

Benoit Strauven

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Senior Leadership Catalyst

Extensive leadership experience in Europe, USA, Asia and Africa

Strong believer in authenticity, co-creation, mutual respect, curiosity and accountability

Humbly driven to create sustainable impact for senior leaders facing complexity

Expertise & Focus

Supporting senior leaders in personal, organizational and strategic development

Creating clarity, alignment and momentum in leadership teams on complex strategic matters

Discovering and solving hurdles in team dynamics

My Career

Founder at The Leaders Ship

2024 - Present

- Unique personal and professional leadership development for CxO
- Sea sailing adventures with structured approach to impactful and sustainable growth

Coaching - Advisory - Interim Management

2016 - Present

- Chairman and board services - Executive coaching and mentoring - Strategic advisory - Interim CEO/CFO
- Supporting and inspiring ambitious leaders on strategy, finance and organization

CEO at Floréac Group

11/2021 - 10/2023

- CEO of a leading horticultural trading company with Belgian and Dutch entities: 108 m€ turnover
- Member of the Executive Team of the Dutch holding company 'Plantify Partners Europe': 400 m€ turnover

CEO at Matermaco Group

12/2015 - 03/2020

- CEO of a leading agricultural machinery distributor with Belgian and African entities: 75 m€ turnover
- Member of the Executive Team of the Dutch holding company 'Mechan Holding': 230 m€ turnover

CEO at van Hoorebeke Timber Group

05/2010 - 11/2015

- CEO of a leading timber importer with Belgian and French entities: 60 m€ turnover
- Joined as interim CFO in 2010, became CEO in 2013. Served as non-executive director until 2023

Interim Management Projects

07/2007 - 04/2010

- Co-CEO at Nash Andrea. Restructuring under bankruptcy protection. Outsourced production to India
- CFO at Genesis Technologies, active in 4 countries. Focus on daily operations & ERP implementation

Senior Consultant at Boston Consulting Group

01/2005 - 07/2007

- Strategy and implementation projects in a variety of industries
- First based in South-East Asia, then in Belgium

Various global sales and sales management positions at Barco

09/2001 - 12/2004

- Expatriated first to Atlanta, USA then Beijing, China
- Commercial leadership roles in the LED (out-of-home media) and projection (home cinema) markets

*I coach, consult, and challenge
senior leadership individuals and teams
to achieve their best, boldest work.*

Board of Director

Non-Executive Chairman

- CYAGO: production and engineering of industrial drying solutions 2020 - present
- Briam Group: production and engineering of industrial silo's 2021 - 2024

Non-Executive Director

- Ets. Freddy Baines: global trade of dairy products 2021 - present
- van Hoorebeke Timber Group: global trade of timber for industry and construction 2015 - 2023
- Fedagrim: Belgian federation of agricultural machinery distributors 2016 - 2020
- Manège Dennenhof: non-profit offering hippotherapy to disabled children 2011 - 2018
- BeLuxCham Malaysia: Chamber of Commerce 2005 - 2006

Executive Director

- van Hoorebeke Timber Group: global trade of timber for industry and construction 2010 - 2015
- Matermaco Group: Belgian-African distributor of agricultural and industrial machinery 2016 - 2020

Advisory Board

Chairman

- Conhexa: transport and logistics of fresh and frozen food 2025 - present
- Qualitec: outsourcing of technical staff 2024 - present

Member

- Vlerick Business School alumni: a network of +25.000 professionals worldwide 2020 - present
- Provet: regional market leading network of veterinary professionals 2019 - 2021
- Intermat: rental and sales of construction equipment 2018 - 2021
- Axon Group: industrial air and water treatment solutions 2016 - present
- Geldof Recycling: industrial production of wooden pallet blocks solutions 2016 - 2017

Coaching and Facilitation

Individual coaching

- A **thinking partner** for senior leaders who face complex systemic challenges 2016 - present
- Guiding them from clear thinking to clear decisions and powerful action
- +500 hours of individual work, both physically and virtually
- +50 clients, incl. listed companies, multinationals, and several leaders in their industry
- 2/3 of my work is with CEO's, Owners, Partners – 1/3 with other CxO

Team facilitation

- A **catalyst** for leadership teams on strategy, vision, culture, communication, trust, ... 2019 - present
- Always combining relational dynamics and commitment to strategic actions
- International client base in Europe and Africa
- References include top-tier consulting firms, government branches, PE buy & build, ...

Keynote speaking

“60+ Knots in the Roaring Forties: Leadership tested in the Southern Ocean”

2024 - present

- A story on resilience, leadership, team dynamics and strategy in an ocean sailing race
- Fundamental lessons on what makes a team win ... or come dead last.
- Clients include Vlerick Business School, company leadership teams, and non-profit

A bit more about me

Education

MIT Sloan School of Management (virtual)

- Artificial intelligence: Implications on Business Strategy 2024

TPC Leadership (Belgium, Netherlands, UK, Italy)

- Masterclass in Developmental Coaching 2025
- Executive Coaching Practitioner: certified program for EMCC & ICF accreditation 2019 - 2020
- Coaching Development Centre 2020

Vlerick Business School (Belgium)

- Advanced Management Program 2014 - 2015
- Inspirational Leadership 2015

Darden Graduate School of Business - University of Virginia (USA)

- Exchange program at 2nd year MBA 2000

Faculty of Chemistry - Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium)

- First year, in combination with 3rd year at business school. Magna Cum Laude 1998 - 1999

Solvay Brussels School of Economics & Management (Belgium)

- Solvay Business School - Master 'Business Engineering'. Cum Laude 1996 - 2001

Onze-Lieve-Vrouwecollege - Antwerp (Belgium)

- Greek-Science, Magna Cum Laude, Valedictorian 1996

Miscellaneous

Volunteering, awards and achievements

- Mentorship of entrepreneurs via VOKA and Vlerick Business School 2020 - 2022
- Alumnus and Member of the jury of the Prince Albert Fund
- Winner of the 2011 Financial Media "Best Finance Team" as CFO at VHO Timber

Languages

- Dutch, French, English Fluent
- German Conversational
- Italian, Norwegian, Mandarin Very rusty

Hobbies

- Being outdoors: coastal and offshore sailing, enjoying a ride on a motorbike, camping, golfing
- Healthy mind in healthy body: a nice run or workout at the gym, and an endless pile of books

Sabbatical

11/2023 - 01/2024

- Watch-leader in the 'Clipper Round The World Yacht Race' in the Southern Ocean
- Racing 4.200 nautical miles from Perth to Airlie Beach, Australia; raising funds for UNICEF