

CLEOPHUS (CLEO) FRANKLIN JR.

FOUNDER, PRESIDENT & CEO
FRANKLIN STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS



Cleophus “Cleo” Franklin Jr.’s leadership expertise is globally recognized. His passion for designing robust business growth, brand strategies, and implementing innovative, disruptive business models have benefited many global businesses and industries. Franklin’s values and beliefs are centered on approaching difficult challenges with curiosity and a beginner’s mindset. He is a purpose-driven leader who embraces servant leadership and investing in the personal and professional development of the next generation of leaders. His leadership career spans over thirty years with John Deere, Case-New Holland, and Mahindra as a global executive. During his career, Franklin’s business and brand contributions recognition include the honor of being awarded the Future Farmers of America (FFA) Honorary American Degree, inducted into the Mahindra Business Hall of Fame, and the recipient of numerous marketing, branding, corporate social responsibilities, new product innovation, and growth performance awards in the agriculture and heavy equipment industry.

Franklin is a published author. His global leadership book *Coffee with Cleo* (coffeewithcleo.com) was launched in June 2020. His book highlights ten leadership lessons from his global business executive career. Through artful and engaging storytelling, it showcases how one can navigate challenges successfully in our ever-changing, fast-paced, and complex business world by using an innovative entrepreneurship mindset and proven framework to improve your livelihood, but more importantly, your life.

His second business leadership book, *Lessons Learned from our Mothers and Fathers* launched in May 2021 extends and takes Franklin’s passion for personal and professional leadership development from his first book, *Coffee with Cleo*, to another level. His new book celebrates 20 short stories of sage generational advice from Cleo and other successful business leaders—sons and daughters who share what has been passed on to them by their parents. The collection of stories focuses on lessons learned and timeless parental wisdom that provides the reader a window into the special moments in the authors’ early lives to witness those critical lessons from their parents that helped to successfully shape their livelihoods and their lives.

Franklin is also an entrepreneur. He founded Franklin Strategic Solutions (franklinss.com), a global consulting business that focuses on leadership development, business development, business/brand strategy, keynote speaking, and executive coaching for business and non-profit industries. He is also the founder of Morningside University’s “Franklin Leadership Foundation.” The foundation’s purpose is centered on creating future leaders today by partnering with businesses, entrepreneurs, and community organizations to develop future leaders through internships, scholarships, experiential learning, and mentoring access for high school and college students.

Franklin serves as a board adviser and investor for several new business ventures, from vertical farming, precision farm technology, STEM education technology, academia, multi-sided digital platforms, and heavy equipment solutions. He also serves as a Senior Corporate Fellow at the University of Houston, and teaches MBA students at the Marilyn Davies Graduate School of Business.

Franklin earned a master’s degree from the Kenan-Flagler School of Business at the University of North Carolina and a bachelor’s degree from Morningside University, located in Sioux City, Iowa. He was inducted into the Morningside “M-Club” Hall of Fame in 2018 as one of the school’s all-time leading scorers. He and his wife, Lois, reside in Cypress, Texas, with their family.