

Ash Alexander-Cooper

Former Elite Military Unit Commander; Leadership and Resilience Expert

“Ash is one of the most experienced Special Operations soldiers of his generation and has learned these lessons of resilience the hard way! His stories are so inspiring, and it is an honour to call him a friend.” – Bear Grylls

Ash Alexander-Cooper OBE is a former specialist military unit colonel in the British Armed Forces, world-championship athlete and award-winning international musician. During a 22-year career, Ash became one of the most operationally experienced officers of his generation, spending 82 months deployed leading some of the world's most elite forces in complex and hostile environments, including the Balkans, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Recognising that companies today experience parallels to what he and his colleagues faced in combat, Ash now helps businesses and leaders develop the skills, mindset, and behaviours necessary to adapt and win.

Leadership & Resilience. Given his expertise in cross-functional collaboration and knowledge sharing within large, international, and geographically dispersed organisations, Ash is skilled in bringing people together to create resilient, high-performing and adaptable teams built on a strong culture of trust and empowerment. Citing stories from his military, business, and sporting careers, Ash shares effective strategies to help clients maximise their potential.

Business Strategy & Change Management. Since retiring from government service, Ash has advised clients across multiple continents in sectors including multi-national healthcare, mining, energy, finance and retail. He established elite advisory services and leadership development firm McChrystal Group's European practice before joining ground-breaking data analytics company Palantir Technologies, where he focuses on developing international strategic partnerships. He maintains a passion for entrepreneurial thinking, additionally advising a number of innovative start-ups and is a non-executive director of geopolitical advisory firm Gatehouse Advisory Partners.

Geopolitics & Relationship Building. Ash has worked as a speechwriter and drafted strategic defence and policy documents for both British and Afghan governments. Between 2011 to 2014, Ash was a senior special advisor to the Afghan Ministry of Interior leading responses to high-profile terrorist attacks. He is credited with the design and implementation of the Afghan National Crisis Response Strategy, now enshrined in national policy. He also spearheaded the training and development of indigenous units tasked with the country's most critical national security missions.

Peak Performance & Teamwork. The fundamental importance of teamwork has been a recurring theme in Ash's life. Whether singing on the international stage as a child, representing his country in multiple sports, becoming a counter-terrorist helicopter pilot and jungle survival instructor, or joining the renowned Brigade of Gurkhas, the requirement to build trust, demonstrate empathy, and harness the diverse skills and experience of every team member has proved to be of paramount importance.

Charity & Non-Profit. Shot and wounded multiple times during combat missions, Ash is a passionate charity campaigner focusing on initiatives which support those who continue to bear the mental or physical scars of their service. To that end, Ash is an ambassador for the charity Remembered and its 'ThereButNotThere' campaign; a Combat Stress Centenary Appeal board advisor and an advisory board member and mentor for PROMOTE, a non-profit organisation, whose mission is to transform the way leaders mentor and develop the next generation. Ash is also an associate with the Center for Empathy in International Affairs.

International Honours. Among his international honours and awards, Ash was appointed MBE by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2012, OBE in 2015 and is the recipient of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's Medal of Honour and Service, as well as a U.S. Bronze Star Medal and Army Commendation with 'V' Device [for Valor].

Engaging Keynote Speaker. Ash is a regular contributor to international conferences, panel discussions, and media content for businesses and charities. Whether your focus is leadership, resilience, adaptability, teamwork, wellness, mental health, diversity, or culture, Ash is an honest and engaging speaker, drawing on a diverse range of life experiences and proven skills to motivate and inspire. He also enjoys connecting with the audience for lively Q&A.