

A BADASS UNCONFERENCE ON HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS

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Below are key takeaways and recommendations from leaders at [Badass Unicorn's](#) inaugural unconference on high-performing teams.

1 REDEFINE "HIGH-PERFORMANCE" AND "HIGH-POTENTIAL"

TLDR; the legacy definition of hours worked and ambition in an upwards trajectory = what good looks like is outdated. It's time to modernise how we think about potential and performance. To judge on impact and output vs. binary input. Conform to the norm.

- **Badassery isn't binary** - since everyone's brain works differently and teams demand greater flexibility, the classic blueprint for brilliance is changing. And we must apply this to leverage talent that isn't "a-typical".
- **Normalise neurodiversity** - [Deloitte](#) estimates 10-20% of people globally are neurodivergent...and teams can be 30% more productive for having them. If one in five brains aren't neurotypical, catering to them is no longer an edge case.
- **Quiet quitting needs a rebrand** - people prioritising their wellbeing and life outside work doesn't necessarily mean they're disengaged...they just have healthy boundaries and aren't prepared to burnout for the sake of their job.

Applications

- Progression pathways for experts who aren't suited to leading teams or those who aren't game for what comes with more seniority presently.
- Part-time senior-level roles showcasing options that don't conform to the norm
- Role model sustainable ways of working e.g. "parenting loudly"
- Embrace "targeted universalism" by redesign work to solve specific barriers different groups face. E.g., making slides easier to read for those with dyslexia helps everyone digest information better.

2 HOW TO FIRE UP YOUR TEAM

TLDR; inspiration isn't one-size-fits-all. Motivation is as unique as we are. To get the best out of our teams, we must evolve our approach when it comes to career get-up-and-go.

- **Peer-to-peer recognition** - create a systematic approach for teams to thank and celebrate *each other* incentivising excellence & collaboration.
- **Eyes on the prize** - ensure teams are 100% clear and ruthlessly focused on the key business priorities vs. distracted by tasks that don't move the needle.
- **Dovetail purpose to the person** - some folks are inspired by a company mission, in which case show how their tasks ladder up to the mission. Others are more enthused by personal goals, so find ways they can lean into what lights them up. Or do both...in the knowledge of their unique drivers.
- **Not everyone wants to socialise at the pub** - create opportunities for team bonding that don't revolve around drinking after hours.
- **External speakers** - leverage partners to deliver messages you want to land.
- **Development conversation Qs** - here are the favourites from our leaders;
 - [I like, I wish, I wonder](#)
 - You don't want to be "promoted" - what is it you **actually** want (more money, recognition, responsibility)?
 - Try "what would need to be true?" with frustrated team members to break out of a victim mindset and activate solution-based thinking with possibilities.
 - What do you/we look like when you're/we're performing at our best?

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Applications

- Create a simple peer-to-peer system, like Wiser - share a survey weekly to nominate team mates against the company's values. Collate the list and send it out at the end of the week.
- Define key "[rocks](#)" (3-5 top priorities) and ruthlessly eliminate shifting sand or pebbles i.e., everything else

3 GEAR UP FOR THE A.I HIGHWAY

TLDR; it's ride or die when it comes to A.I – as leaders, we have a duty to bring our team on the journey (or else they'll get left behind). Used effectively, it can streamline efficiencies and unleash human capital value.

- **A.I = the next industrial revolution** - A.I is transforming the world of work and this train has already left the station. We must help our teams to adapt and future proof them from becoming irrelevant.
- **Beware of A.I slop** - the risk with A.I is over-reliance and using it verbatim. It's clear when something's been "done" by A.I - for example "the dash" and classic phrases like "but, here's the thing." And, remember, A.I isn't always right!
- **#bethechange you want to see** - role model curiosity and demystify its use by making it visible, safe and normal.

Applications

- Upskill yourself by using it and make it a weekly topic in team meetings
- Try Fathom for note-taking in online meetings
- Create personas (or build a custom GPT) in A.I to create an ideas sound board
- Try "voice" mode as a way to bounce and capture ideas when on the go

4 TEAMS THAT TWERK TOGETHER WORK BETTER

TLDR; "if team work makes the dream work", a leader's role is to nurture and define what this looks like. Co-create team commitments that set collective expectations for how we show up for *each other* that optimise effectiveness.

Applications

- **Define "Healthy Habits"** - specify and pledge as a team the behaviours that allow your unit to work most effectively together and why these are important.. For example, core working hours mean we know when to/not to schedule meetings, no phones in meetings means we're fully present, making up for any hours taken off mean flexibility but still completing our contracted hours
- **Get and give "contract"** - life's a game of give and take. Build on the above by agreeing a team contract that defines what you will "give" as a leader e.g. regular 1-2-1s, timely updates on decisions that affect your team, and what you expect in return e.g., agendas for 1-2-1s and punctuality.

5 EMBRACE BUT DON'T HIDE BEHIND INCLUSION

TLDR; creating a psychologically safe environment is the key ingredient for team members to do their most badass work.. But, inclusion and belonging aren't a "hall pass" for poor performance or bringing ourselves to work unfiltered.

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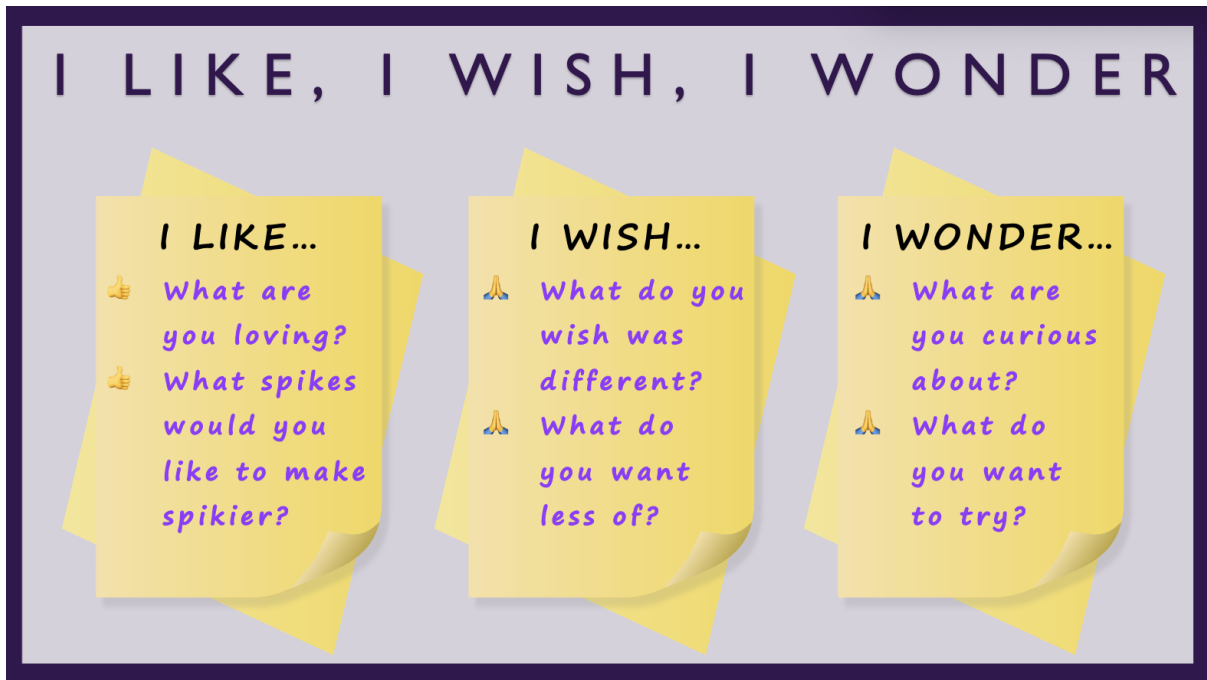
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Applications

- **Call out poor performance** - to avoid inclusion being criticised for setting a low bar for excellence, we must confidently assert where behaviour isn't meeting acceptable standards.
- **Bring your best "work self" to work** - while we want our teams to feel comfortable being who they are at work, we must recognise we're in a professional setting, meaning there are certain boundaries to maintain that promote group wellbeing.

RESOURCES

I like, I wish, I wonder



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Visual summary

BADASS BEST BITES FROM OUR UNCONFERENCE
HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS

1 We need to redefine “performance” & “potential”
The old-school definition of hours worked and ambition in an upwards trajectory = what good looks like is outdated. Impact and commitment has moved on. Judge on output. P.S work/life boundaries are sexy! [More](#)

2 Motivation is as individual as us
Everyone is different – and so are their preferences when it comes to creating career “get-up-a-go”. Craft a tailored approach that speaks to each team members growth drivers. [More](#)

3 Gear up for the A.I highway
It’s ride or die when it comes to A.I – you have a duty to lead your team on the journey (or else they’ll get left behind). Make it a weekly team discussion topic...and strap-in! [More](#)

4 Teams that twerk together work better
Co-create team commitments that set collective expectations for how we all show up for each other that enable us to perform at our best. [More](#)

5 Embrace but don’t hide behind... We need to bring our best “work selves” to work. Foster an accessible workplace. But, if there’s a performance issue, our job as leaders is to call it what it is! [More](#)

INCLUSION

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