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'Become the Best Version of Yourself!' Corporate performance culture in a Swedish sportswear company

While corporate performance cultures involve us in extensive systems of lofty stretch goals, continuous feedback and elaborate support schemes, they are nothing without dreams and desire. They promise us that the future is wide open; that there are no limits; that, as long as you do what it takes, the impossible is possible. In this paper, I will draw on my ethnographic fieldwork in the medium-sized Swedish sportswear company Björn Borg to discuss how performance cultures thrive on a libidinal economy of dreams and desires to maximize employee commitment and performance. In such work regimes, task-specific goal achievement is framed as a mere partial ingredient of the job. Increasing emphasis is put on personal goals set to help employees realise their dream and become the best version of themselves – not just more productive, but smarter, fitter, stronger, better, and more likeable. As this framing and exploitation of lust and dreams and the future comes to replace and co-exist with conventional notions of duty and responsibility, I conclude by asking what this may hold for the future of work and capitalism.