

Insurance Australia Group Limited

Insurance Sector, International Presence, Iconic Brands, and Complex Challenges



“I was able to share how I was feeling”

THE APPROACH

IAG began using The Leadership Circle Profile just over five years ago, beginning with its CGU business. As Peter explains:

“We needed to understand our own personal motivations, the things that made us tick, and a way to open ourselves up to being more vulnerable. If we were to be a truly collaborative, inclusive leadership team – we needed to understand each other, our souls, and then how we might behave and impact others.”

Peter and his leaders found the tool “incredibly helpful”, and introduced it to more parts of IAG’s businesses.

“Thousands of our colleagues have gone through the assessment. They have engaged in programs that have helped tease out important learnings.”

“I think one of the reasons I was such an early convert was it provided me with an amazing piece of self-learning that I found, at times, quite confronting.”

“Sometimes I would say, openly and clearly: ‘I’m, actually, quite concerned about this for the following reasons’. But at least I was able to share how I was feeling about it. We’d unpack that, address it and move on.”

THE CHALLENGE

Insurance Australia Group Limited (IAG) is Australia and New Zealand’s largest general insurance company and has operated in this country for more than 165 years.

As well, IAG has operations in India, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia.

IAG employs almost 15,000 people, writes about \$12 billion in insurance premiums a year and has a current market capitalization of around \$13billion.

Under its umbrella are some iconic brands, including NRMA Insurance, CGU and WFI.

Through an arrangement with IMA, it also shares in underwriting the RACV brand.

IAG’s workforce has remarkably long tenure and the organization is focused on its purpose: making the world a safer place for its customers.

However, IAG managing director and CEO Peter Harmer says that, during this past decade, leaders in several of the company’s businesses had found themselves confronted with complex challenges.

THE IMPACT

The Leadership Circle has benefited IAG leaders, its businesses and the organization as a whole. As Peter explains:

“It’s an incredibly valuable tool. Going through this supported process, together as a team, we were able to support one another and clearly understand each other’s vulnerabilities.”

“It’s like (Chinese philosopher and military strategist) Sun Tzu said: ‘The quickest way to disarm your enemy is to hand him your sword’. When you ask people for help, they’re so willing to contribute. They feel privileged being able to help.”

“Having our most senior leaders share their stories – not only with colleagues, but also direct reports – gave vulnerability a place in the organization, which has strengthened our efforts to drive the leadership change, the cultural change, that we needed to see in our organization. The ripple effects have been enormous.”

Peter says The Leadership Circle Profile has allowed individuals and teams to get to the heart of matters more quickly.

“You’ve got this common language and a common framework. It’s all supportive, there’s no politicking. There’s no making sure somebody’s going to be okay if I raise an issue that might otherwise be a little bit offensive or intrusive. You’re just able to cut through things so much faster.”

“You are able to say: ‘You know what, I don’t know’, and that’s okay because someone else will. In this way, you can avert a lot of missteps, but you can also cut to the chase much faster.”

THE RIPPLE EFFECTS HAVE BEEN ENORMOUS

“For an organization going through change or disruption – or simply trying to become more nimble, more flexible, more agile, more responsive to changing customer needs – I would encourage you to do The Leadership Circle Profile.”