

Deon Basson

Founder of reClnate | Chairman of Spatialedge

Keynote Speaker | Leadership Strategist | Extreme Endurance Athlete

 [LinkedIn Profile](#)

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Keynote: The Munga Mindset

Leadership Beyond the Limits of the known

Leadership begins where certainty ends - in the decisions, clarity, and resilience of people under pressure.

For example AI can support, accelerate, and scale business - but it cannot replace human leadership. The world today demands more than just data and automation. It requires real people to navigate ambiguity, lead under pressure, and make calls when the system doesn't give a clear answer.

In today's AI-driven world, where uncertainty impacts people deeply, true leadership blends empathy, clarity, structure, and foresight to guide teams with confidence.

This is where The Munga Mindset applies. The Munga is a five-day, 1,148 km ultra-endurance race across some of South Africa's most unforgiving terrain. It's unpredictable, punishing, and mentally demanding - much like the modern leadership environment shaped by rapid technological change.

In this compelling keynote, Deon Basson shares the mindset and mental models that helped him finish The Munga. He applies business-tested leadership to AI-era organisations with clarity, structure, empathy, and innovation

He will show a structured framework to equip leaders with tools for high-stakes conversations, clarity under pressure, and emotionally intelligent influence.

Through vivid stories and leadership-tested insights, Deon unpacks how individuals and teams can lead when the dashboards go quiet, the pressure mounts, and only mindset, awareness, and courage remain.

Audience Takeaways

1. Endurance lessons under extreme conditions in sport.
 2. Four principles to be successful in the Munga and AI
 - a. Strategic intent vs strategic plan.
 - b. Agile and Lean
 - c. High Agency
 - d. The importance of human relationships
 3. How decision making (especially micro decisions) influences the success of both
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Who This Is For

- Senior leaders and decision-makers navigating AI transformation
 - High-performance teams under pressure to deliver results
 - Leadership offsites, strategy sessions, and transformation initiatives
 - Organisations facing complexity, change, and ambiguity
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About Deon Basson



Deon Basson is an extreme endurance athlete and a seasoned executive and board member operating at the intersection of AI, leadership, and human performance. With more than 35 years of experience in technology, strategy, and high-pressure decision environments, his career has spanned technical roles, sales, sales leadership, executive leadership, CEO and Chairperson responsibility. This breadth gives him a full-spectrum view of how AI strategy translates into commercial and organisational reality. He serves as Chairperson of Spatialedge, the largest AI company in Africa, and is the founder of reClnate, a structured communication framework built to strengthen leadership judgement when complexity, data overload, and time

pressure are high. His work centres on a critical truth: AI changes systems quickly, but people still make the decisions that determine success in complex, fast-moving, and high-stakes organisational environments.

His perspective is shaped by what he calls The Munga Mindset, drawn from competing in The Munga, a five-day, 1,148-kilometre ultra-endurance mountain bike race across extreme and unforgiving terrain in South Africa. Riders must make continuous decisions while fatigued, uncertain, and under sustained stress, where small mistakes compound rapidly and consequences escalate quickly over time. This mirrors AI-driven environments, where leaders face accelerating information, incomplete visibility, competing priorities, and constant change. In both contexts, outcomes are shaped by the same capabilities: mental clarity, emotional control, disciplined judgement, and the ability to adapt without losing direction or strategic intent.

Deon works with leaders and teams navigating AI transformation to improve how they think, decide, and align under pressure. His focus is not on technology alone, but on the human decision-making that sits around it. He integrates systems thinking, data awareness, and emotional intelligence to help leaders remain clear, consistent, and effective when stakes are high and conditions are uncertain and evolving.

Through this work, Deon shows organisations how structured communication and sound judgement ensure that AI investments translate into real performance, rather than confusion or misalignment. When pressure increases and the margin for error narrows, it is the quality of human decisions and alignment that determines whether AI delivers its promised value. His work reinforces the principle that while AI can enhance capability, leadership clarity and communication remain the decisive factors in sustained success over time and at scale.

Speaking Requirements

- Audio and video will be played from Deon's Windows laptop
- Microphone and screen required
- Recording permission: Approved

Testimonials

"If you're leading a team and haven't done this, you're already behind the curve."

- VP Operations, AI Product Company

"Our leadership team got unstuck fast. Culture, trust, and performance all improved."

- Chief People Officer, Global Software Business

“This isn’t feel-good leadership talk. It’s clear, direct, and gets you back in control.”

- CEO, Applied AI Company