DESTINATION EXCELLENCE
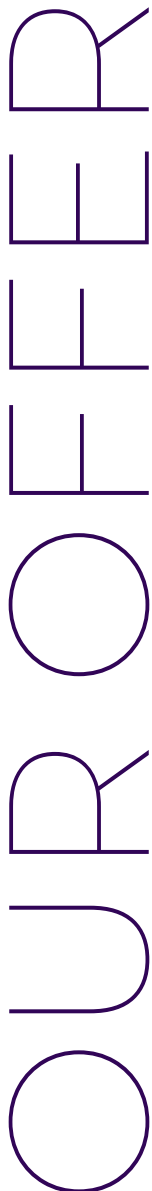
Together for a better future.

Today, many organisations are at crossroads: for decades, the mantra was maximising efficiency, growth, and share prices – often at the cost of human development, social and societal responsibility, and our natural environment. **Businesses and their leaders are now among the least trusted "institutions" in society**, and our narrow way of "thinking business" is increasingly jeopardising our capacity to flourish on this planet.

At the same time, organisations depend more than ever on their employees' motivation, engagement, and competence. To remain viable in fast-moving, global markets, businesses need to increase their agility by removing the restrictive and centralised bureaucracy and leveraging the potential of all their members. Yet, agility, often enacted in the spirit of "more nimble, quicker, efficient", is not enough. Many - especially younger - **colleagues are no longer willing to submit themselves to heartless "suffering machines"** that deplete systemic aliveness and ignore their shared accountability for humanity.

You have already made a first step (or even a giant leap) towards a different destination: **you are an organisation of strong values and with a purpose to contribute to society**; you are on the road to excellence! Yet, the transformation towards excellence needs leaders and teams to "re-think" and rework courageously the way to do business. Drawing on our decades-spanning research on excellent organisations, and experience in executive teaching, we have customised a unique development programme for your leaders, teams, and organisation as a whole: **Our "Destination Excellence – Together for a Better Future" is designed to support and accelerate your organisation in its transformation towards excellence.**

OUR OFFER

We invite you into our "good lab", a shared adventure to discover and strengthen excellence. **Our objective is to gain insights into how to craft "good organisations" that enable human flourishing in the 21st century** and to empower you to carry your legacy "back to the future". **The programme we have developed aims to empower you through three steps:**

01   **LIGHTING THE SPARK: LEADING SELF**
Develop leadership capacities for positive impact

02   **CRAFTING HOT SPOTS: LEADING TEAMS**
Increment the ability and inspiration of teams to collaborate and innovate their daily work

03   **CREATING RIPPLES: INSPIRING THE ORGANISATION**
Co-create systemic capacities for further responsible and sustainable organisation-wide transformation

This programme is a prototype; hence, to qualify our "hypotheses", we adopt a scientific approach to measure the areas that offer the highest leverage points for your transformation. For this, **we created our "Flourishing Barometer", which will accompany you throughout your journey** and allow you to track your progress over time. This enables you to leverage your entrepreneurial creativity to refine and test a set of innovative practices that could further transform your organisation whilst also creating a spark of hopeful inspiration beyond your office gates and starting a movement for the good.

In the following pages, we will briefly guide you through our rationale, the structure of our leadership and organisational development programme, and our research offerings. We hope this concise overview will assist you in orienting yourself and serve as an initial "game plan" that logically fits all the pieces into an exciting learning adventure!

THE GOOD ORGANISATION

FROM AGILITY TO EXCELLENCE: A NEW ORGANISATIONAL MODEL

It is in the air: grand challenges, fundamental uncertainty, driven by an increasingly complex world, and a society that is often more divided than united call out for **new organisational models that go beyond agility and towards excellence.** Whilst nowadays businesses are expected to contribute to "a better world", doing so becomes more difficult.

Agile organisations have developed methods to cope with an ever-faster changing world. Decision-making is mainly decentralised, teams are empowered to act more swiftly, and the culture is geared towards innovation and resilience. But while "agility" enhances how things are done, it seldom answers the existential questions of "what should be done" in the first place and "whom we should become" through our work. Not every decision is "good", and while speed is expedient, it is no substitute for reflection and a deeper understanding of creating a flourishing society.

Instead, excellent organisations place the generative process of "what we should do" and "whom we want to become" at the core of all their activities.

EXCELLENT ORGANISATIONS IN PRACTICE

In practice, excellent organisations' primary focus is their purpose and character and innovating and producing excellent products and services, whilst how much profit they make becomes a means to this end. This can only be achieved by adapting their ways of reasoning and awakening organisational vitality to spark human generativity and ignite a climate of collective striving towards good.
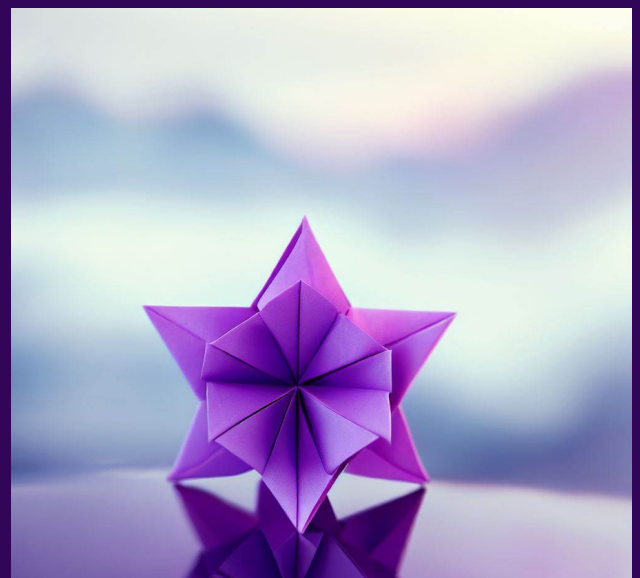
FLOURISHING: THE PURPOSE

The primary purpose of excellent organisations is to enable individual, organisational, and eco-systemic flourishing. Originating from virtue ethics, individual flourishing is defined as the "by-product" of acting at our highest potential: we flourish when we become our "best selves". Organisational flourishing represents synergetic processes within the organisation, where everyone "lifts each other up", and organisational structures, processes, and practices enable such meaningful co-elevation. Eco-systemic flourishing is enacted when organisational members and stakeholders excel together and deploy their talents and creativity by - for instance - crafting innovative products for the good of all.

In our programme, flourishing is defined as the product of enabling practical wisdom and organisational vitality.

Flourishing = Practical Wisdom x Vitality

Practical wisdom is the capacity to make and enact good decisions in uncertainty and potential value conflicts. It allows for a more integrative understanding of where leaders, their teams and company stand, their challenges, and their possible futures. Practical wisdom enables leaders to focus on the good life - not only for themselves but also for the organisation and its broader ecosystem - and facilitates unity amid diversity.

Vitality is the motivation and joyfulness of an organisation and its members, which needs to be mobilised to walk firmly on the path defined by practical wisdom. To increase momentum, we must learn to tap into new sources of vitality such as self-determination, uplifting emotions, task-enabling cross-functional collaboration, and purposeful innovation. This vitality can then be channelled towards the purpose of the organisation.

REACHING ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE: A THREE-STAGE MODEL

Transformation is a "shift" in the collective capacity of an organisation to "see" itself in a wider (eco-) system and to be animated by this willingness to reach its highest potential in all its actions and activities, both inside and outside the company. Grounded on a three-stage model, our joint adventure will support you and your organisation in developing this capacity and unleash your vitality.

For that, we have crafted a **(1) development programme for leaders** (typically for middle- or senior management levels), which is followed **(2) by team development activities** (initiated and guided by leaders) and tied to **(3) structured ways to create organisational ripples** throughout the entire organisation.
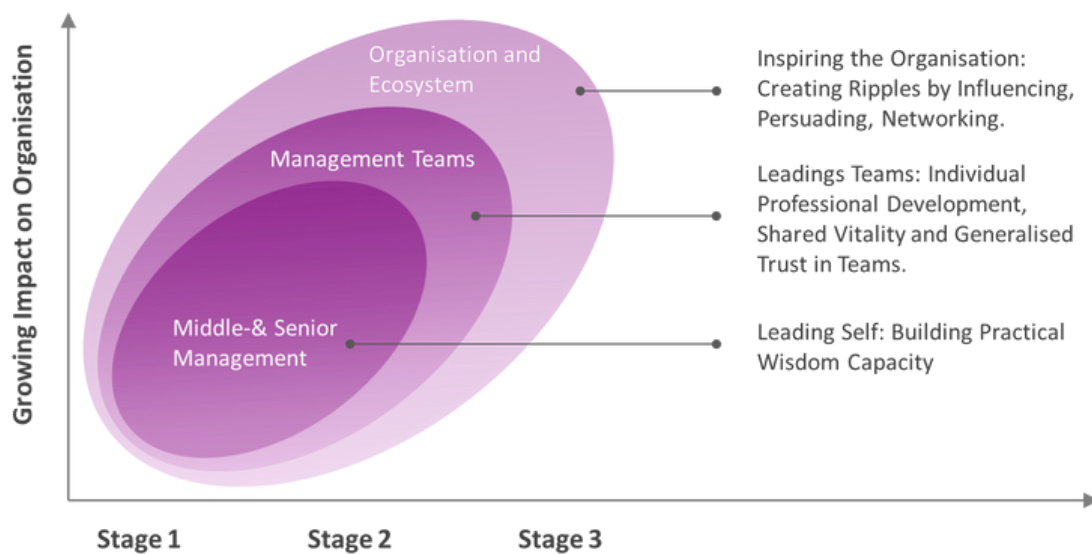
The single purple flower, superimposed on the "flower of life", symbolises how individual and collective flourishing is intertwined and how humans can only truly live our individuality in a caring and compassionate togetherness. Purple is the colour of spirituality and nobility.

LIGHTING THE SPARK: LEADING SELF

The first stage, **"Lighting the Spark", begins on the leadership level and focuses on learning, defining, and following our moral compass to unleash our best "leader self".** The goal is that leaders become guardians of organisational flourishing by crafting a social force field for employees to develop. In turn, cultivating practical wisdom and embodying moral virtues are essential developmental steps in harnessing this organisational vitality.

Our programme emphasises five core moral virtues: compassion, justice, hope, courage, and temperance. These virtues serve as important heuristics for maintaining the right path toward wisdom. Initially, they become habitual behaviours that foster good character and guide our daily practices. They show us how to act in routine situations and provide direction when facing difficult decisions. Regularly practising these five virtues will enable leaders to enhance their moral consciousness by developing their (1) sensitivity to others, such as sharpening their emotional literacy, and (2) refining their capacity to judge by – for example – learning to compare and critically reflect. Their commitment to finding good solutions will be enhanced by (3) a stronger moral identity, which involves moral imagination and

creating personal agency, and (4) the cultivation of moral character, which could, for instance, improve perseverance. It is also crucial for leaders to develop (5) meta-capacities for reflection, such as building systemic awareness. These virtues play an essential role in leadership development and are integral to the process. Please refer to Figure 1 for more detailed information on how each virtue is enacted.

CRAFTING HOT SPOTS: LEADING TEAMS

The second stage, **"Crafting Hot Spots", focuses on the team level, as organisational flourishing is strongly predicated on how we work in teams** (or microenterprises). Here we need to consider several components: the perspective of each team member, their development, and their vitality, but also the perspective of the whole group, of what happens between team members and what emerges from this togetherness.

Firstly, **teams can become hot spots if every role in the team is created for individual professional development and vitality** (i.e., the role supports the development of practical wisdom and provides sufficient motivation).
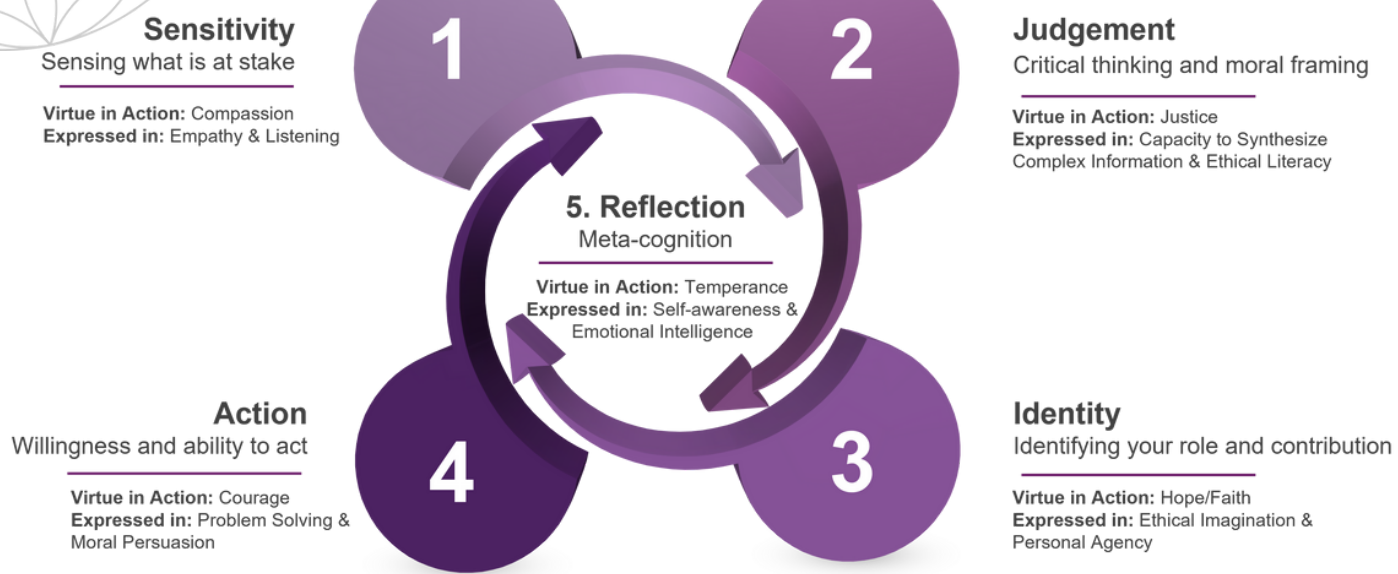
Figure 1 Practical Wisdom and Core Virtues in Action

This requires finding the strongest levers for excellence and experimenting with new decision structures, processes, and collaborative practices.

For instance, creating opportunities for "job crafting", swapping or stopping some tasks, or connecting each person to professional mentors or role models across the organisation can enable professional development and wisdom as well as provide higher energy for team members.

Secondly, **wisdom and vitality are enabled and manifested through our shared practice, i.e., the way we, as team members, are and work together**. A flourishing team works on the premise of systemic trust, which is the shared understanding that individual development is (also) emerging from social relations and is based on the commitment to lift each other up.

It is predicated on the understanding that systemic trust can only ever be as strong as the contribution of each team member. Hence, systemic trust allows team members to contribute with their unique potential to the shared good of the team.

This "whole-group perspective" can be fostered through two approaches. **On the one hand, it is essential to create a "climate of excellence" where co-development, honest feedback, and a persistent search for the best solutions** act as a shared inspiration for completing tasks and developing products, services, and projects for the benefit of customers and other internal or external stakeholders. This climate of excellence relies on regular management and operational processes that are adjusted in a way that facilitates continuous learning and co-development.

On the other hand, it is vital to establish a "holding environment" that acknowledges and manages challenging emotions, such as anxiety or fear, while energising with positive emotions. In this environment, each member demonstrates care, vulnerability, and accountability towards others, which results in a collective responsibility to support each other in transforming individual needs, ideas, and desires into collective ones. Such a holding environment requires careful boundary management, as well as the integration of interpersonal skills among all those involved.

CREATING RIPPLES: INSPIRING THE ORGANISATION

The third stage, **"Creating ripples", focuses on ripple effects on the organisational level, as we believe that enacting excellence and flourishing within teams and microenterprises can positively affect eco-systemic flourishing** by carrying the "flame of good" forward.

We work with leaders on action plans that support them to become **ambassadors** of the learnings acquired in the programme, thereby enabling them to **spread their insights to other teams and the organisation as a whole.** In addition, we assist them in **creating networks for further transformation for good on a larger scale**, which requires closely connecting the organisation to its wider ecosystem and society and creating ties between teams and stakeholders across the organisation. This is essential to both (1) ensure a vital connection with and adaptation to the evolving needs of stakeholders and (2) honour the role of the organisation as a constitutive organ of society, and foster its contribution to a shared blueprint for collective prosperity and flourishing. Eco-systemic development can thus be interpreted as an increase in the capacity of the company to act in an expanded "ethical space" – adequately supported by the creation of inclusive governance mechanisms and stable connections between the organisation and its environment.

The Ensō symbol originates from the rich tradition of Japanese ink painting. Prior to embarking upon each artistic endeavour, the artist meticulously crafts a solitary circle. When closed, it can represent perfection, the immutable essence, and relate to symmetry, balance, and mastery ideals. On the other hand, it may be open, as it often is, which takes on an entirely new meaning. In this form, it exemplifies movement and progress towards perfection, even if it is not attainable.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Our programme comprises three modules that build on each other. **Each module consists of selected theoretical inputs (4 lessons), an experimental part ("Discovery lab"), and a coaching session (2 lessons).** After being provided with the necessary theoretical foundations, the participating leaders are empowered to organise and perform an experiment (individually or together with their teams) and eventually reflect on the outcomes of the experiment during a guided coaching session. The duration of the whole programme is 6 months.

The first module, "Leading Self", focuses on developing individual leadership capacities. Leaders will be introduced to practical wisdom and the five core virtues in it. By reflecting on important life and work events, lessons and insights from the past can be extracted and connected to their "best self-leader" version of the future.

The second module, "Leading Team", focuses on improving teamwork quality by elevating team vitality and fostering systemic trust. This will sharpen and expand the individual aptitude for perspective-taking to analyse situations with an open mindset and deepen their capacity for empathic concern, compassion, and care. In addition, the team's capacity for individual flourishing, practical wisdom, and generalised trust is strengthened.

The third module, "Inspiring the Organisation", is focused on defining what constitutes an excellent organisation and what effect this would have on the larger ecosystem. This will enable leaders (and possibly their team members) to co-create systemic management capacities for responsible and sustainable transformation and carry the flame of good forward.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

During the programme, **our "Flourishing Barometer" - an indispensable resource that illuminates your organisation's readiness for and development towards excellence** - will track your evolution and provide you with some tailored insights on how to continue improving along the path. Hence, with its initial, mid-term, and final assessment, this barometer will allow you to gauge your and your team's progress over time, identify areas for growth, and chart a course toward virtuousness, flourishing and excellence on a broader level.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT

01 A very carefully crafted learning journey with six curated, highly insightful, and interactive lessons supported by six customised coaching sessions

02 Monthly toolkits for all the experimental tasks "Discovery lab" (leaders and teams)

03 Access to a rich collection of relevant, thought-provoking literature, videos, and podcasts

04 Evidence-based evaluations of your and your team's progress along the way and flourishing (Flourishing Barometer)

YOUR INVOLVEMENT AND CONTRIBUTIONS

We expect you to participate fully in our development programme which overall involves:

6 x 4h input sessions for leaders	6 x 2h group coaching sessions
6 x 10-minute surveys (3 for the leaders and 3 for their teams)	2 x 20-minute interviews with 20 managers (T1, T2)

PART 1: LEADING SELF - LIGHTNING THE SPARK

MODULE	THEORY AND DIALOGUE	DISCOVERY LAB	COACHING
1 – Introduction **Wisdom as Leadership Power Tool**	• Initiation & Expectations • Good Organisations Vision • Ethical Theories Basics • Leadership Core Competence: Five Pillars of Practical Wisdom	Leadership Virtue Practice: Temperance Gap-to-Excellence Baseline	Intro & Contracting Self-reflection: • Identifying Barriers to Self-development
2 – Identity **Becoming Our Best (Leader) Self**	• Organisations as Complex Systems • Vertical Development and Action Logics • Leadership Core Competence: Identity and Character	Leadership Virtue Practice: Wisdom Planning the Team Experiments	Self-reflection: • Imagined Best (Leadership) • Self (Identity Construction)

PART 2: LEADING TEAM - CRAFTING HOT SPOTS

MODULE	THEORY AND DIALOGUE	DISCOVERY LAB	COACHING
3 - Job Crafting **Elevating Energy**	• Personal Excellence in Role: The Professional Development Journey • Scaling Wisdom through Deliberate Development: Setting up the Micro Organisation ("MO")	Leadership Virtue Practice: Courage Team Experiment: The Flourishing Challenge (Job Crafting & Charter)	Group Reflection: • Immunity to Change – Identifying "Team Dynamics Blockers"

MODULE	THEORY AND DIALOGUE	DISCOVERY LAB	COACHING
4 – Team Crafting **Sparking Hot Spots**	• Crafting a Climate of Excellence – Bringing the MO to life • Scaling Wisdom through Management Routines: MO Toolkit I	Leadership Virtue Practice: Compassion Team Exercise: Imagined Best Team (Team Gap-to- Excellence Action Plan)	Peer Reflection: • Identifying Relational Barriers (attachments, transference, etc)

PART 3: INSPIRING THE ORGANISATION - CREATING RIPPLES

MODULE	THEORY AND DIALOGUE	DISCOVERY LAB	COACHING
5 – Product Crafting **Innovation for Good**	• Good Organisation Model: Micro Organisations and Corporation • Scaling Wisdom through Innovation and Creativity Practices: MO Toolkit II	Leadership Virtue Practice: Hope Team Experiment: Innovation for Good	Group Reflection: • Systemic Constellations – Identifying Team Barriers
6 – Closure **Carrying the Flame Forward**	• Political Leadership & How to Reach your Company's Highest Potential • Leadership as a Profession • Closure and Q&A	Leadership Virtue Practice: Justice Individual Exercise: Agenda Check Team Exercise: Plan for Impact Gap-to-Excellence Update	Group Reflection: • Organisational Role Analysis • Increasing Organisational Affordances • Personal Action Plan & Touchstone

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Professor Dr Antoinette Weibel has been Director of the Institute for Work and Employment Research at the University of St. Gallen since April 1, 2016. She is a professor for HR, a trust researcher, and has recently found her passion in the good organisations project and the question, "how to operationalise the good in big, fat, difficult corporations"?

Throughout her career, she has been the Principal Investigator of multiple applied research projects in collaboration with leading research institutions and companies from the D-A-CH region (e.g., Innosuisse Project "Agile Performance Management", SNF Project "Stakeholder Distrust", NFP Project "Trust and Datafication").

She is one of the 20 leading HR thinkers in the D-A-CH region, on the board of the Swiss Academy of Social Science and Humanities, and seeks to be the "purple dot" in the academic world to make Academia impactful (and listening) again.

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