



Mercer Marsh Benefits™ (MMB), a global leader in the health and benefits marketplace has been through a period of fast growth through mergers and acquisitions.

Paul Hollingdale, Sales & Development Leader, told me how the Stand Out programmes are winning hearts and minds, and uniting teams.

Solution Cell:

Mercer and Solution Cell have been working together for many years; how did that background support the development of the Stand Out programmes?

Paul Hollingdale:

We have been working together for over a decade and Solution Cell were already working with Marsh (another Marsh McLennan business) prior to our collaboration. Solution Cell really understand our industry, the common challenges we face and nuances in the ways of working. More importantly, you know our culture, you know our business, and there is a lot of trust and mutual respect that has built up over the years.

Solution Cell:

How has the design of these programmes differed from previous projects?

Paul Hollingdale:

The projects we worked on together in the early days were quite tactical. We (Mercer) would identify a skill gap and Solution Cell did a good job of delivering a programme tailored to that particular need.

When JLT, Jelf, Mercer and Thomsons Online Benefits came together under MMB, it was important for us to take a step back and be clear about who we were and what it meant to be a client of MMB, and what it meant to work for MMB. Our business became a more strategic partner for our clients and our relationship with Solution Cell responded to that shift.

The approach for the development of the Stand Out programmes for Leaders and Consultants was consultative and collaborative from the start. Although Solution Cell knew our business well, we almost started with a blank sheet of paper. No assumptions were made, and the result is two programmes that are unique, designed for the business we are today, to help our leaders and consultants achieve the ambitions we have for the future.

Solution Cell:

What did a move to a more strategic relationship mean in practical terms for the programme design?

Paul Hollingdale:

We invested our time, not developing a programme but going through an in-depth Discovery, finding out what might be holding us back and what we needed to do to achieve the longer-term goals we had for the business. We took some time out with Solution Cell to ask some difficult questions.

Going through that kind of comprehensive Discovery can be quite uncomfortable for the leaders involved. It's almost having to put your hands up and say, 'We haven't got everything right'. That can feel like a dangerous thing to do; but it worked. It gave us a detailed picture of where we were and gave us space and a solid foundation to build a clear view of what good looks like and where we want to be.

Solution Cell:

We are still in the early stages of delivery, what impact have you seen so far?

Paul Hollingdale:

The programmes start with a self-assessment against the framework of 'what good looks like', so everyone has the same reference point for what they're aiming for. There's no ambiguity. Knowing the benchmark and having the ability to prioritise growth areas for your development has an immediate cognitive effect.

A key goal for us is to nurture and reinforce the values and behaviours that release the benefits of a 'One MMB' business for our clients and teams. Collaboration and teamwork have been positive outcomes that we are seeing already.

"Very well presented and engaging. I have a great group and feel I can ask questions if required."

Tracy Walker, Team Leader

People have come together from four different businesses with different experiences and company cultures. They are given the opportunity to be vulnerable and honest with themselves and each other. The response to this has been admirable.

"I was delighted to be put forward for the 'Stand Out Leadership' programme. The training was delivered to an exceptional standard based on a sound knowledge of our business, our goals and priorities. For me, some of the most meaningful learnings have been: flexing my leadership style for all and

communicating with impact. In addition to the training, I have thoroughly enjoyed working with my peers that I wouldn't otherwise get to work with. This has not only increased my knowledge of the wider business, but it has also greatly expanded my internal network, which will no doubt benefit MMB."

*Nicola Saltman,
Principal and Growth
Consulting Team Leader
Large Corporate*

Solution Cell:

The feedback from participants is excellent. What is driving the response?

Paul Hollingdale:

We know we have a huge amount of talent in the business, and we want to invest in those individuals to help them be the best versions of themselves in their current and future roles.

"Lots of immediate practical tips to apply straight away."

*Martin Dearman
Mid-market Consulting
Leader*

We have worked hard to integrate the Stand Out programmes with each other (Leadership and Consultant), into performance reviews and existing development programmes. Participants are also bringing existing projects into sessions to tackle challenges with colleagues using the tools they're being introduced to.

"Good debates in breakout rooms with current real-life examples to help apply learning."

*David Croker
Head of Pension Consultancy
Darwin Consulting*

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“They are given the opportunity to be vulnerable and honest with themselves and each other. The response to this has been admirable.”

“They're not training courses; they are enablement programmes”

The Stand Out programmes are practical, they're challenging intellectually, and they provide tools and tips that can be applied with immediate effect. The positive feedback we're getting is not surprising me at all. As I started seeing the programmes come together, I got excited about what people were going to experience by being on this journey. They're not training courses, they are enablement programmes.

"I feel motivated to lead our teams into 2022 and beyond, and to continue to collaborate with my colleagues across the business."

*Nicola Saltman
Principal and Growth Consulting Team Leader
Large Corporate*

A note from our executive sponsor

"I have personally been delighted to see the positive impact of our MMB Stand Out programmes this year. Our vision was to bring together talent from across the business to nurture and reinforce the values and behaviours required to achieve our growth ambitions. It's been great to see such positive feedback from this year's cohorts and I look forward to seeing how the programmes progress in 2022. It's been great to have a long-term partner like Solution Cell who really understood our objectives with us on the programme."

*Tony Wood, Senior Partner
Region Leader & Managing Director,
Continental Europe*



Laura Hands
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solutioncell

Our purpose in life is simple: we help people change their behaviour.

Solution Cell is a specialist management consultancy, helping clients get the best from their people. We look at ALL the ingredients that impact behavioural change. We are with our clients for the whole journey, from initial thinking, through embedding and measurement.

Based on the client's needs, we deliver knowledge and develop skills covering leadership, management, negotiation, customer service, presentations, account management and sales techniques. We have vast experience helping technical experts who do not view themselves as traditional salespeople but need commercial skills to excel in their roles.

Our clients receive a truly bespoke solution that resonates with teams and then we help coach and reinforce the programme to ensure new skills are embedded and long-term behaviour change is achieved.

If you would like to speak with us in person contact one of our team on:

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