planning & control systems	Innovation pipeline
Common pitfall	Stability leads to stagnation	Creativity leads to chaos

# PURPOSE-SETTING

The organizational purpose is the fundamental reason why an organization exists.

Key question is which purpose the leader should emphasize to give meaning to people's work in the organization.

## PARADOX OF WEALTH & HEALTH

Wealth is an abundance of material possessions.

Leaders need to focus people on achieving economic objectives so that wealth can be created and all stakeholders can have a share of the value. Therefore, bottom-line performance is both important and motivating to people in the organization.

A **VALUE-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes wealth, by focusing on working in an economically sound way.

Health is about being in a physically, mentally and spiritually sound condition. Leaders need to focus on the fitness and work satisfaction of people to maintain long term organizational vitality. Therefore, a sense of well-being and fulfilment is both important and motivating to people in the organization.

A **VIRTUE-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes health, by working in a physically, mentally and spiritually sound way.

	VALUE-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP STYLE	VIRTUE-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP STYLE
Emphasis on	Wealth over health	Health over wealth
Motivating people by	Realizing financial rewards	Realizing moral rewards
Core value	Doing well	Doing good
Orientation towards	The business environment	The social & ecological environment
Basic attitude	Strive towards economic viability	Strive towards ethical vitality
Core quality	Creating added-value	Creating added-virtue
Intended impact	Focus on customer satisfaction	Focus on noble contributions
Underlying conviction	People work to make money	People work to make a difference
Guiding principle/motto	Money makes the world go around	Meaning makes the world go around
Preferred tools	Performance targets and bonuses	Impact and sustainability reports
Common pitfall	Financially fulfilled but sick	Spiritually fulfilled but poor

# INTERESTS-SETTING

Organizational interests refer to the needs of the main stakeholders of the organization.  
Key question is whose interests the leader should serve.

## PARADOX OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION & SERVICE

Self-actualization is the act of fulfilling one's own potential. Just as all humans, leaders need to fulfil their potential by developing themselves and realizing their dreams. Therefore they must serve their own interests by engaging in those actions that will help them to be who they want to be.

A **SOVEREIGN LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes the importance of self-actualisation, by focusing on self-interest first.

Service is the act of doing what is needed for the good of others. Just as all humans, leaders want to contribute by serving a greater cause. Therefore they must focus on the organizational interests by mobilizing all stakeholders to strive towards a shared purpose

A **SERVANT LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes the importance of service, by focusing on the good of the organization.

	<b>SOVEREIGN LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>	<b>SERVANT LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>
Emphasis on	Self-actualization over service	Service over self-actualization
Motivating people by	Striving to fulfil the leader's dream	Serving a common cause
Core interests are	The dream of the individual	The good of the collective
Orientation towards	Satisfying one's own needs first	Giving priority to group needs
Basic attitude	What's in it for me	What's in me for it
Core quality	Pride and charisma	Humility and determination
Intended impact	Follow my dream- do what I want	Follow our vision – do as I do
Underlying conviction	What's best for me, is best for all	What's best for all, is best for me
Guiding principle/motto	Follow me!	I am behind you!
Preferred tools	Compelling presentations	Intensive dialogue
Common pitfall	Narcissism	Self-sacrifice

# LEADERSHIP PROBLEM-SOLVING

Problem-solving refers to the ability of leaders to overcome adversity.  
Key question is which steps need to be taken when dealing with leadership challenges.

## PARADOX OF THOUGHT & ACTION

Thought refers to the ability to thoroughly reflect on issues. To be effective, leaders need to take a step back and carefully put things in the right 'bird's eye' perspective. Disciplined reasoning and well thought-out measures are essential to success.

A **REFLECTIVE LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes thought, considering measures in a disciplined and analytical way.

Action refers to the ability to directly do something about issues. To be effective, leaders need to be proactive and courageously 'seize the bull by the horns'. Getting things moving and figuring out which measures work in practice are essential for success.

A **PROACTIVE LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes action, by taking measures in a direct and intuitive way.

	REFLECTIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE	PROACTIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE
Emphasis on	Thought over action	Action over thought
Motivating people by	Knowing how	Showing how
Competent leaders are	Reflective and analytical	Proactive and intuitive
Orientation towards	Deliberate planning	Learning along the way
Basic attitude	Right is better than quick	Action speaks louder than words
Core quality	Putting things in perspective	Taking the initiative
Intended impact	Do it right the first time	Making things happen
Underlying conviction	Insight leads to success	Movement leads to success
Guiding principle/motto	Think before you act!	Just do it!
Preferred tool	Research & reports	Experiments & personal talks
Common pitfall	Paralysis by analysis	Jumping to conclusions



# LEADERSHIP ATTUNEMENT

Attunement is about making sure that a leader's behavior is well-aligned to the needs of the situation. Key question is whether a leader should adjust to the situation or vice versa.

## PARADOX OF AUTHENTICITY & ADJUSTMENT

Authenticity is about acting in accordance to one's true self. To be effective, leaders need to behave in a way that is consistent with their own character, beliefs and values, irrespective of the circumstances. Only when leaders are genuine and connected with their essence will they be trusted and able to keep up their role in the long run.

A **CONSISTENT LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes authenticity, by predictably remaining true to one's default approach.

Adjustment is about acting in accordance to the requirements of a specific situation. To be effective, leaders need to understand the context in which they are operating and behave in a way that suits these conditions. Only when leaders are flexible, adaptive and responsive will they be respected and successful in multiple environments.

A **RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP** style emphasizes adjustment, by flexibly aligning one's approach to the specific circumstances.

	<b>CONSISTENT LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>	<b>RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>
Emphasis on	Authenticity over adaptation	Adaptation over authenticity
Motivating people by	Behaving predictably	Responding appropriately
Identity is	Stable over time	Dynamic over time
Orientation towards	Self-expression	Situational behaviour
Basic attitude	Build on your personal strengths	Respond to the situational needs
Core quality	Remaining true to oneself	Continuously renewing oneself
Intended impact	Build reliability	Develop agility
Underlying conviction	Nature is leading	Nurture is leading
Guiding principle/motto	I am who I am	You can be who you want to be
Preferred tools	Making clear statements	Asking open ended questions
Common pitfall	Rigidity: my way or the highway	Reactive: feather in the wind

# THE LEADERSHIP PROFILER

<b>Supervisory Leadership Style</b> I take hands on control of key tasks to ensure that people carry out the work correctly.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	<b>Facilitative Leadership Style</b> I delegate key tasks to the right people and ensure that they are well-equipped to carry out the work independently.
<b>Demanding Leadership Style</b> I challenge people to do better, by emphasizing the room for improvement.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	<b>Encouraging Leadership Style</b> I show confidence in people, by emphasizing their ability to do a good job.
<b>Integrative Leadership Style</b> I build teams of like-minded people, creating a shared sense of identity and uniform ways of working.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	<b>Federative Leadership Style</b> I build teams of people with a diversity of attitudes and views, giving them room to think and act differently.
<b>Autocratic Leadership Style</b> I take the responsibility for making decisions and ensuring speed and clarity.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	<b>Democratic Leadership Style</b> I take the responsibility for making sure decisions are taken and ensuring quality and commitment.
<b>Visionary Leadership Style</b> I set strategic goals that are ambitious and broad, challenging people to find ways of achieving them.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6	<b>Pragmatic Leadership Style</b> I set strategic goals that are realistic and specific, guiding people's progress in achieving them.

**Executive Leadership Style**

I focus people on managing the current activities as efficiently and effectively as possible.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

**Entrepreneurial Leadership Style**

I focus people on renewing the organization, taking the risk to seek out new opportunities.

**Value-driven Leadership Style**

I explain to people that our mission is to do well by making money for our shareholders and ourselves.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

**Virtue-driven Leadership Style**

I explain to people that our mission is to do good by making a contribution to the well-being of our stakeholders.

**Sovereign Leadership Style**

I strive to fulfill my own objectives, mobilizing others to help me where possible.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

**Servant Leadership Style**

I strive to fulfill the group's objectives, offering others my help where possible.

**Reflective Leadership Style**

I think before I act, patiently and cautiously reflecting on issues and options before moving into action.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

**Proactive Leadership Style**

I directly and energetically take action, reflecting and managing responses along the way.

**Consistent Leadership Style**

I approach each leadership situation in the same way, remaining predictable and authentic.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

**Responsive Leadership Style**

I flexibly adjust my approach to each leadership situation, depending on the specific circumstances.

## Ron Meyer

r.meyer@c4sl.eu

Dr. Ron Meyer is managing director of the **Center for Strategy & Leadership**, an international research, consulting and management development company, dedicated to improving companies' competences in the areas of strategic thinking, leadership, business innovation, entrepreneurship and change management.

Ron is also Professor of Corporate Strategy at Tias School for Business and Society, Tilburg University, the Netherlands. He has written various books, among others the best-selling *Strategy Synthesis* and the widely-used strategy text book *Strategy – Process, Content, Context*.

The **Center for Strategy & Leadership** helps to develop agile leaders by designing and delivering state-of-the-art training programs, running workshops and seminars, organizing round-table discussions and conferences, and by offering coaching and assessments.

For more information see:  
**www.c4sl.eu**

## Ronald Meijers

rmeijers@deloitte.nl

Ronald Meijers is partner and talent leader at **Deloitte**, an international consulting, audit and tax firm, dedicated to building better organizations. He is also supervisory board member at Dunamare, an education group comprising 21 high schools, teaching 15.000 teenagers.

Prior to joining Deloitte in 2011, Ronald was co-chairman of the executive board of Krauthammer. He has extensive experience working with leaders and their teams, both from international businesses and the public sector. He is the (co-)creator of several widely-used leadership tools, such as the Human Capital Development Model.

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