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Impact Report

2023

01

A Letter from the
Managing Partners 3

05

Challenging our
Supplier Base 12

02

Our
Journey 4

06

Helping our
Environment 12

03

Strengthening our
Community 7

07

Improving our
Governance 13

04

Supporting our
Ecosystem 10

08

Our
Goals 14

01 A Letter from the Managing Partners

At Leadership Choices we tend to see ourselves as an organizational experiment which simply means that we have not come across many companies like us.

Technically, hardly anyone is employed at our firm, yet we are proud of our vibrant community life and our strong company culture. Every of our associates has the freedom of choice when it comes to mandates and areas of specialization, yet our approach to quality in recruiting, onboarding, certification, supervision, continuous professional development and quality assurance is amongst the highest in the

industry. All our people have a strong desire for freedom and creativity and at the same time we all work according to the same set of methodologies and approaches. We are driven by our desire to have a positive impact in the world, to grow both as professionals and as human beings and of course we need to earn some money.

Maybe this is how the organization of the future could look like. Professionals who have a free choice and who are united by a common purpose: Better Leadership - Better Organizations - Better World.



Picture 1: Part of the LC Community at our Spring Party 2023

Warmly



Uwe Achterholt & Karsten Drath

02 Our Journey

Early days

- Supporting charities was part of Leadership Choices DNA since our foundation in 2008.
- The first foundation we supported was [ChildAid Network](#) through annual fundraising events.
- ChildAid Network is a non-denominational and politically independent charitable foundation, whose activities focus on educational projects. The aim of ChildAid Network is to give disadvantaged girls and boys in the project areas access to a good education and vocational qualifications. The geographical focus of the foundation's activities is currently in South Asia, with Northeast India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Around the World by Bike

- In 2017 we started fundraising for the [zis-foundation](#) through annual long distance bicycle tours by [Karsten Drath](#), one of our managing partners.
- The “zis Stiftung für Studienreisen” is a non-profit foundation which offers young people between the ages of 16 and 20 a scholarship of 700€ to explore a self-chosen topic in a foreign country alone and without any money other than the study grant.
- In 2020, these casual fundraising tours turned into the project “[Around the World by Bike](#)” with annual unsupported long-distance bicycle tours with the goal to circumnavigate the earth in about 10 years.



Picture 2: Project overview “Around the World by Bike”

Support of our Clients during COVID

- When the COVID pandemic hit in March 2020, many of our clients had to file for economic unemployment. As a result, almost all leadership programs and coaching programs were put on hold.
- Since most of our coaches had no more business and a lot of available time, we invested heavily in our community and developed offerings for our ecosystem.
- One of them was to offer free individual and team coaching support for companies that were in economic distress.

Flooding in the Ahr-Valley

- In July 14, 2020 a major flood killed 134 people in German Ahr-Valley. Thousands of volunteers were coming to the valley to support the local inhabitants in clearing their houses from mud and debris.
- By December 2020 we had developed a relationship to a local aid organization called [Dachzelt-nomaden](#) who we supported for the following 24 months through individual and team coaching. A total of 15 LC coaches were involved.
- The “DZN Hilfsorganisation” has been providing unbureaucratic disaster relief in the affected areas since July 31, 2021. Their volunteer work has focused on gutting buildings: equipped with caulking hammers, cable drums, generators, shovels and wheelbarrows, volunteers tackle the wet buildings to enable the drying and eventual restoration of people’s homes.

Better World Community

- In parallel to our work in the Ahr-Valley we established a community that specifically focuses on supporting Non-Profit-Organizations which focus their activities on the sustainable development goals of the United Nations. In this BetterWorld Community we develop partnerships to foundations and NGOs in order to become a trusted partner to support organizations in the social, environmental, or educational space with professional coaching, leadership workshops and resilience development.

LC helps Ukraine

- After the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022, we decided to make our digital coaching platform [Cosmikk](#) available for free to all people who were affected by the war.
- In collaboration with the International Coaching Federation we were able to sign-up several dozens of certified Ukrainian-speaking coaches all over the world who were willing to help.
- Also, the user dialogues were translated into Ukrainian.



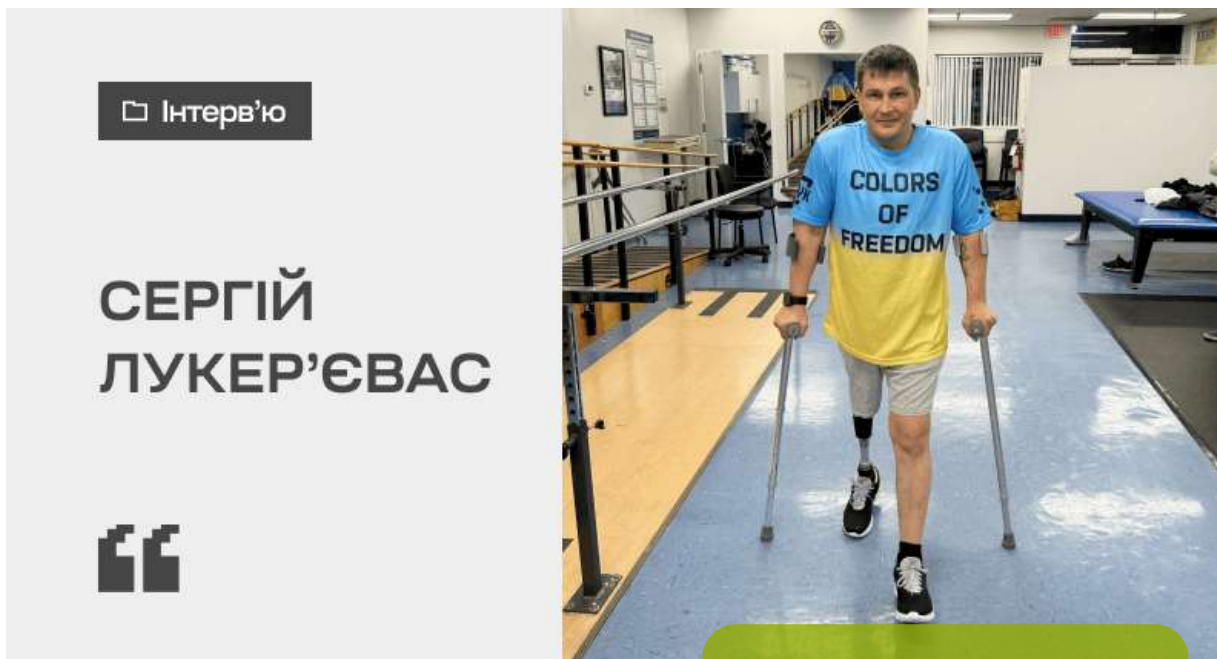
Picture 3: Team Workshop with the Core Team of the DZN Aid Organization

Cosmikk-Foundation

- Inspired by the positive impact of our support in the Ahr-Valley and for Ukrainian people the idea came up to start a charitable foundation of our own.
- So, in July 2022, the two managing partners of Leadership Choices Uwe Achterholt and Karsten Drath, founded the [Cosmikk-Foundation](#).
- The mission of the Cosmikk-Foundation is to provide leaders of humanitarian NGOs free access to high-quality coaching services. At the same time, the foundation provides access to a pool of certified coaches, and the NGO can benefit from a coaching manage-

ment system to ease administration.

- After a year of dedicated fundraising with the project [“Around the World by Bike”](#) the Cosmikk-Foundation will start working in 2024 by supporting its first NGO, the [Foundation for the Future of Ukraine](#).
- The FFU has been founded in 2022 after the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The work of the foundation is focused on three fields:
 - Prosthetics for people wounded in the war.
 - Support for women who experienced sexual violence.
 - Support for children with mental health issues.



Picture 4: Ukrainian Recipient of FFU prosthetic support

Pledge 1%

- In April 2023 Leadership Choices joined the [Pledge 1% Movement](#).
- Pledge 1% is a global movement that inspires, educates, and empowers every entrepreneur, company, and employee to be a force for good. Over 18,000 members in 100 countries have used Pledge 1%'s flexible framework to ignite half a billion dollars in new philanthropy.
- At Leadership Choices we pledge to give at least 1% of our annual profit to the Cosmikk-Foundation.

B-Corp Certification

- In March 2022 we began our journey to become a certified [B-Corp](#).
- Benefit Corporation, or B Corp for short, is an international certificate awarded by the non-profit organization B Lab to companies for their social and ecological impact. The certificate measures the overall social, ecological, and economic performance of the company.
- We aim to achieve our initial certification in Q1 of 2024.

03 Strengthening our Community

At Leadership Choices we are self-organized in communities. Most of these groups circle around specific applications of coaching in a client setting. Others cover specific functions or areas of interest. Each associate chooses if he or she wants to be engaged in any specific community e.g., because there is something to learn or because it simply is fun. Community work at Leadership Choices is pro bono. The associates who are active in our community life form the inner circle of our company and are considered first when it comes to staffing projects or allocating business opportunities. All community meetings are open for all associates to join. Each community is typically facilitated by two Co-Leads who organize the meetings and make sure the collaboration is engaging and productive. The Co-Leads are nominated for one year and can then

either pass on the baton to another colleague or continue their mandate for another year.

Our Communities

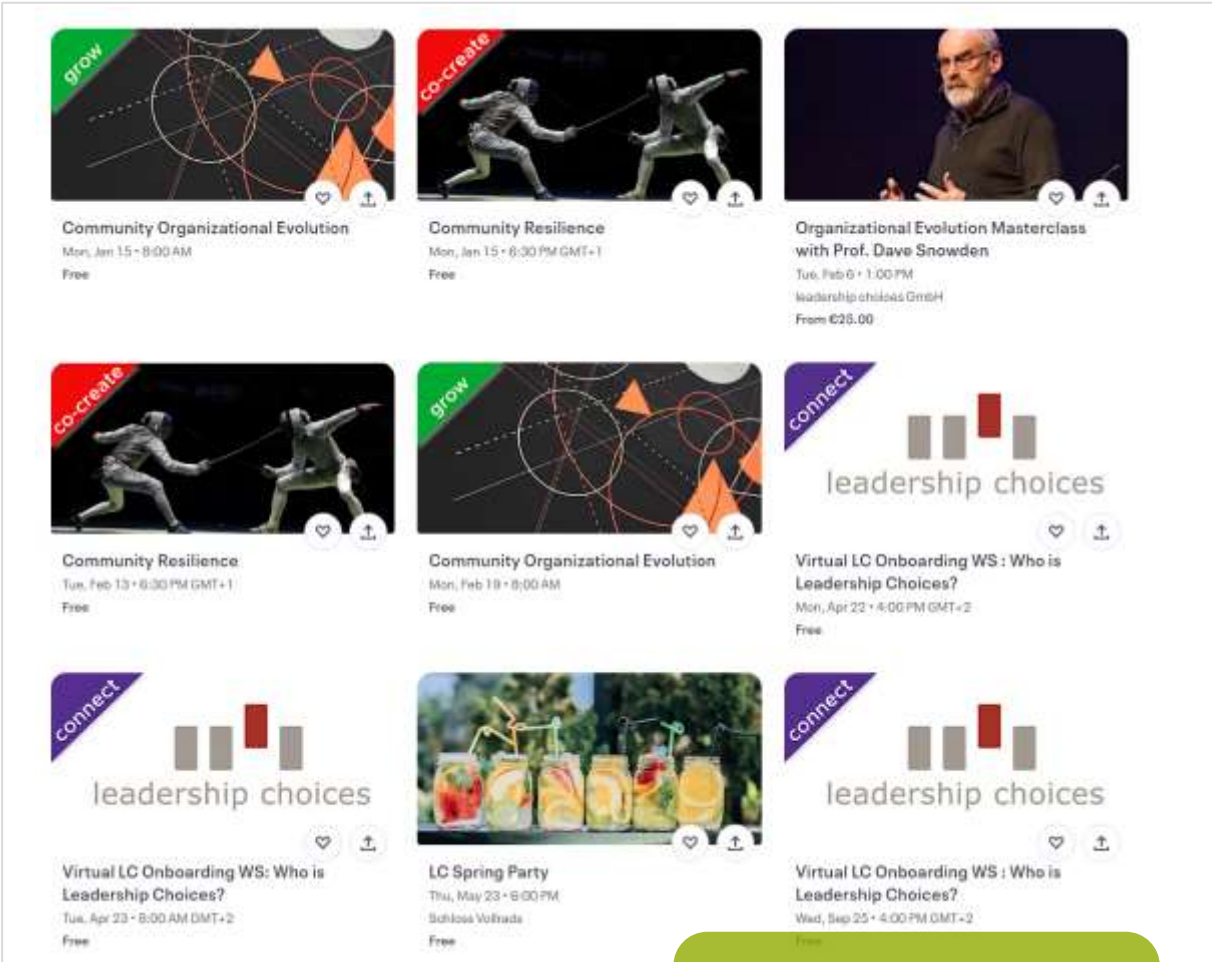
This is an overview of our current communities:

- Team Coaching
- Resilience Coaching
- Organizational Evolution
- Agile Coaching
- Navigating Complexity
- Inclusiv
- Tailored Leadership Development
- Better World
- Shaking the Tree
- Client Partners
- Talent
- Quality
- Marketing

LC University

At Leadership Choices, it is important to us to foster both growth and a sense of belonging within our highly diverse and experienced community of coaches. Our internal LC University is our living center of learning, our virtual campus of networking, growth and collaboration. It is also a place where our coaches can gain qualifications and participate in certification programs for selected psychometric instruments. All our coaches bring valuable experience which in turn forms the eclectic core of our Coaching Solutions for Entrepreneurs and Managers. All our coaches work according to our coaching philosophy and the Leadership Choices model. Each week there is a wide range of community

events, workshops for coaches, space to develop new ideas together and ongoing certification programs. Our coaches can choose what best suits their needs and those of our clients from a vibrant campus life. In the LC University we consolidate our competences and exchange experiences from concrete assignments. We also help new associates to feel at home with us and organize peer supervision, case discussions, and support each other in renewing our coach certification. Celebrations within our company are also organized here. The spirit of LC University is fueled by trust, abundance and collegiality and leads to a broad commitment to quality combined with fun and joy in working together.



Picture 5: Snapshot of upcoming LC University Events

Community & Spirit Survey

In 2023 we conducted our first annual Community & Spirit Survey amongst our employees and associates. Before that, we had other, less standardized methods of measuring employee and associate satisfaction.

Here are some highlights from the 2023 survey results:

- Overall satisfaction working with Leadership Choices: 77%
- Satisfaction with engaging and challenging projects: 77%
- Satisfaction with personal and professional development: 72%



Picture 6: Spring Get-Together of the LC Community



Picture 7: Level of work satisfaction inner circle

Naturally, the perception of our company by associates varies based on the level of interaction with other LC colleagues e.g. because of voluntary community work or paid project engagements. Looking at the “inner circle” shows a high level of satisfaction with the working climate at Leadership Choices.

04 Supporting our Ecosystem

At Leadership Choices we believe that our services extend beyond conventional business interactions, embracing a commitment to contribute to our ecosystem of clients, partners, and friends. Central to our philosophy is the empowerment of leaders, providing them with valuable resources and support to thrive in their leadership roles. We are passionate about mutual growth and see ourselves not only as service providers but as supporters of innovation, helping our stakeholders navigate challenges and adapt to changing environments.

Through active knowledge sharing, we foster a culture of collaboration, facilitating the exchange of ideas and best practices. Building lasting relationships is paramount, reflecting our dedication to sustained collaboration and support within our ecosystem. We aim to be a catalyst for community building, fostering meaningful connections among stakeholders.

Podcast Leaders Talk

- In October 2021 we launched our own podcast Leaders Talk to share inspiring biographies with our ecosystem every other week.
- Leaders Talk is an interview podcast in German and English which portraits leaders from various fields who are committed to better leadership, better organization, and a better world.



Picture 8: Annual Spotify Overview for our Podcast

Our guests are business and thought-leaders, social entrepreneurs, and activists, as well as adventurers, and politicians. We talk about their personal stories as well as the motivations and values that made them pursue their exciting journey. Leaders Talk is available on all major podcast platforms.



Picture 9: Thumbnail of the Episode No. 68 featuring South-African Neuroscientist Etienne van der Walt

LC Impulses

In October 2021 we launched an event series LC Impulses as a monthly early morning format in which we have one of our associates introducing a topic, a model, or an intervention to our ecosystem. These monthly events are free for everyone to join.



For Leadership and
Organisational Development

04. October 2023
08:00 - 08:55 Uhr

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Picture 10: LC Impulses "Diversity, Equity & Inclusion"

NGO seats in LC Academy Programs

At Leadership Choices we run two coaching training programs in our LC Academy on an annual basis:

- The LC Coaching Master Program (Launch 2020)
- The Essence of Coaching for Senior Leaders (Launch 2021 together with [WHU business school](#))
- For both programs, we give away 1 - 2 seats in each cohort to leaders from NGOs for free.

Awards

In 2023 we were nominated for and awarded with several awards for our work:

- [German Influencer Award](#) for the quality of our content marketing.
- [Global Business Excellence Award](#) for our outstanding marketing team.
- [Hipe Award](#) for superior service excellence.



Picture 11: The LC Management Team celebrating the Hipe Award

05 Challenging our Supplier Base

In 2023, we began surveying our top suppliers to track their social and environmental impact. Since we are in the professional services business, our suppliers are typically providing specialized services to us like IT Support, Application Development, or Graphics Support.

Here are some highlights from the 2023 survey results:

- 100% of our suppliers
 - pay a fair living wage to their employees.
 - are socially, societally, or ecologically committed.
 - monitor energy and fuel consumption and procure electricity from renewable sources.

06 Helping our Environment

At Leadership Choices, we strive to practice what we preach. Hence, we also look at how we can create a better world inside Leadership Choices, e.g. through a reduced carbon footprint, the way we deal with power and equity, and how respectfully we work together as human beings. One of our basic tenets for members of our coaching community is to strive for high impact with low ego. We believe that only with humility we can create sustainable results within our society. Moving from ego to eco means a shift in perspective. Seeing ourselves as part of a larger context where our actions have consequences lets us design and share ideas that work for all.

CO2-Emissions

- In 2020, the Management Team of Leadership Choices made the commitment that our company will be CO₂ - neutral from 2020 onwards.
- In the first step, Leadership Choices to achieve this by switching to green energy whenever possible and by compensating the CO₂ generated as part of the pro-

fessional activities of Leadership Choices.

- In a next step we will reduce our carbon footprint by critically evaluating the practice of our work and travel.



Picture 12: Certificate on CO₂ Compensation

07 Improving our Governance

LC Bylaws

In April 2023 we amended the bylaws of Leadership Choices to reflect the responsibilities of our company towards society and our ecosystem.

The added sections read as follows:

1. Paragraph on the object and purpose of the company

- The company pursues the further purpose of achieving a significant positive impact on the common good and the environment through its business activities.

2. Paragraph on the obligation of the management

- Within the scope of their management activities, the managing directors must consider the effects of their actions on:
 - the shareholders of the company
 - the employees of the company, its subsidiaries and its suppliers
 - the customers as beneficiaries of the company's endeavors to have a significant positive impact on the common good and the environment
 - the communities in which the company, its subsidiaries or its suppliers are located
 - the local and global environment
 - the short- and long-term interests of the company, incl. the benefits arising from long-term plans or from the independence of the company

The managing directors must promote the success of the company to the best of their knowledge and belief within the scope of their management activities, without being required to give priority to the interests of individual stakeholders or stakeholder groups.

Better World Advisory Board

- Leadership Choices has a very strong background in the private sector but not so much in the social sector. Therefore, next to our group of Equity Partners who serve as an advisory board for statutory purposes, we have created an Advisory Board to help us navigate in the social sector.
- The Better World Advisory Board consists of the following experts:
 - Katarina Peranic**
Member of the Board “Deutsche Stiftung für Engagement und Ehrenamt“
 - Rainer Höll**
Former Managing Director of Ashoka Germany, Co-Founder Inner Work Alliance
 - Christian Meyn**
Member of the Board “Crespo-Foundation”
 - Dr. Peter Kreutter**
Director WHU Foundation, Managing Director of WHU Center for Non-Profit Management and Digital Social Impact

08 Our Goals

The primary intention of measuring and documenting our societal and ecological impact is to create awareness within our organization, within our supplier base and within our ecosystem of clients, partners, and friends.

A secondary goal is to maintain our level of impact or even improve ourselves where possible going forward.

For 2024 we have the following goals:

- Achieve B-Corp certification.
- Increase volunteer hours by 10%.
- Increase employee satisfaction by 10%.
- Increase third-party donations to our Cosmikk-Foundation by 50%.



Picture 13: LC Summit 2023