



JO RAZZAQ
VP HR International
Global Head of Talent Management

IFS, global leader in Industrial AI, is committed to empowering their leaders and driving organisational growth

We spoke to Jo Razzaq, VP HR International/ Global Head of Talent Management, about the innovative IFS leadership framework and how this global software leader is empowering managers, driving innovation and growth, and achieving measurable business outcomes.

Solution Cell: With over 7000 employees operating in some 90+ countries around the world, what were the main drivers for introducing a new leadership framework?

Jo Razzaq: The request came from our Executive Board. There was a strong desire to have more clarity and greater insight into where our talent sits across the organisation, from top performers to those needing more help. We needed an enterprise-level view of our talent. So, we started looking at what we had in place, identifying gaps, and building a talent framework. This was based on work already being done in some functions within our business. We took best practices from those areas and scaled them.

Solution Cell: What were your top priorities in the development of the framework as a business enabler?

Jo Razzaq: We built the IFS talent framework, Aspire to Thrive, to include goal setting, regular one-to-ones, talent assessment, succession planning, promotions, performance improvement, and development

planning. From the outset, our overarching goal was to give the business a robust leadership framework, not an HR process. Aspire to Thrive helps our leaders make informed, data-driven decisions about our talent and people.

Once built, we needed to tool it. Of course, being a software company, we used our own product, working with our R&D and IT functions to tool it in a way that works for our business.

We knew a critical piece was to enable our leaders to own this. Changing the mindset around performance management was crucial. So, we built a thorough enablement plan to scale it across 800 managers and leaders.

Solution Cell: How important was the launch session for the overall success of the implementation of Aspire to Thrive?

Jo Razzaq: A successful launch session was vital. It signalled that something new was coming and that

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managers were going to own it. We emphasised accountability and the launch session focused on leadership expectations rather than process. It was the start of the whole enablement series and framework.

Managers have a tough job, balancing their own responsibilities with managing teams. We wanted to highlight that effective management is crucial for career progression and team development. It's not just an HR mantra; it's essential for organisational growth. This was a stake in the ground for us.

Solution Cell: What made you decide to partner with Solution Cell for the launch?

Jo Razzaq: Having experienced working with Solution Cell and seeing their facilitation at the IFS sales conference earlier in the year, I was confident about choosing them as a partner for this project. It was impactful, highlighting accountability and small actions that make a big difference. The engagement and feedback were excellent. I knew Solution Cell understood our fast-paced, dynamic environment and could handle any pushbacks and queries we might get.

Solution Cell: How was your experience working with Solution Cell this time?

Jo Razzaq: It was so easy to work with Solution Cell. The team were professional, experienced and knowledgeable. They quickly understood our goals, came back with a suggested plan and worked collaboratively with our internal talent development function, making the process smooth.

Solution Cell delivered high-quality content, including tailored modules and supporting materials, within extremely tight deadlines. This launch session for 800+ managers was oversubscribed, and Solution Cell adapted in real time making the session interactive and impactful despite its brevity. The speed and quality of their contribution was phenomenal and their ability to operate as an extension of our team was instrumental in the success of our project.

Solution Cell: What feedback have you received from participants who attended the launch?

Jo Razzaq: The feedback from our managers and leaders was overwhelmingly positive. They appreciated the investment and engagement, and many asked for a longer session, which speaks to the value delivered.

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“The speed and quality of their contribution was phenomenal and their ability to operate as an extension of our team was instrumental in the success of our project.”

“Really good content and interesting session with effective interactive breakout sessions.”

“Great session and really important for people managers.”

“Great session. Valuable information and enthusiastic facilitation that kept my interest.”

Participant feedback

Solution Cell: What advice would you give to a colleague to help them optimise the value of partnering with Solution Cell on a similar initiative?

Jo Razzaq: Trust the team and be open about what you're trying to achieve; approach the partnership as a true strategic collaboration. Solution Cell really took the time to understand our aims, even when we were still shaping the project.

They worked collaboratively with our internal teams, adapted quickly to tight deadlines, and were flexible when things changed.

For us, that trust and partnership made all the difference, especially with a project that was high-profile and moving at pace.

Finally, I'd emphasise the importance of clear, decisive communication. Solution Cell matched our decision-making speed, which was essential for maintaining momentum and delivering a successful outcome.



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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.

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