

# LEADING HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS

WHITE PAPER



How to activate potential  
and amplify performance  
in the new era



# CONTENTS

- 3 · Introduction: Activate Potential
- 4 · What is high performance?
- 6 · Why do we need high performance?
- 8 · Thriving in the Artificial Intelligence Era
- 10 · What is holding us back from building high-performing teams?
- 14 · Leadership is a learned skill, second in difficulty only to raising children
- 15 · Only inspiring leaders foster high performing teams
- 17 · Inspire your team
- 20 · Where to from here
- 22 · About Stephanie Bown
- 23 · References

# INTRODUCTION: ACTIVATE POTENTIAL



There's something really beautiful,  
even joyful, about a team of people finding  
their performance flow.

We see it watching an orchestra, a ballet, a live band, a game of elite football, chefs at service at a 3-hatted restaurant, or even an emergency response team.

It doesn't matter if that team is young or old, experienced or novice, many or few. When individuals, each with their unique personalities, quirks, fears, hopes and dreams, find formation and click into place to collectively produce an exceptional result, it's nothing short of joyful.

These are high performing teams – teams who leverage complementary skill sets to deliver consistently exceptional results, while at the same time growing from the experience.

I regularly meet CEO's and their leadership teams who know they have all the components to flourish but can't quite click into gear. They often start with the same question. "I know we are capable of more. How do we show better results for our efforts?" Simply throwing a bunch

of talented people into a bowl isn't enough. Leadership is the enzyme that activates team synergy – where the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

If you're a leader of a team or business, you might be asking yourself the same question: How can I get better results from my team, but with less effort?

It's a given that we're all short on time – and if we somehow miraculously find more time, we fill it. This is not about how much time you have, but how you use that time with your people.

The good news is, your team's performance is a direct result of your leadership. The bad news is, your team's performance is a direct result of your leadership! Whichever way you choose to look at it, you pull the performance lever. So... buckle up and be prepared to transform the way you lead.

# WHAT IS HIGH PERFORMANCE?



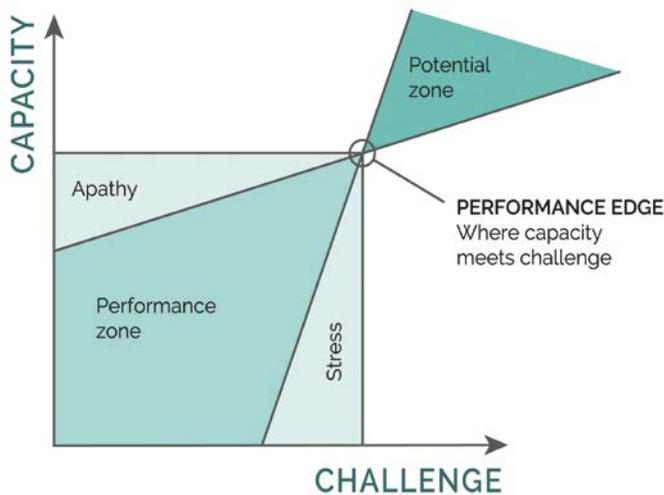
How many of us  
wake up on any given  
workday and think  
to ourselves "I hope  
I do a mediocre job  
today?"  
My guess is zero.

Nobody strives to be average. We all start with an intention to perform to our highest standards; to love our families, run our businesses, serve our customers, support our colleagues, and grow our communities in ways that reflect our deepest held values and beliefs. We all aspire each day to show up as the best version of ourselves.

The reality though, is that many of us are feeling overwhelmed in some areas of our lives yet underwhelmed in others. We languish in either apathy and boredom (where skill outweighs challenge) or stress and anxiety (where challenge outweighs skill).

Where we grow is at our **performance edge**; where capacity meets challenge. By simply performing challenging tasks, we are learning from them and increasing our capacity to meet them. This in turn allows us to take on more responsibility or tasks of greater complexity.

For example, you wouldn't ask a junior lawyer to lead a high-profile case. You build that lawyer up over time with training and real experiences. As the lawyer learns more; they take on not just more complex cases, but leadership responsibilities of the firm and empowerment to foster policy change within their chosen sector. They constantly extend their capacity to meet ever increasing challenge. This is where we live a life of full engagement.



The diagram above is an adapted version of the classic FLOW model first presented by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi – with a few small twists. Mihaly introduced the concept of flow in 1975 as a mental state of operation in which a person is fully absorbed in activity that requires both skill and challenge. In flow, we are lost in the moment. We forget about time. We forget everything except the task we are actively engaged in performing. People find flow in activities like playing a musical instrument, designing a new concept, writing code, performing intricate surgery, cooking, painting, or any other activity that requires effort and focus.

Our performance edge is where full capacity meets the complexity of challenge. At the edge, we push past what we know, to the unthought known<sup>1</sup>. We dig deep, forge new neural pathways and make new connections. Our potential is never fully realised. The brain is continuously changing and dendritic cells (brain cells or neurons that look like tiny trees) never stop reaching for more connections. The internal landscape of possibility is never one that is fully explored. What a beautiful, endless plane of possibility lies within?

Our challenge as leaders and change makers is helping people to discover their performance edge and safely hold them there.

To be a high performing business or organisation – it is a pre-requisite to have high expectations. We can't be ground-breaking unless we ask for

exceptional, seek continuous improvement, continuous growth, and continuous innovation. This is the only way to be market leading. This is the only way to attract and retain the best in the business. My old mentor and now great friend, the ex-Director of People & Culture at Swisse Wellness, Catherine Crowley, used to say that “if they are not green and growing, they are ripe and rotting!” She was referring to the truism that if people are not learning, they're stagnating and falling into either the apathy or stress zones and that is not good for them, for the people around them, or for the business.

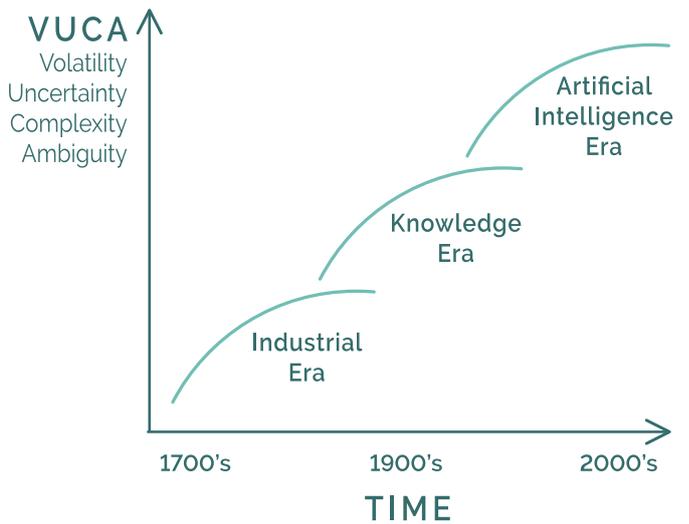
So as not to push people into the high stress zone – which neuroscience proves hinders creativity and innovation – we also need to increase the capacity of people by investing in them – by developing skills and knowledge and exposing them to more complex work. This is why we invest in people to grow our businesses. People seek businesses where they see opportunities to learn, grow and improve. Where they will be surrounded by people who inspire them. When people grow, business grows. It's a win-win for everyone.

The question then is not whether we should invest in people, but what skills are required to meet the demands of an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world (or VUCA for short). VUCA was an acronym introduced by the U.S. Army War College to describe the Cold War period, but is now a short-hand way of recognizing the total cluster-f@\*k we now find ourselves in (more useful U.S. Army terminology)!

In our current context of post pandemic adaptation, rapid technological advancement, globalization, environmental crisis and economic instability; what skills will be most important in building not just high performing teams, but people who are emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually equipped to deal with the entanglement of issues we now face as a human race?

<sup>1</sup> The unthought known was a concept introduced by psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas in the 1980s to represent experiences that are somewhat known to us and formed prior to the development of language at around the age of 3. These knowns live within our pre-conscious mind until they are surfaced by later experiences and ultimately 'thought'.

# WHY DO WE NEED HIGH PERFORMANCE?



To answer this question, we need to go back a bit. We need to understand how the nature of work and the capabilities we've needed have changed over the past 300 years, and how the pace of change is now accelerating.

The Industrial Era was a period from the late 1700's to early 1900's characterised by the emergence of machines and mass production. Large, centralised bureaucracies emerged and workers migrated from farms to factories. In this era, competitive advantage emerged from standardisation. Leaders led by command and control. Thinking was not valued – for workers were merely extensions of machines, parts in a production line. Needless to say, this was an extraordinarily dehumanizing period – the powerful few controlled the welfare of the masses, and quality of life was adversely impacted.

Having said that, it was a necessary and important period of growth that led to advancements and improvements that we still use today –

organisational structures with functional divisions, job descriptions and key performance indicators, budget and control systems, quality assurance processes, employment laws to protect workers' rights and minimum pay rates just to name a few.

Cue the emergence of computers and computer technology in the mid 1900's and very quickly the Industrial Era was surpassed by what we now call the Knowledge or Information Era.

In the Knowledge Era, ideas are the main sources of competitive advantage and economic growth. Knowledge is, literally, power. We, many of us, are now called knowledge workers. Largely university educated – our ability to think, problem solve, make decisions and add to existing knowledge is highly valued and well-paid for. Our quality of life has improved immeasurably, and we are part of a large emergence of middle-class workers with unprecedented levels of access to education, health and recreation options.

For companies to be successful in the Knowledge Era, people must do the very opposite to what was expected less than 100 years ago – now people need to speak up, challenge the status quo, share their ideas, communicate and collaborate across boundaries of all kinds.

This requires a complete gear shift in how we lead. The guys and girls at the top are no longer the ones with all the answers. Now the frontline, field sales, customer service teams and suppliers are the real knowledge brokers. Their information is mission critical. Organisational

structures are still important to facilitate information sharing, prioritization of effort and workflows, but we don't want hierarchy to block proactive responsiveness to our customers and markets.

In his foreword for Liz Wiseman and Greg McKeown's book *Multipliers*, Steven R Covey writes that "in the knowledge economy, the biggest leadership challenge of our times is not insufficient resources per se, but rather our inability to access the most valuable resources at our disposal". Leaders today, must activate the intelligence at every level and leverage the strengths of their teams to work collaboratively and align their efforts.

Thanks to the research of Professor Amy Edmonson from Harvard Business School, psychological safety is now known to be a pre-requisite for innovation and creativity to flourish. In order to access this innate intelligence, leaders must create workplaces that are psychologically safe; where team members are treated like equals, where ideas may be challenged no matter where you sit in the hierarchy, where mistakes are celebrated as learning opportunities, and where innovation and change are just part of the way business is done. Professor Edmonson warns that this is not about being soft on performance. Quite the opposite – it's about enhancing accountability, holding people to high standards and having the hard conversations. But this is done in a way that doesn't stifle creativity or intellect.

# THRIVING IN THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ERA



With a foot firmly in the door, is a new era of unprecedented technological advancement, referred to variously as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the Conceptual Age, or the Artificial Intelligence age.

The World Economic Forum Future of Jobs report, 2020, reports a “double disruption” caused by the dual impact of pandemic impacts on ways of working, coupled with accelerated transition towards digitisation, automation and artificial intelligence.

“By 2025, the time spent on current tasks at work by humans and machines will be equal.”

This is a startling statistic, indicating that at least 50% of the global workforce will need reskilling over the next five years.

The report cites a number of specific technological advances; adoption of cloud computing, big data, e-commerce, encryption, non-humanoid robots and artificial intelligence as the drivers affecting the nature of the workforce over the next 5 years.

To be future ready – is to build the capacities of people, teams and organisations to adapt and respond. Effectively utilising and leveraging technology is a core driver of that.

What skills will be more highly valued in the coming age? Chief Human Resources Officers from some of the worlds’ largest employers believe that the most critical skills include innovation, critical thinking, learning, creativity, leadership and resilience.

## TOP SKILLS TRENDING FOR 2025



Analytical thinking and innovation



Active learning and learning strategies



Complex problem-solving



Critical thinking and analysis



Creativity, originality and initiative



Leadership and social influence



Technology use, monitoring and control



Technology design and programming



Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility



Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation



Emotional intelligence



Troubleshooting and user experience



Service orientation



Systems analysis and evaluation



Persuasion and negotiation

Source: World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report, 2018.

Almost 15 years ago, Dan Pink predicted the rise of Right-Brain capabilities in his book *A whole new mind*. Well ahead of his time, Dan cited six essential right-brain aptitudes or 'senses' as essential in driving competitive advantage in the conceptual era. These were; design, storytelling, synthesis, empathy, play and meaning.

The world we now live in is a complex system, involving multiple feedback loops with

unpredictable consequences. To tackle the challenges we face, we need to drop causal thinking and adopt systems thinking. We need to understand that growth is driven by innovation, not standardization. We need our corporate motivation to be for purpose, not profit. We need to develop creative right brain capabilities in addition to left brain analytical capabilities, and we need leaders who activate those intelligences by asking, not telling.

# WHAT IS HOLDING US BACK FROM BUILDING HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS?



Now that we understand the context in which we are operating, the complexity of the challenges we face and the skills we need to harness in teams; we need to recognise the noise that holds leaders back from getting the best from their people.

What are the real people challenges that prevent us from meeting our performance edge and either tip us over into stress or allow us to languish in apathy and boredom? There are three common problems that in my 15 years of consulting widely with leaders, teams and individuals I've observed:

1

**We don't give enough attention to our best people**

2

**We don't address underperformance quickly enough**

3

**We invest time in generating great strategic plans, but fail at implementation**

## 1 • We don't give enough attention to our best people

We spend 80% of our time working with the 20% who are underperforming; when it should be the other way around.

The idea that many of us have our priorities wrong was presented by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman in their ground-breaking 1999 book *First Break All the Rules*.

***"If you pay the most attention to your strugglers and ignore your stars, you can inadvertently alter the behaviours of your stars. Guided by your apparent indifference, your stars may start to do less of what made them stars in the first place and more of other kinds of behaviours that might net them some kind of reaction from you, good or bad."***

Peter Drucker famously quoted – "What gets measured, gets managed". It's also true that what gets recognised, gets repeated.

If we're not paying enough attention to our top performers, we're actually rewarding average performance and ultimately stunting business growth. A study published in *Personnel Psychology* in 2013 which cut across several industries, revealed that the top 5 percent of the workforce at the researched firms produced 26 percent of the firm's total output. That means that top performers have an incredibly high ROI because they produce more than four times more than average workers.

When we pay disproportionate attention to our stars over our strugglers, at best we underutilise our stars, and at worst, we actively drive them away.

Jen Shirkani, author of *Ego vs EQ* and *Choose Resilience* talks about what leaders do to unintentionally drive high performers away:

- ▶ We reward our high performers by leaving them alone; reducing their access to on the job coaching and feedback
- ▶ We give them the toughest projects; causing them to work long hours with high stress
- ▶ We have unrealistic expectations of them; because they continue to deliver to high standards with no complaint.

## 2 • We're not addressing under-performance quickly enough and this lowers the standard for everyone

Positive workplace cultures can be double edged swords. People who love where they work often do so because they love the people they work with. They have fun together. They respect each other. They consider each other friends, which is great on so many levels, and not so great when we need to address underperformance.

The Australian Government Fair Work Ombudsman classifies underperformance as one of four things:

- ▶ Unsatisfactory work performance (failure to perform duties to the standard required)
- ▶ Non-compliance with workplace policies, rules or procedures
- ▶ Unacceptable behaviour in the workplace
- ▶ Disruptive or negative behaviour that impacts co-workers.

A great friend of mine, Georgia Murch, author of *Fixing Feedback* aptly calls this... being a dick! (Classic!) Too often we let small things slide, because, well, they're small things. Mild

lateness; corridor back-chat; rolling eyes. But these small things stack up fast and pretty soon, we have the proverbial snowball.

Not addressing underperformance quickly enough is like letting someone with muddy shoes walk all over your pristine carpet. It's unsightly, difficult to clean, and often leaves a stain. If we wouldn't let someone muddy our carpet, why on Earth would we let disrespectful behaviour muddy our workplace environment?

Sometimes we forgive unacceptable or disruptive behaviour because we see these people as rainmakers. We think we can't do without them. But in fact, a (2015) Harvard Business School study by Michael Housman and Dylan Minor of more than 50,000 employees across 11 firms found that a superstar performer, one that models desired values and delivers consistent performance, brings in more than US\$5,300 in cost savings to a company. Avoiding a toxic hire, or letting one go quickly, delivers US\$12,500 in cost savings. In other words, these so called 'rainmakers' may make us more in revenue, but they cost us more too, cancelling out any reason for excusing poor behaviour.

Bek Chee, Global Head of Talent at Atlassian, the Australian software powerhouse, calls these people "brilliant jerks – people who are extremely bright and talented with respect to the way they execute their role but aren't necessarily concerned with the impact they have on others".

Atlassian's performance review system has changed to now place equal weight across three areas: job skills, impact on other team members, and living the company values. Atlassian says the change will "more fairly measure people on how they bring their whole self to work".

Our General of the Commonwealth of Australia – The Honourable David Hurley – told us that "the standard you walk past is the standard you accept". He was referring to unacceptable discrimination against women in the defence forces and was actively empowering the entire institution to make a stand for change.

Being a leader means not walking past. It means holding ourselves and others accountable to higher standards. It means stepping outside our comfort zones and empowering ourselves with the tools and language to nip underperformance in the bud.

### 3 • We invest time generating great strategic plans, but fail at implementation.

These days it's commonplace for leadership teams to have an annual strategy and planning cycle. To go on a retreat or take a day out of the office and ask questions about where they can gain market share, better manage costs, improve engagement, increase productivity, and make customers happier. This is all consolidated into a succinct one-page plan with measurable KPIs and launched proudly by the CEO and her team in a very exciting all-in meeting. Sometimes even with cake, a branded keep-cup or new colour lanyard. (Note to self... if you're not there... catch up!).

Some take it a step further and cascade KPIs throughout the business so that individual performance plans are clearly linked to the business plan. Alignment achieved – SNAP!

Then, it's back to the daily hustle and grind. Busy takes over. Fewer still actually use these plans as fuel for performance and make them part of regular conversations within and between teams.

Too many of us fall into the trap of investing time generating great strategic plans, only to fail at implementation.

A good test for whether your strategy plane has landed is to ask the newbie these questions:

- ▶ Do you know what our strategic priorities are this quarter?

---

- ▶ How do our strategic priorities align with our mission and vision as a company?

---

- ▶ What are the performance measures important to this business?

---

- ▶ How does your role add value and how do you measure your own success each day?

---

- ▶ How does what you do influence the success of the teams working around you?

If you're met with blank stares, you have your answer.

In an HBR Article *Turning great strategy into great performance*, Michael Mankins and Richard Steele report that companies typically realise only about 60% of their strategies' potential value because of defects and breakdowns in planning and execution.

In 2004 they surveyed senior executives from 197 companies worldwide. They discovered that the strategy to performance gap can be attributed to a combination of factors including:

- ▶ Inadequate resources

---

- ▶ Poorly communicated strategy

---

- ▶ Actions required to execute not clearly defined

---

- ▶ Unclear accountability for execution

---

- ▶ Organisational silos and culture blocking execution

---

- ▶ Inadequate performance monitoring

---

- ▶ Inadequate consequences or rewards for failure or success

---

- ▶ Poor or uncommitted leadership

Every single one of these blockers comes back to leadership. Leaders influence how well strategy is utilised as a force for driving high performance.

Failing to extract full value from your strategic plan is about as wasteful as planning and paying for your dream holiday and not actually taking it! The secret to success is not just setting a plan – it's implementing it.



# LEADERSHIP IS A LEARNED SKILL, SECOND IN DIFFICULTY ONLY TO RAISING CHILDREN



Just because you were once a child, doesn't mean you automatically know how to raise one. Similarly, just because you've been led, doesn't mean you know how to lead.

Nothing, literally nothing, compares to the most challenging and most important job in the world – raising children. And it's not just parents that understand this – aunts, uncles, teachers, nannies, cousins, friends – all experience their fair share. The second you think you have it all sorted, you've lost it again. That is because humans, particularly tiny ones, are unpredictable, uncontrollable, and infinitely creative in ways they come up with to reduce perfectly capable adult humans to puddles of raw emotion.

Many, many leaders are promoted to their position because they are great technical specialists and they're given people to add more value. They realise quickly they are ill-equipped to manage complex people dynamics and hardly want to admit it, well, because it's shameful to be promoted into a leadership role and not look like you know what you're doing!

The solution to all of this is to recognise where you are and commit to learning the skills that will take your team from simply functioning to fully flourishing, working daily at their performance edge and tackling complex problems with energy, grace and humour.

# ONLY INSPIRING LEADERS FOSTER HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS



## THE LEADERSHIP LADDER

The leadership ladder describes styles of leadership ranging from hostile leadership to inspiring leadership. A leader's behavioural style determines what they focus on when dealing with people, and impacts the effectiveness of their time investment – their 'effort-to-result

ratio'. The effort-to-result ratio is how much time a leader puts in with their people versus the results generated from that time investment.

Let's have a look at each of these, starting from the bottom up.

	Leadership style	Focus on	Effort to result ratio
Flourishing ↑	<b>INSPIRING</b> (visionaries)	Potential	1:10
	<b>SUPPORTIVE</b> (ask oriented)	People	1:5
Functioning ↓	<b>DIRECTIVE</b> (tell oriented)	Results	1:1
	<b>BUSY</b> (task oriented)	Action	5:1
	<b>HOSTILE</b> (dictators)	Control	10:1

### Hostile leaders:

Hostile leaders are a relic of the industrial era. They are dictators who rule by command and control because it makes them feel safe. People working with hostile leaders are too afraid to share their ideas or step outside the box, even if they know a smarter, more efficient way of doing things. It's safer to shut up and do as you're told. Ultimately this is ineffective because it requires the leader to micromanage every task putting in 10x the effort to produce a result. This style is actually a business liability, costing in lost productivity, turnover, disengagement, sick leave and even fair work claims.

### Busy leaders:

In contrast to hostile leaders, **busy** leaders are absent. They're focused on **action** and are **task oriented** – they are just too busy to get to you. They prioritise their customers, their superiors, their own task lists, before you. If you're a member of their team, your meetings get bumped, interrupted, or they just don't happen. This style is also ineffective because busy leaders are underestimating the talent in their teams, holding onto too much work, not delegating enough, and not gaining value from the people they have. Their effort-to-result ratio is more like a 5:1... they put in 5x the effort to produce a result.

### Directive leaders:

**Directive** leaders are **results** focused and **tell oriented**. They keep their eyes on the results necessary to achieve high standards and direct people by telling them what to do. If you produce results, you're slapped on the back. If you fail to produce results, you're just slapped! Directive leaders achieve a 1:1 ratio of effort to results. They are very capable at delivering a positive profit and loss report, but are quick to burn people out. While they may deliver returns, they incur hidden costs through sick leave and turnover.

### Supportive leaders:

Supportive leaders focus on **people** and are **ask oriented**. They prioritise people over results. They understand that an investment in people is an investment in the business. They spend time coaching and developing capabilities, asking questions to activate creative intelligence, and instil confidence in others. Supportive leaders have more engaged teams and gain better results for their efforts. For every hour they invest in people, they get 5x the result.

### Inspiring leaders:

Inspiring leaders go one step further than supportive leaders – inspiring leaders are visionaries. **They are not just focused on who you are – but on who you have the potential to be.** These leaders share purpose and ignite passion. For these leaders, we're capable of producing extraordinary results over sustained periods without burning out.

Inspiring leaders achieve a 1:10 effort to result ratio; they are light touch, with big impact.

An hour a week, sometimes just an hour a month, is all we need to stay focused, aligned, productive, engaged and innovative with these leaders.

Along your journey, have you worked for an inspiring leader? What did it do for your creative intelligence? Your energy? Your ability to sustain long periods of high performance? What did it do for your career? Your happiness? Your health?

In reality, the leadership ladder describes styles that all leaders adopt at different points to motivate people to do the work that must be done. But leaders who anchor their style in supporting and inspiring their people produce the most remarkable results through their teams. They are the leaders who transform potential. If you're a leader, the question you need to be asking yourself is, where do you spend the balance of your time across these styles of leadership? And if you're over investing in the styles that take more effort with less result, perhaps it's time for you to adopt The Leadership System.

# INSPIRE YOUR TEAM



Transforming your team from  
functioning to flourishing  
is a process of getting the  
leadership basics right and  
doing them consistently.

Liz Wiseman, author of *Multipliers: How the best leaders make everyone smarter* talks about two types of leaders – leaders who drain intelligence, kill ideas and sap energy. These are the diminishers of talent. Then there are leaders who amplify the smarts and capabilities of people around them. Who inspire employees to stretch themselves to deliver results that surpass expectations. These are multipliers.

I agree with Liz, and I think that the best leaders do more than just multiply talent.

They transform potential.

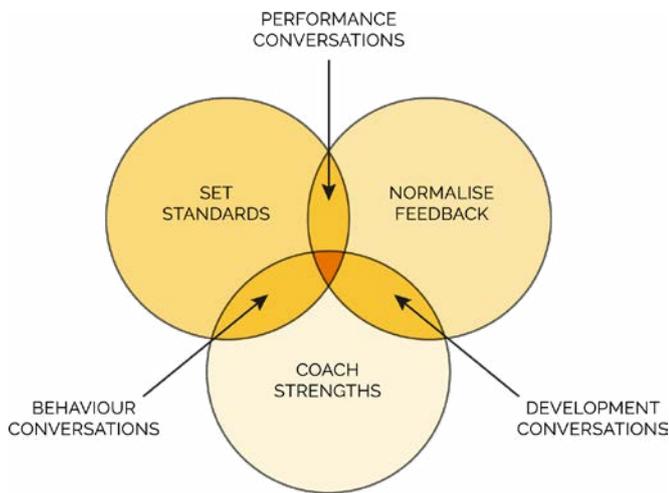
Like enzymes that act as catalysts for chemical transformations, inspiring leaders activate potential by leveraging talent in the pursuit of shared purpose.

And unlike diminishers who tend to soak up all the attention in a room and insert themselves into every decision, inspiring leaders make a big impact with less effort.

Transforming team potential is deceptively simple. There is a code and a formula to how it works.

- ▶ If you want to inspire your team to reach aspirational goals – set clear expectations
- ▶ If you want your team to be more accountable – normalise a culture of feedback
- ▶ If you want your team to continuously improve – coach and develop people's strengths.

## THE LEADERSHIP SYSTEM



The Leadership System is a perpetual process of building capability in your people and inspiring high performance in the service of the organisation's purpose. The system is a series of deceptively simple behavioural codes for unlocking performance through leadership. The only trick is mastering these codes as part of your leadership DNA and applying them consistently over time.

We are not born with these codes downloaded – leadership is a learned skill. How your team perform comes down to how you're leading them. If you're a Founder, a CEO, or a manager of people – ask yourself – how are you transforming potential?

### Set standards

Means exactly that – setting measurable benchmarks for performance that reflect the shared purpose and values of the organisation. High-performing teams set high standards for themselves and each other – they reach for stretch goals and targets that keep them working to their performance edge – the place where performance meets potential – where learning and growth occurs as a natural part of the performance process.

### Normalise feedback

Leaders who drive high-performing teams never miss an opportunity to reinforce positive results with positive feedback. In high-performing teams, feedback is seen as a gift because not only does it contribute to learning, it deepens trust and respect. In high-performing teams, feedback is normalised as a behaviour that is essential to meeting agreed standards. Feedback is both given well and received well because it's heavily weighted towards recognising positive effort and sharpening the application of strengths. When we normalise feedback, we create cultures where people are receptive to holding themselves and others accountable to results.

### Coach strengths

Coaches adopt an 'ask vs tell' mentality to activate the innate intelligence and creative problem-solving capabilities of their teams. They seek and appreciate individual strengths and put these strengths to work in helping people maintain their energy in the achievement of stretch goals. Leaders who ask are talent activators – they ask people to bring their best game and empower them to own their decisions, behaviours and ultimately their own results.

### The intersections

Powerful conversations are the glue that ties the entire system together.

## Performance conversations

When we set standards and normalise feedback, we are having performance conversations. We are objectively assessing whether people are meeting pre-set goals and standards. Individuals and teams shouldn't be left wondering how they are performing or how the business overall is performing. Objective, measurable data on performance needs to be easily accessible, communicated through the right channels, and discussed between managers and their teams.

## Development conversations

When we normalise feedback and coach strengths, we are having development conversations. We identify the development actions that enable ongoing learning and development in the role and support sustained high performance. Development conversations result in development plans aimed at fast-tracking an employee's professional and career progression. These plans are clear signals that a manager is actively seeking mutually beneficial outcomes both for the business and for their people.

## Behaviour conversations

When we coach strengths and set standards – we are having behaviour conversations. We highlight the behaviours that align with our organisational values and support achievement of our performance standards. Behaviour conversations are crucial to reinforcing that the company values are not just words on a website – they are standards that we live by and measure ourselves against because we know that these behaviours ultimately deliver the best outcomes for the business in the long term.

***When leaders continually set standards, normalise feedback, and coach strengths, they enable their people to quickly move through cycles of growth and amplify performance in a structured and supported way.***

Developing and embedding systems of leadership is both good for the employee and good for the business leader. Leaders who learn and systematically apply these behaviours create cultures of psychological safety – where it is safe to set and hold each other accountable to high standards in the shared interests of the individual, the team, and the organisation.



# WHERE TO FROM HERE



To learn how to transform  
potential in your business  
– talk to me about my  
leadership development  
program – **INSPIRE!**

**INSPIRE** is a program that develops leaders' capacity to transform potential and inspire high performance. The program is ideal for senior leadership teams who are collectively responsible for delivering results and scaling the organisation.

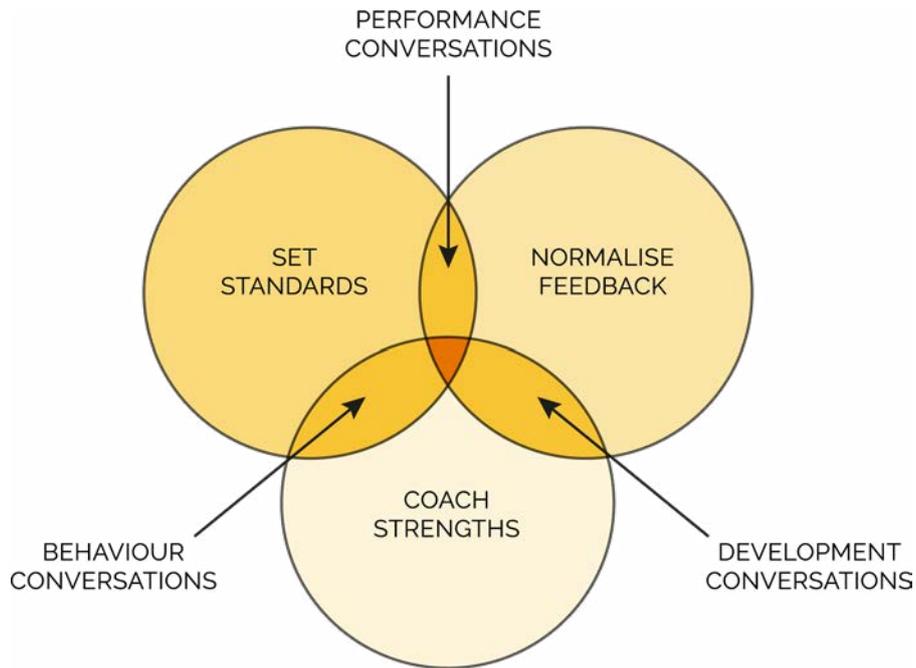
Through this program, leaders learn a system for leadership – a series of deceptively simple behavioural codes for unlocking performance. They learn how to:

- ▶ **SET STANDARDS** to inspire high performance and connect people to purpose
- ▶ **NORMALISE FEEDBACK** to create safety and a focus on results
- ▶ **COACH STRENGTHS** to develop capabilities and leverage natural talents

By combining these behaviours, leaders learn to have powerful conversations that tie the whole system together – performance, development and behaviour conversations.

By making these behaviours a regular habit, leaders gain a 1:10 effort to result ratio. That is, they gain 10 x the results from their leadership effort.

In addition, participating together as a senior leadership cohort means you will adopt the same language, habits and practices, effectively role modelling positive leadership behaviours to other leaders in the group and helping keep each other accountable to your shared standards and expectations.



### Program format

The program encompasses 4 x 3hr sessions and a 1-month post session follow up group coaching session to embed a system of habits and behaviours.

The table below provides a program breakdown for your organisation.

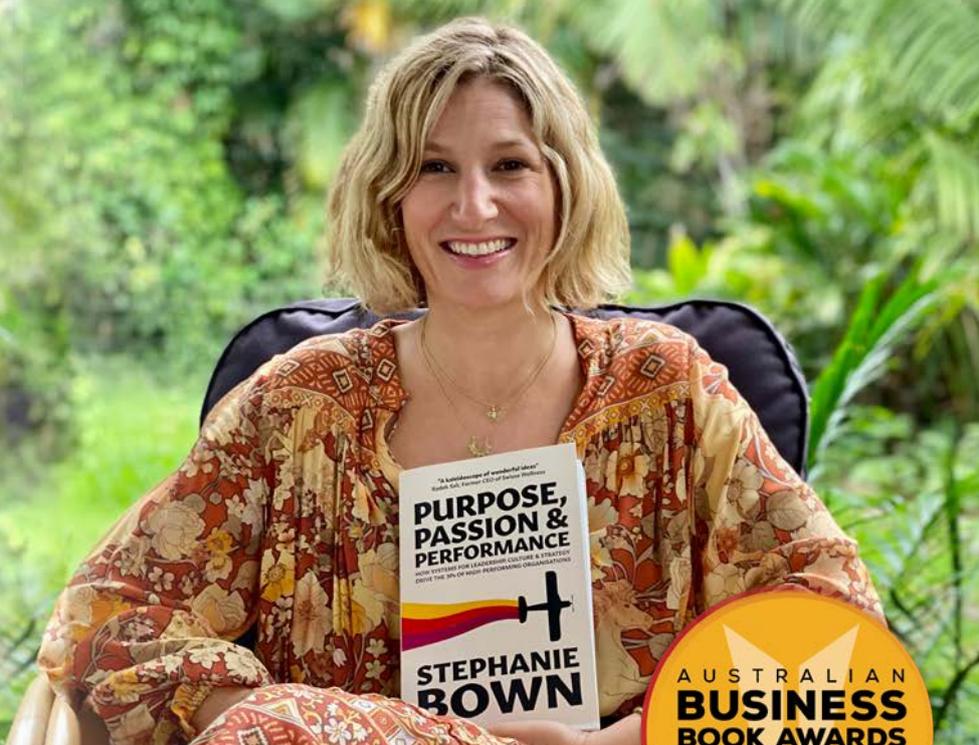
Session 1 (3hrs)	Session 2 (3hrs)	Session 3 (3hrs)	Session 4 (3hrs)
<b>Inspire High Performance</b>	<b>Normalise Feedback</b>	<b>Be a Coach</b>	<b>Leverage Strengths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Inspirational leadership</li> <li>▶ Your Purpose</li> <li>▶ SMART standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Get quality and quantity right</li> <li>▶ Learn AID for feedback</li> <li>▶ Feedback practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The mindset of a coach</li> <li>▶ GROW for coaching</li> <li>▶ Coaching practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The amplifier of strengths</li> <li>▶ Put strengths to work</li> <li>▶ High performance plans</li> </ul>

### Contact Stephanie

Email: [stephanie@stephaniebown.com](mailto:stephanie@stephaniebown.com) | Mobile: +61 439 044 940 | [stephaniebown.com](http://stephaniebown.com)  



# ABOUT STEPHANIE BOWN



Stephanie is a business performance specialist. She is obsessed with building workplaces where people thrive. Stephanie delivers talks, workshops and training sessions that lead to engaged, aligned, inspired teams!

She is the author of one of Australia's Top 3 leadership books in 2021 – ***Purpose, Passion & Performance: How systems for leadership, culture and strategy drive the 3Ps of high performing organisations.***

Having completed over nine years of tertiary education in psychology and organisation dynamics; as well as professional accreditations in validated psychometric tools; Stephanie has devoted her life to helping leaders create the conditions for thriving, high performing teams.

After 10 years as a management consultant at Australian based values-led firm Nous Group, Stephanie joined Australia's #1 supplement brand Swisse Wellness as their in-house Performance Partner. There, Stephanie was the architect of performance systems that supported the company through a rapid turnaround and record sale for AUD \$1.6 billion to Hong Kong listed Biostime.

In 2015, Stephanie relocated her family to Byron Bay, NSW, to start her own practice. Her purpose is to deliver life changing learning experiences.

## Qualifications & Accreditations

- ▶ Bachelor of Applied Science - Psychology and Psychophysiology, Swinburne University of Technology
- ▶ Honours in Neuropsychology, Swinburne University of Technology
- ▶ Masters of Organisation Dynamics, RMIT University
- ▶ Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
- ▶ Diploma of Positive Psychology
- ▶ Young Presidents Organisation (YPO) Certified Forum Facilitator (CFF)
- ▶ Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Personality profile tool
- ▶ Human Synergistics Life Styles Inventory (LSI); Organisational Culture Inventory (OCI), and Customer Service Styles (CSS)
- ▶ Genos Emotional Intelligence (EI) Accredited Practitioner

Stephanie Bown 

## References

- Buckingham, M. & Coffman, C. (1999). *First Break All the Rules: What the world's greatest managers do differently*. Simon & Schuster, USA
- 
- Bollas, C. (2018) *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*. Routledge, UK.
- 
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1975). *Beyond boredom and anxiety: Experiencing Flow in Work and Play*. Wiley, 2000, USA.
- 
- Edmonson, A. (2019). *The Fearless Organisation: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation and Growth*. Wiley, USA.
- 
- Housman, M. & Minor, D. (2015). *Toxic Workers: Working Paper 16-057*. Published online. Harvard Business School, USA.
- 
- Mankins, M., & Steele, R. (2005) *Turning Great Strategy Into Great Performance*. Harvard Business Review, July-August 2005 Issue.
- 
- Murch, G. (2016). *Fixing Feedback*. Wiley, Australia.
- 
- Shirkani, J. (2014) *Ego vs EQ*. Routledge, USA.
- 
- Pink, D. (2005). *A whole new mind: Why Right-Brainers will Rule the Future*. Riverhead Books, NY.
- 
- Wiseman, L & McKeown, G. (2010). *Multipliers: How the best leaders make everyone smarter*. Harper Business, USA.
- 
- World Economic Forum; *Future of Jobs Report, 2020*. Published online: [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Future\\_of\\_Jobs\\_2020.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2020.pdf)
-