



DASAN AHANU

Award-winning Poet

National Performing Artist & Speaker

Cultural Strategist & Educator



Dasan Ahanu is an award-winning poet, performance artist, cultural strategist, and educator based in Durham, North Carolina. A highly sought-after speaker and facilitator, he is known for his ability to blend powerful storytelling, creative insight, and strategic clarity to help organizations reimagine how they lead, communicate, and build culture.

A dynamic voice across both corporate and nonprofit sectors, Dasan delivers keynote talks and workshops on topics such as organizational leadership, effective communication, storytelling, imagination-driven design, and culture-building. He brings a poetic perspective to practical challenges, empowering teams and leaders to engage with vision, purpose, and innovation.

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Dasan is the founder of The Vonsson Group (TVG), a creative consulting agency that partners with organizations and institutions to deepen connection, expand capacity, and build impact through human-centered, imagination-driven design. At TVG, he leads “imagination work” that uses art and culture as a foundation for creative problem solving, strategic planning, and community engagement.

In addition to his consulting work, Dasan is the co-founder and managing director of Black Poetry Theatre, serves as a visiting lecturer at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Nasir Jones Fellow at the Hip Hop Archive and Research Institute at Harvard University. In 2023, Dasan was named the Piedmont Laureate for Poetry. Dasan has performed across the country, published five books of poetry, and been featured on national radio, television, and in numerous publications.

CLIENT LIST



Culture-Driven, Performance Always: The New Leadership Equation

Culture isn't a perk—it's your competitive advantage! In the pressure-cooker of modern business, where innovation and agility are non-negotiable, the most competitive edge you can invest in is the environment you create.

In this keynote presentation, Dasan will invite you into a bold new leadership conversation: one where culture isn't an afterthought, it's the driving force behind sustainable performance, radical creativity, and resilient teams. Blending artful insight, real-world strategy, and human-centered design, Dasan unpacks how leaders can unlock collaboration, amplify trust, and spark innovation across their organization.

Backed by imagination work and a deep commitment to community-minded frameworks, this session offers practical, high-impact strategies to help leaders turn cultural alignment into measurable business outcomes.

Clients Will Leave With:

- A new framework for leadership rooted in human-centered, imagination-driven thinking
- Tangible strategies for embedding trust into your company culture to reduce internal drag and friction
- Tools to transform collaboration from surface-level teamwork to true cross-functional synergy
- An understanding of creative leadership that balances vision, empathy, and execution
- A roadmap for cultural alignment that fuels productivity, brand integrity, and long-term growth

Heard, Seen, Understood: Speak the Culture YOU Want to Build

Communication is more than talking—it's the art of connection.

Are team members talking past each other? Do your new hires struggle to find their place in the team dynamic? Is cross-departmental collaboration more transactional than transformational?

Communication is how trust takes root. How energy moves from an idea to action. In this vibrant keynote, Dasan invites you to reimagine communication not as a task, but as a craft. Whether you're leading a team, navigating organizational change or trying to build a culture that resonates—how you communicate is how you lead.

This keynote reminds us that when people feel heard, seen, and understood, they become more engaged, more courageous, and more committed. And in a workplace where people feel heard, valued, and seen...is where the magic (and the metrics) happen.

Clients Will Leave With:

- Understand communication as a creative and cultural act
- Reflect on personal communication styles and their ripple effects
- Learn to listen deeply and respond with intention
- Explore how storytelling brings vision, values, and teams into alignment
- Shift from transactional exchanges to transformational conversations

Make Room for Wonder: Using Imagination to Redesign the Way You Work

Imagination isn't a luxury—it's a leadership tool. In this transformative keynote, Dasan Ahanu invites participants to embrace imagination as both method and mindset.

This session is part inspiration, part activation. Drawing on the creative frameworks that guide The Vonsson Group, Dasan explores how imagination can be used to chart direction, build capacity, solve challenges and dream boldly in real time. Whether you're designing systems, leading teams, or shaping your own personal path, the power of imagination is the game-changer.

Through interactive exercises, reflective storytelling, and generative conversation, participants will reconnect with their creative instincts and learn how to turn vision into momentum.

Clients Will Leave With:

- Reflective Storytelling and Personal Mapping
- Design Thinking Through a Cultural Lens
- Collaborative Exercises in Imagination and Possibility
- Exploration of Creative Strategy for Professional Growth



The Work Between Us: Cultivating Connection, Culture & Collective Power

Your mission matters—but it's your culture that moves it. At the core of every nonprofit is a mission, but it's the work between us—the relationships, trust, and shared commitment—that turns intention into impact. In this powerful and reflective keynote, poet and cultural strategist Dasan Ahanu explores how nonprofit leadership must go beyond structure and strategy to embrace connection and culture as the foundation for collective success.

Drawing from his lived experience in community organizing, arts leadership, and education, Dasan weaves story, insight, and actionable guidance to illuminate how “leading from behind” and cultivating a culture of care can foster stronger teams, deeper collaboration, and mission-aligned innovation. This is leadership that listens, builds, and believes—in people, in purpose, and in the possibilities between us.

Clients Will Leave With:

- A deeper understanding of how trust accelerates execution and lowers organizational costs
- Tools for meaningful engagement across teams
- Insights on how narrative and lived experience can drive leadership effectiveness
- Strategies to cultivate meaningful connections and shared responsibility across teams
- A framework for community-minded leadership that inspires innovation and resilience

Speak the Story, Shift the Room: The Art of Narrative Impact

Stories don't just entertain — they move people. They stir emotion, shift perspective, and shape what's possible. In this immersive keynote, Dasan Ahanu explores storytelling as a force that can transform rooms, teams, and cultures. The right story, doesn't just communicate—it connects, clarifies and catalyzes action.

As a nationally recognized poet, educator, and creative strategist, Dasan brings the craft of storytelling to life with authenticity, humor, and presence. This session is a guided creative journey that blends performance, reflection, and active participation to help individuals and organizations harness the power of narrative for real-world impact.

Whether you're leading a team, advocating for a cause, inspiring change, or strengthening culture, this session will give you the tools and confidence to speak the kind of story that can shift the room.

Clients will experience:

- Personal Story Mapping
- Interactive Writing and Performance Exercises
- Group Sharing and Discussion
- Feedback and Creative Refinement
- Visioning Through Narrative Frameworks

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