# Insurers refresh senior ranks with technical hires and regional chiefs ahead of 2026



The insurance sector’s late‑summer job market is proving busy, with established carriers, specialist underwriters and MGAs refreshing leadership lines as they chase growth, geographic expansion and new product opportunities. The appointments range from newly created technical roles to regional chief executives and internal promotions that shift founders into strategic oversight — a signal that firms are balancing direct underwriting muscle with broader distribution and product bets ahead of 2026.

Hiscox has created a Group Head of Technical Claims role and named Matthew Budd to the post, a move the company says will strengthen its capacity to handle complex, high‑value losses as it expands internationally. According to a Hiscox press release, Budd — who joined from AIG and has previously held senior claims positions at Talbot Underwriting and XL London Market — brings 36 years’ claims experience and will be based in London reporting to Group Claims Director Steve Parry. The appointment, announced on 14 August 2025, is presented by the insurer as part of efforts to bolster technical claims capability and support its growth ambitions.

In regional broking, Howden has added a well‑known sporting figure to its South Wales team, appointing former Wales and British & Irish Lions player Dafydd James as Business Executive. Speaking on his appointment in the Insurance Edge report, Dafydd said he was “thrilled to be joining Howden’s team in South Wales” and cited the firm’s local presence combined with a global footprint as key attractions. Howden said James will cover South Wales, the South West and the group’s global offices, supporting risk strategy across cyber liability, marine engineering, aviation and renewables.

Bridge Specialty International has strengthened its Asian leadership with the appointment of Abhishek Chhajer as chief executive for its regional platforms. Bridge Specialty’s announcement states Chhajer took up the role on 1 August 2025 and will run Acorn International Network in Singapore and act as a director of Capstone Insurance Brokers in Hong Kong from his Singapore base. The company highlighted his 25 years in banking and insurance and said the move underlines Bridge Specialty’s strategy to deepen its specialty presence across Asia; co‑founder David Ong will step into a chairman role while remaining active in the business.

PIB Group’s Acquinex business has also been the focus of senior reshaping as it seeks to capitalise on recent market momentum. Reinsurance News reports that Josh Cowen joined as CEO on 18 August 2025 from Chubb, where he led international transactional risk, and that co‑founders Chris Jackson and Chris Thompson will move into new group roles — Jackson overseeing Specialty MGA strategy and Thompson leading product development across PIB’s MGA businesses. The changes are being framed as part of a wider push to scale Acquinex and integrate it into PIB’s specialist portfolio, alongside hires for Heads of UK W&I and Title.

Davies, the professional services and technology firm serving insurance and regulated markets, promoted Richard Barke to lead its Insurance Solutions division in a move the firm said will strengthen its operational leadership and technology investment. Announced in mid‑August, Davies described Barke — formerly CFO at the Davies‑owned Asta and with prior experience at AIG, Aspen and KPMG — as charged with shaping the division’s growth strategy and supporting underwriting, outsourced operations and compliance services to syndicates, MGAs and insurers.

Chubb has reconfigured its surety leadership with two internal promotions aimed at aligning global strategy and North American execution. The company announced on 11 August 2025 that Steve Haney was elevated to President and Chief Underwriting Officer of Global Surety, with executive responsibility for strategy, underwriting and P&L across the franchise. Teresa Black was promoted to Division President of North America Surety to succeed Haney and will oversee North American operations and the region’s P&L. Chubb framed the appointments as moves to strengthen global surety capability while maintaining disciplined underwriting and client focus.

Finally, Blenheim Underwriting has scheduled a high‑profile casualty hire for the start of next year, naming Alex Stratton‑Thomsett as Casualty Underwriter with effect from 8 January 2026. Reinsurance News and the Insurance Edge report that Stratton‑Thomsett, who brings some 25 years’ casualty market experience including a lead US casualty role at MS Amlin, will work alongside senior casualty underwriter David Barber to expand the MGA’s casualty account. Barber was quoted as saying the appointment “marks a significant step forward in the expansion of our casualty MGA book” and framed it as confirmation that Blenheim’s independent model continues to attract established underwriting talent.

Taken together, these moves underline a dual theme across the sector: firms are hiring deep technical and regional expertise to support product and geographic expansion, while also repositioning senior founders and executives into roles that prioritise group strategy and scalable distribution ahead of the new year.

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://insurance-edge.net/2025/08/18/job-moves-and-senior-hires-18-08-2025/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://insurance-edge.net/2025/08/18/job-moves-and-senior-hires-18-08-2025/), [[2]](https://www.hiscoxgroup.com/news/press-releases/2025/14-08-25)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://insurance-edge.net/2025/08/18/job-moves-and-senior-hires-18-08-2025/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://insurance-edge.net/2025/08/18/job-moves-and-senior-hires-18-08-2025/), [[4]](https://bridgespecialtygroup.com/news/bridge-specialty-international-appoints-abhishek-chhajer-as-chief-executive-officer-of-asian-business/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://insurance-edge.net/2025/08/18/job-moves-and-senior-hires-18-08-2025/), [[5]](https://www.reinsurancene.ws/acquinex-bolsters-senior-leadership-team-with-appointment-of-josh-cowen-as-ceo/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://insurance-edge.net/2025/08/18/job-moves-and-senior-hires-18-08-2025/), [[6]](https://www.reinsurancene.ws/davies-names-richard-barke-as-ceo-of-insurance-solutions-division/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://insurance-edge.net/2025/08/18/job-moves-and-senior-hires-18-08-2025/), [[3]](https://news.chubb.com/2025-08-11-Chubb-Announces-Key-Leadership-Appointments-in-Suretys-Global-and-North-America-Businesses)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://insurance-edge.net/2025/08/18/job-moves-and-senior-hires-18-08-2025/), [[7]](https://www.reinsurancene.ws/blenheim-underwriting-appoints-alex-stratton-thomsett-as-casualty-underwriter/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://insurance-edge.net/2025/08/18/job-moves-and-senior-hires-18-08-2025/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.hiscoxgroup.com/news/press-releases/2025/14-08-25> - Hiscox announced on 14 August 2025 that Matthew Budd has been appointed Group Head of Technical Claims. Budd brings a 36‑year claims career with experience across multiple lines, joining from AIG where he led aerospace claims, and having held senior roles at Talbot Underwriting and XL London Market. Based in London, he will report to Steve Parry, Group Claims Director, and lead the Group’s technical claims operations to support growth and deliver innovative customer solutions. The release highlights his breadth of experience with complex, high‑value claims and positions Hiscox to strengthen its market‑leading claims capability as it expands globally further.
3. <https://news.chubb.com/2025-08-11-Chubb-Announces-Key-Leadership-Appointments-in-Suretys-Global-and-North-America-Businesses> - Chubb issued a statement on 11 August 2025 announcing leadership changes within its Surety businesses. Steve Haney was promoted to President and Chief Underwriting Officer of Global Surety, gaining responsibility for strategy, underwriting and P&L across the global operation. Teresa Black was promoted to Division President of North America Surety, succeeding Haney and assuming executive oversight and North American P&L responsibility. Both appointments are effective immediately. The release outlines their extensive industry experience, reporting lines to Juan Luis Ortega and Paul McNamee, and emphasises Chubb’s intention to strengthen global surety capability while maintaining disciplined underwriting and client focus in markets.
4. <https://bridgespecialtygroup.com/news/bridge-specialty-international-appoints-abhishek-chhajer-as-chief-executive-officer-of-asian-business/> - Bridge Specialty Group published an announcement on 14 August 2025 naming Abhishek Chhajer as Chief Executive for its Asian business. Chhajer will serve as Chief Executive at Acorn International Network in Singapore and Director at Capstone Insurance Brokers in Hong Kong, having assumed the role on 1 August 2025. The release highlights his 25 years’ experience across banking and insurance in senior management and underwriting. Based in Singapore, he will lead growth across Asia from those two platforms. David Ong will step down as CEO to become Chairman. The appointment supports Bridge Specialty’s strategy to deepen its regional specialty presence.
5. <https://www.reinsurancene.ws/acquinex-bolsters-senior-leadership-team-with-appointment-of-josh-cowen-as-ceo/> - Reinsurance News reported on 18 August 2025 that Acquinex appointed Josh Cowen as Chief Executive Officer. Cowen joins from Chubb, where he was Senior Vice President, International Transactional Risk, and has held roles at Aviva and AIG. The article states co‑founders Chris Jackson and Chris Thompson will move into new roles within PIB Group: Jackson overseeing Specialty MGA strategy and Thompson leading product development across PIB’s MGA businesses. It also notes Henry Pearson was named Head of UK – W&I and Matthew Andrews appointed Head of Title, underscoring Acquinex’s leadership strengthening and PIB Group’s ambitions for growth and future expansion plans.
6. <https://www.reinsurancene.ws/davies-names-richard-barke-as-ceo-of-insurance-solutions-division/> - Reinsurance News published on 12 August 2025 that Davies has promoted Richard Barke to Chief Executive Officer of its Insurance Solutions division. Barke, previously Chief Financial Officer at Asta (a Davies company), brings over twenty years of experience including roles at AIG, Aspen and KPMG. In his new position he will lead operations and shape growth strategy across Davies’ Insurance Solutions business, working closely with the global leadership team to advance technology investment and innovation. The announcement highlights Davies’ focus on building distribution capability, supporting syndicates, MGAs, brokers, insurers and captive owners with underwriting, outsourced operations and compliance expertise globally.
7. <https://www.reinsurancene.ws/blenheim-underwriting-appoints-alex-stratton-thomsett-as-casualty-underwriter/> - Reinsurance News reported on 15 August 2025 that Blenheim Underwriting has appointed Alex Stratton‑Thomsett as Casualty Underwriter, effective 8 January 2026. Stratton‑Thomsett, with 25 years of casualty market experience including a lead underwriter role for US casualty at MS Amlin, joins Blenheim to collaborate with senior casualty underwriter David Barber to expand the MGA’s casualty account. The article highlights his prior tenure working alongside Barber at Chaucer for fourteen years and notes the appointment as part of Blenheim’s strategy to attract top underwriting talent to strengthen and grow its casualty MGA offering within the specialist Lloyd’s market in the marketplace.