



Nick Jankel

AUTHOR · FUTURIST

Senior leaders are asked to lead change, AI transition, and transformation continuously, often while still recovering from the last cycle. Most leadership development equips them analytically and leaves the harder part untouched: under pressure, the brain protects rather than adapts. The gap between leaders who can articulate the change and leaders who can land it is a human biology problem, not a strategy problem.

Nick Jankel works with senior executives and leadership teams to build the human capability behind change, AI transition, and transformation, drawing on the neuroscience-based Bio-Transformation® (BTX) methodology he developed at Switch On Leadership.

Nick Jankel's 2026 Biography

Why organisations work with Nick Jankel

- He works with senior executives as a peer rather than an outsider. His position lets him challenge leadership teams in the room and stay engaged across the programmes that follow, which is the difference between a keynote that lands and a keynote that fades by the next quarter.
- Bio-Transformation® (BTX®) is one of the few leadership frameworks built from medical science and philosophy of science rather than consulting practice. The argument that change fails when leaders apply machine logic to living systems is a defensible intellectual position, not a packaging exercise.
- His Cambridge Triple First in Medicine and Philosophy of Science, combined with twenty-five years applying the framework inside organisations, gives senior leaders a rare combination: a scientist's argument about human behaviour and a practitioner's instinct for what works in the room.
- Across roughly 250 executive leadership and transformation programmes for organisations including Unilever, Microsoft, HSBC, LEGO, Genentech, NHS, and Intel, the methodology has shaped the development of approximately 100,000 senior leaders and executives.
- His keynotes are designed as interventions: customised, experiential, and built to move leaders toward leading change, AI transition, or transformation, rather than simply describing why it matters.

Biography highlights

- Cambridge Triple First (summa cum laude) in Medicine and Philosophy of Science; clinical medicine at UCL
- Co-founder and CEO of Switch On Leadership, designer of executive

AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Moderating and Emcee
- Speaking

NICK'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Artificial Intelligence & Generative AI
- Change Management
- Executive Development
- Leadership
- Motivation and Inspiration
- Organizational Agility
- Resilience & Stress Management

LANGUAGES: English

leadership and transformation programmes for organisations including Unilever, Microsoft, HSBC, LEGO, Genentech, NHS, and Intel

- Creator of the Bio-Transformation® (BTX) methodology, a neuroscience-based framework for individual, team, and organisational change
- Roughly 250 executive leadership development and transformation programmes designed and delivered, shaping the development of approximately 100,000 senior leaders and executives
- Author of multiple books on leadership and transformation, including *Now Lead the Change* (2020) and *Switch On* (2014); work translated into Chinese
- Lectured at Yale, Oxford, London Business School, Sciences Po, and UC Berkeley; media coverage in the Financial Times, The Times, The Economist, and The Guardian
- Transformation coach on BBC and MTV television series; spoke at the Aspen Ideas Festival, Talks@Google, and The Economist Summit

Biography

Most senior leaders are now asked to lead change, AI transition, and transformation in parallel, often without the time to recover between cycles. The standard answer is to equip them with better strategy. The harder answer, and the one Nick Jankel has spent twenty-five years working on, is that under pressure most leaders default to protecting rather than adapting, and no amount of strategic clarity rewrites that biology.

Jankel arrived at this argument by an unusual route. He studied medicine and philosophy of science at Cambridge, graduating with a Triple First, before training in clinical medicine at UCL. He then moved into brand strategy at TBWA/Chiat Day on accounts including PlayStation and Nike. Bio-Transformation® (BTX®), the methodology he later built, draws on all three: a clinician's view of human systems, a philosopher's account of how knowledge changes under pressure, and a practitioner's understanding of how people actually choose.

As co-founder of Switch On Leadership, Jankel applies BTX through senior executive interventions, leadership team development, and enterprise-wide programmes for organisations including Unilever, Microsoft, HSBC, LEGO, Genentech, NHS, and Intel. Roughly 250 programmes and 100,000 leaders have been built around the methodology to date. He has explored the underlying ideas in books including *Now Lead the Change* (2020) and *Switch On* (2014), and lectured at Yale, Oxford, London Business School, Sciences Po, and UC Berkeley.

What separates his keynote work is the deliberate refusal to treat the keynote as a speech. The session is designed as an intervention, customised to a leadership group's actual change agenda and built to move people, not only inform them. The Financial Times, The Times, The Economist, and The Guardian have covered his work; he has spoken at the Aspen Ideas Festival, Talks@Google, and The Economist Summit, and hosted transformation-focused series for the BBC and MTV.

Key speaking topics

- Executive leadership development under pressure
- Leading change, AI transition, and transformation
- Neuroscience of organisational change and human adaptation
- Adaptive leadership and senior team capability

- Leadership for the age of generative AI
- Bio-Transformation® methodology and applied complexity science

Ideal for

- C-suite and senior leadership teams leading transformation, AI transition, or large-scale organisational change
- CHROs and Chief Learning Officers commissioning executive leadership development programmes at top-50, top-100, or top-500 leader scale
- Boards and executive committees seeking a science-backed perspective on why standard leadership development underdelivers in conditions of sustained pressure
- Innovation, transformation, and AI leads in regulated or complex sectors including pharma, financial services, and government

Audience outcomes

- Senior leaders leave with a working understanding of why their organisation's last change programme stalled at the human level, framed through the Control-and-Protect vs Create-and-Connect distinction at the heart of BTX®
- Practical tools for regulating stress responses and shifting leadership defaults under live pressure, applicable inside the room and after the event
- A shared language for naming the human dynamics of change at senior team level, so the work continues without him
- A clearer view of what generative AI specifically asks of leaders, distinct from what it asks of technology functions
- Visible movement, not only information: the session is designed to leave leaders ready to lead the next phase of change, not only to think about it

Nick Jankel's 2026 talks & topics

Leading in Peak Uncertainty: 7 Brain-Based Principles for Navigating Uncertain Times

A keynote that equips leaders with seven neuroscience-informed principles for reframing disruption, regulating stress responses, and combining analytical data with intuition under conditions of peak complexity.

Key takeaways:

- How the brain processes uncertainty and why standard leadership responses tend to make it worse
 - Seven practical principles for staying grounded, clear, and creative when conventional logic runs out
 - Techniques for combining data-driven analysis with intuitive judgment in high-stakes decisions
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Leading In VUCA++: Breaking Through BANI with a METTA Mindset

A keynote introducing the METTA Mindset framework – Malleability, Empathy, Transformation, Tetheredness, and Adaptivity – as a direct response to the brittle, anxious, and nonlinear conditions defining today’s operating environment.

Key takeaways:

- Why the VUCA model no longer captures the full complexity leaders are navigating, and what BANI adds
- How to recognize and interrupt defensive, stress-driven leadership patterns before they block adaptation
- How to apply METTA as a practical leadership orientation in real organizational decisions

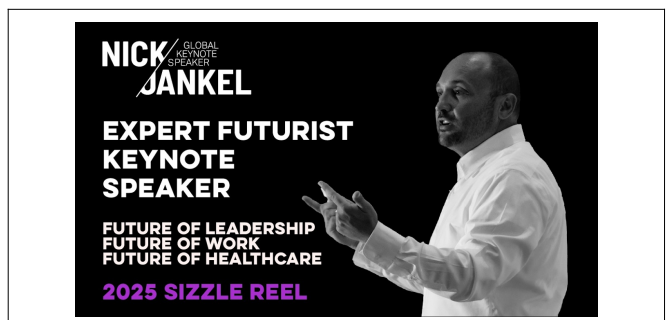
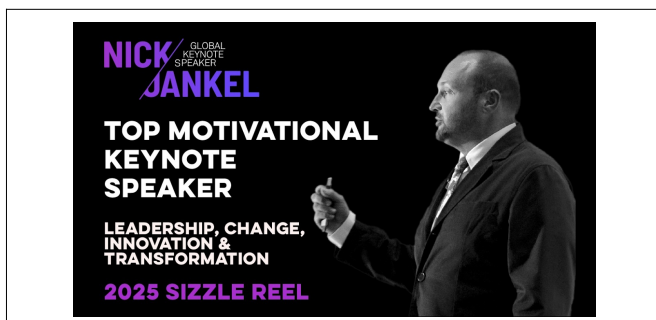
Future-Proof Your Org With Transformational Innovation

A keynote outlining a seven-step pathway for leading and embedding transformational innovation, building cultures that support experimentation rather than protecting established models.

Key takeaways:

- The distinction between incremental optimization and the kind of transformational innovation that changes business models
- A seven-step process for leading and landing innovation programs inside real organizations
- The cultural and behavioral conditions that separate organizations that experiment from those that only plan to

Nick Jankel's Videos



What Nick Jankel's clients say

A standing ovation! I am already sharing the insights with my leadership team. Thank you!

CEO, Unilever Health & Wellbeing Division

Nick transformed our event with an engaging and evocative talk that hit all the nails that we put out there. It set a perfect scene for the remainder!

Head of Marketing EMEA, Syngenta

An inspiring and eyeopening keynote. So helpful to regain trust that even in an unpredictable and rapidlychanging world, we all can succeed by changing ourselves, challenging our assumptions, reflecting, adapting, learning from mistakes, making creative responses, and acting fast.

CEO, Spar

Wonderful! The talk was motivating, thoughtful, and so well delivered. Many colleagues said they felt seen for the first time.

Director, McCormick & Co

Highlight of the 2-day conference and made it worth going to. Thought-provoking, insightful, and very enjoyable.

Director, Investment Bank

I saw the room go from a bit tired to very inspired. Totally engaging and fully immersive. You wouldn't want to miss a second of it. It was powerfully supercharged right from the start, felt across the auditorium.

VP Digital, Alfa Laval

Exactly what we wanted. Our CEO has been quoting Nick's thinking to our leaders.

HR Director, Oxford University

An eye-opener and also a “wake-up call” that these are unusual times and there is an urgent need to find a better way forward!

Senior Economist, Pfizer

Extremely thought provoking with a big challenge to me as a people manager to move from managing to leading!

Team Leader, Innovate UK

Very inspiring and clear, full of content not just a formula.

VP, Global Medical Affairs, Abbvie

Nick Jankel goes deeper and clearly made an impact on me and on others. Looking forward to seeing the seeds grow in my mind, heart and my organization.

Executive Vice-President, Merck

An inspirational speech about the coming transformation. Both the content and the delivery were really strong: relevant, clear, concise and powerful. I highly recommend Nick as a speaker.

Director, Rothschild & Co

A fantastic speaker with passion and enthusiasm, highly engaging and able to simplify complexity.

Commander, UK Ministry of Defence

Nick inspired us to work on ourselves as leaders and lead the change. The value of the transformation tool was spot on!

SVP, SAP

As a transformation guru, Nick's ideas are as relevant to the newest startup as they are to the oldest public company.

Head of White House Office Of Innovation, Advisor to President Obama

Innovative and expert speaker who knows well how to gain attention and inspire his audience.

Senior Project Manager, Sanofi

A very inspirational keynote.

EVP & CHRO, Assa Abloy

Nick's expertise on the subject of transformation is clear. He broke complex ideas into simple relatable concepts and did this in a highly compelling fashion. In particular, the way Nick correlated transformation, performance and diversity had a big impact on me.

Sales Director, CDW

Nick's passion for the topic brought everyone along with him and made the audience want to understand more..

Manager, Centrica

Nick makes you think about the important things. Put your head up, not down, particularly in difficult times!

CEO, ArcelorMittal

Happy, impressed and excited! I would like to take these thoughts and ideas into my organization to move forward with transformation and mindset shift.

Senior Innovation Strategist, Airbus UK

An outstanding framework and powerful tools. A huge impact!

President, Kellogg's

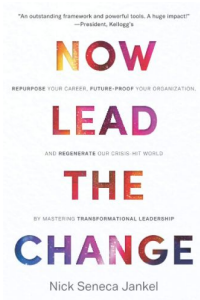
I consider myself a DEI champion and I had not heard anyone explain diversity challenges like Nick did.

Director, Association of Financial Markets in Europe

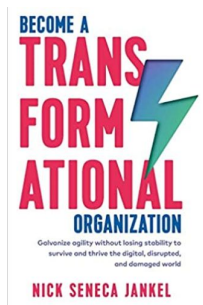
A very inspiring and thought provoking presentation.

COO, Astellas EMEA

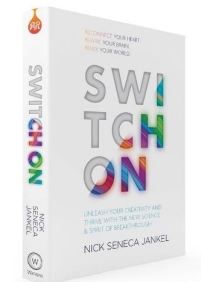
NICK'S LATEST BOOKS



Now Lead The Change



Become A Transformational Organization



Switch On: Unleash Your Creativity and Thrive with the New Science & Spirit of Breakthrough

ARTICLES AND PODCASTS



Unlocking Uncertainty



Four thought leaders share their top tips for innovation