



**TERRY DYSON**  
Commercial director

**MATTHEW JOHNSON**  
Director of HR

HSB - a Munich Re company - is a leading specialist engineering and technology insurance and engineering inspection services provider.

## We talked with Commercial Director, Terry Dyson, and Director of HR, Matthew Johnson, about the 2025 Ambition and why they're not content being 'good enough'.

**Solution Cell:** What is the 2025 Ambition and how has it affected the strategy?

**Terry Dyson:** When I joined HSB at the end of 2019, we published the 2025 Ambition; a long-term strategy which gave everyone a clear view of the growth aspirations for the core business and highlighted opportunities that should be prioritised as we grow.

From the outset, we recognised that our people are our most valuable asset, and we must remain vigilant in maintaining our focus on them, and our investment in them. With their contribution playing a critical role in the strategic ambition, it was important to determine what we needed to do to help them. We undertook a review of everything we were doing.

As you would expect, there were improvements that we could make technically: better systems, product knowledge, better processes; these were things we could take care of internally.

We also knew we could improve how our teams engaged with our customers. We had some technically gifted, highly intelligent people, but were they always asking great questions? Were they actively listening to the responses and demonstrating understanding and empathy? Did they know our

value proposition and were they able to articulate it in a way which helps build thriving business relationships? We decided we needed to work with someone on these aspects, and this was the backdrop to the partnership with Solution Cell.

*"Solution Cell is a company who is genuinely interested in us, and not simply in selling us a training programme."*

*Matthew Johnson*  
Director of HR

**Solution Cell:** Terry, you had worked with Solution Cell before, so you already knew and trusted our approach. How easy was it to engage the rest of the HSB leadership team?

**Terry Dyson:** When you work with Solution Cell, engagement and collaboration are part of the process – it's part of the deal. You don't turn up one day and get put onto a training course. Even through the early stages of discussions with Solution Cell, we were thinking about and planning the involvement of our leaders.

They were vital contributors to the Discovery phase. Having worked with Solution Cell before, I knew how impactful this opportunity would be for our leaders'

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own development, not to mention the benefits of having their expertise help shape the programme.

*“An engaging session that contained some real nuggets of wisdom. I enjoyed the interactive nature of the workshop and felt I had some solid take-aways.”*

#### *Head of Quality and Technical Excellence*

**Matthew Johnson:** The approach taken by Solution Cell was very different to anything I had come across before; there was no suite of courses to choose from, it was almost starting with a blank canvas.

I remember feeling some trepidation at the enormity of that task and then very quickly that changed. As we went through the Discovery and collaborated with colleagues and Solution Cell in different ways, we were soon gaining interesting insights about the capabilities within the team and a much clearer view of where we were and where we wanted to get to.

I enjoyed the process and found it very enlightening. As someone who hadn't been in the business long at that time, it helped me quickly learn a lot about us as well.

**Solution Cell:** You named the programme ‘Stand Out To Win More’, what does that mean to you?

**Terry Dyson:** We started with a great foundation. The business was in a good place, strong and growing and we had an experienced and skilled team; but we weren't happy to settle, and we wanted our people to stand out against the competition in all their interactions.

When we talk about winning, we're not just talking about winning new business, but winning in terms of better interactions with our customers, winning by learning how we can cross-sell more effectively, winning by raising our game across everything we do.

Consistently, what wins in our industry is service and customer experience. We're constantly checking in with our customers on what is important to them and what will make HSB stand out against the competition.

**Solution Cell:** What would your advice be to anyone embarking on a transformation programme?

**Terry Dyson:** Good engagement at all levels is critical to the success of any transformation programme, so finding ways of achieving and maintaining it is important. We've talked about engaging our leadership team already and it was through their involvement that we were able to make sure HSB terminology and real-life examples were consistently used throughout the programme. It seems a small thing, but when you're introducing lots of new skills and tools, familiarity and recognition helps the 'new' feel less intimidating.

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“When you work with Solution Cell, engagement and collaboration are part of the process – it's part of the deal. You don't turn up one day and get put onto a training course”

The preparation work is vital, constant reiteration of key messages during the programme is equally important as are the senior leaders visibly demonstrating support and involvement.

**Matthew Johnson:**

Clarity of purpose and getting the positioning right from the outset helps achieve early adoption and will save a lot of time and effort later, potentially having to deal with challenges or resistance to change.

**Terry Dyson:** Get comfortable with the idea that there might not be a finish line. We

are lucky to have found a partner in Solution Cell who is growing with us on this journey. As we reach certain goals, we never just sit back. We continuously review what we're doing well and how we can keep improving. Always prioritising our customers: finding ways to help their businesses thrive, being proactive about understanding what they need from us, and enhancing their experience of working with HSB.

Accept that you won't bring everyone with you. Change isn't easy. When you go through a transformation, there will always be some people who don't want to go in the new direction you're taking the business, and that's OK. In some cases, we found new roles within HSB that better suited the skills and ambitions of those individuals.

**Solution Cell:** Having reached a milestone in the development journey aligned to the 2025 Ambition, what results are you seeing?

**Terry Dyson:** While we can't attribute this solely to the development programme because there are always external factors that are difficult to measure the impact of, we ended the year of 2022 with double digit growth in our insurance and engineering fee businesses, we won our largest ever customer in 2022, and we have moved on significantly in key partner relationships.

Within our teams we are seeing new levels of curiosity and an openness to the possibility of developing stronger business partnerships, and that is driving great outcomes.

*"Fantastic, really enthused after the session, a lot to put into practice and will really help in my job."*

*Senior Trading Underwriter*

**Matthew Johnson:** It is rewarding to see tools from the programme being used by the teams. Anyone who has ever invested in 'training' will admit that it is unusual to see widespread behavioural change and new techniques and tools becoming part of the way people operate. I was talking to somebody last week who was part of the leadership programme. He was explaining some of the skills he learned and how he is using them to adapt his style to better suit the audience for internal presentations and is now getting better traction and engagement from people. The impact of a programme that really works is far reaching.

**Terry Dyson:** Our employee engagement scores have increased as have our customer satisfaction scores.

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A hugely positive outcome which wasn't factored into the plans is an uplift in our employer brand. People are hearing about what we're doing, and they are contacting us to find out what opportunities there are to join us.

Having once felt like an inconceivably distant goal, the 2025 Ambition is very much within our reach.

**Solution Cell:** With such positive results from the work you have done, what's next?

**Matthew Johnson:** We have an exciting opportunity to further embed the skills learned as well as the tools that were created collaboratively through the first stages of the journey. I

see these tools being used at a variety of touchpoints throughout someone's employee journey at HSB, from recruitment, through coaching and development, and career progression.

I'm looking forward to partnering with Solution Cell on the next phase of this development journey and, moving forward, onto the next organisational goal.

**Terry Dyson:** HSB isn't an organisation that likes to stand still, especially when we can see we have done something well. We challenge ourselves, we're constantly asking, 'How can we be better?'

So, we have more work to do with Solution Cell to embed the changes we have seen and build on the improvements that have been realised. As you would expect, that work sits alongside other important development programmes such as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and so much more. We are just getting started.



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