PRE-EVENT BRIEFING PACK · 2026

NEURODIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

A practical primer for HR, L&D and event leaders building the business case for a neurodiversity keynote — designed to be circulated, skimmed and used internally before the booking conversation.

PREPARED BY

Theo Smith
Neurodiversity Keynote Speaker

CONTACT

neurodiversityspeaker.co.uk

THE CONVERSATION HAS MOVED FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION.

Up to one in five professionals identifies as neurodivergent — dyslexic, autistic, ADHD, dyspraxic, or another cognitive difference. Most organisations still hire, manage and promote through systems designed for a narrow band of brains, which means capability is being filtered out at exactly the moment it's needed most.

Four shifts driving the urgency

01 **The talent gap is structural, not cyclical.**

Roles demanding pattern recognition, sustained focus, abstract reasoning and creative problem-solving are growing faster than the talent pool. Organisations that learn to hire and retain diverse talent gain access to capability their competitors silently filter out.

02 **Boards are asking sharper questions.**

"Are we missing people?" is now a board-level conversation. The answer your HR function provides shapes retention, recruitment and reputation in measurable ways.

03 **Legal expectations are tightening.**

Workplace accommodation duties are evolving across the UK, EU and US. The organisations getting ahead are doing so because they want to — not because regulation forced their hand.

04 **The audience is ready.**

Internal feedback consistently shows employees want their organisations to talk about this, and to do something about it. A keynote that lands well is often the catalyst that converts conversation into action.

What a great keynote actually does

Three things, in order: it shifts the assumptions people walked in with, it gives the audience a shared language they can use the next morning, and it creates the political cover for the real work — hiring redesign, leadership development, policy change — to begin.

THREE OUTCOMES WORTH BOOKING A KEYNOTE FOR.

Event organisers and HR leaders typically commission Theo with one of three specific outcomes in mind. Each one shapes the format, the framing and the follow-through.

01 **Re-energising a stalled D&I conversation.**

Theo's talks land because they reframe neurodiversity around capability and performance, not deficit. That reframe gives leadership teams a new starting line, and gives D&I work that had plateaued a credible reason to move forward.

02 **Creating common ground across the organisation.**

From C-suite to frontline managers, audiences leave with the same vocabulary and the same questions. That alignment is frequently more valuable than any single training module — it makes the next twelve months of work measurably easier.

03 **Building confidence inside HR and Talent teams.**

Theo spent 17+ years inside talent functions before keynote speaking full-time. His talks give your team specific things to act on rather than feel-good principles. People leave with a plan, not just a feeling.

What Theo won't do

Deliver a generic awareness talk. Lean on jargon. Talk down to the audience. Or leave the room without a clear sense of what changes on Monday morning. The brief always starts with the audience and the outcome — not the slides.

TALKS THAT EVENT ORGANISERS BOOK MOST.

Each can be delivered as a 30–60 minute keynote, a fireside conversation, a panel moderation, or a 90-minute interactive workshop. All are tailored to your audience — Theo briefs himself thoroughly on sector, context and the outcome you want the audience walking out thinking.

KEYNOTE · 45 MIN

WHY MOST HIRING SYSTEMS MISS GREAT PEOPLE

How traditional recruitment filters out the very capabilities organisations say they need — and what to redesign first. Practical, evidence-led, and directly useful for any HR or Talent function reviewing its hiring architecture in the next twelve months.

KEYNOTE · 30–60 MIN

NEURODIVERSITY AND THE FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP

What the next decade of work demands from leaders, and why diverse talent is central to performance — not a side initiative. Lands particularly well with senior leadership audiences, board-level events, and strategy offsites.

KEYNOTE · WORKSHOP AVAILABLE

THE HIDDEN WORKFORCE YOUR ORGANISATION IS MISSING

A practical look at the talent already inside (and adjacent to) your business that current systems silently exclude. Best suited to HR conferences, recruitment summits and internal Talent Acquisition events.

Custom commissions

For sector-specific events — financial services, tech, public sector, healthcare, education — Theo also commissions bespoke keynotes built around your audience and the change you want to start. Get in touch with the brief and he'll come back with a proposal.

THE SPEAKER, IN SHORT.



Theo Smith is an international keynote speaker, LinkedIn Top Voice, and award-winning co-author of Neurodiversity at Work (Kogan Page) — written with Professor Amanda Kirby and winner of the Business Book Awards.

Before keynote speaking full-time, Theo spent 17+ years leading talent acquisition across health, tech and education sectors. That operating-side perspective is what audiences pick up immediately: he speaks the language of HR, recruitment and L&D leaders because he sat in those chairs.

His new book, Designed for Humans, extends the work into the future of hiring and leadership in the age of AI.

Theo has delivered keynotes for global organisations and conferences including EY, IBM, LinkedIn, Zalando, Hello Fresh, Canada Life, the Government of Jersey, the University of Bocconi, and the United Nations.

- **LinkedIn Top Voice** · Neurodiversity & Future of Work
- **Business Book Awards Winner** · Neurodiversity at Work (Kogan Page)
- **17+ years** · senior talent acquisition leadership
- **Author** · Neurodiversity at Work & Designed for Humans

IN THE WORDS OF THE PEOPLE WHO BOOK SPEAKERS.

> “ Theo brings a rare mix of clarity, depth, and energy. He reframes neurodiversity as a source of capability and performance — accessible and actionable, with strong impact on the audience.

Dainius Baltrušaitis
Organisational Psychologist · LinkedIn Top Voice
HR Week Europe — multiple conferences

> “ Theo helped deliver the UN World Autism Awareness Day 2023 and did a stellar job. I can highly recommend Theo as a speaker, moderator and panelist for any wide audience.

Professor Charlotte Valeur
FTSE Chair · Non-Executive Director
United Nations — World Autism Awareness Day

> “ One of the only speakers who only ever scores the highest score in our feedback — a perfect score every time. Hugely knowledgeable, high-energy, and always evolving.

Natasha Preocanin
Managing Director
In-house Recruitment (IHR)

> “ Theo is an outstanding speaker. He connected with our audience on the topic of neurodiversity and ignited a deeper conversation. There were so many questions that we ran out of time for Theo to answer all of them.

Gayle Murdoch
Senior Vice President
Canada Life

> “ Theo, I don't know where to start. He's one of the most influential DE&I leaders and speakers out there.

Yasar Ahmad
Global VP
Hello Fresh

FROM ENQUIRY TO STAGE, SIMPLY.

When you enquire, the five things that help most

- ☐ **Audience.** Who's in the room, how senior, and what they already know about the topic.
- ☐ **Context.** What's happening in your organisation right now — a launch, a strategy pivot, an awareness month, an offsite.
- ☐ **Outcome.** What you want the audience thinking, saying or doing the day after.
- ☐ **Format.** Keynote, fireside conversation, panel moderation, or interactive workshop.
- ☐ **Logistics.** Date, location, audience size, virtual or in-person, AV setup.

The booking process

1. **Enquire**
   Submit the form at neurodiversityspeaker.co.uk. Theo replies personally, usually within one working day.
2. **Brief call**
   A short discovery call to scope the audience, the outcome, the format and the wider event context.
3. **Proposal**
   A written proposal with confirmed format, customisation, deliverables and investment.
4. **Pre-event preparation**
   Content tailoring, slide review and AV requirements — handled with Theo's team in the weeks before.
5. **Delivery & follow-up**
   Theo stays available for audience Q&A and provides post-event materials your team can re-use.

READY TO TALK?

neurodiversityspeaker.co.uk

linkedin.com/in/theosmithuk

Typical reply within one working day · Fees on request · Available globally · In-person & virtual