

CV Karla Schlaepfer

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SUMMARY

"What I appreciate most about Karla is her ability to challenge me in a way that feels both supportive and constructive." Senior HR Consultant, Sum Up

Karla Schlaepfer is an Executive Coach, consultant, and facilitator who empowers leaders to lead with clarity in complexity. With 15+ years of coaching experience and 25 years as a founder and innovation trainer, she combines academic insight, business sense, and psychological expertise.

She has authored two books and over 200 blog articles on leadership, communication, and coaching. Karla delivers Design Thinking workshops certified by the Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI), and has coached and trained teams across Europe in agile methods, simplicity and creative innovation.

Since 2023, she has focused on building AI confidence in leaders through workshops, keynotes, and coaching. She is also the creator of AI Coach Karla, a German-based, EU privacy-compliant AI bot that extends coaching impact between sessions.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Karla works with executives, directors, and team leaders across mid-level and DAX companies, start-ups, and the public sector. Her areas of expertise include leadership clarity, cognitive diversity, strategic self-awareness, and psychological resilience. As a bilingual coach fluent in English and German, she brings strong intercultural awareness and cross-cultural leadership expertise to her international client base.

She is the co-founder of a 2019 VR/Metaverse technology GmbH startup, where she gained hands-on experience in emerging technologies, venture capital, product development, and scaling innovative solutions. This tech entrepreneurship background uniquely positions her to guide leaders through digital transformation and AI adoption challenges.

Karla delivers workshops on innovation and agility—especially Design Thinking for teams—certified by HPI and adapted for both in-person and virtual formats. In April 2025,

she co-led a sold-out AI Confidence workshop (80+ seats) sponsored by Leadership Choices, and created a popular AI Confidence Guide that has become a key resource for leaders navigating AI integration.

She lectures at German universities, supports the ICF Virtual Education board, and provides pro bono coaching for Liquid Legal e.V.

CERTIFICATIONS

- PCC Coach, International Coaching Federation ICF (renewed in 2025 with over 3000 hours of coaching)
- Systemic Coach & Change Manager (University of Cologne, IneKO)
- Solutions Focused Master Coach (Solutions Academy)
- Certified Design Thinking Coach (Hasso Plattner Institute, Potsdam)
- Scrum Master (PSM1) & Product Owner (PSPO1)
- Hogan Personality Assessment and 360 Feedback Accreditation
- Master Design Sprint Practitioner
- Digital Resilience Journey, Leadership Choices
- Creator of AI Coach Karla + author of the AI Confidence Guide (2025)

EDUCATION

- M.A. Applied Linguistics, University of Freiburg, cum laude (2012)
- B.A. Humanities, University of California, Berkeley, cum laude (1992)

Born in the USA and now based in Cologne, Karla brings exceptional intercultural fluency and international perspective to her work. Conducting coaching and workshops in both English and German, she specializes in supporting leaders across diverse cultural contexts. She lives with her German husband and remains closely connected to her two adult bilingual children. Her coaching reflects the belief that great leadership balances clarity, presence, and humanity—especially in a tech-driven world.