

Westfield Specialty to add new lines as it targets \$250mn GWP in 2022

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From a standing start last summer Westfield Specialty has already bound \$100mn in gross written premium (GWP) and is targeting \$250mn for 2022, its first full year of underwriting, as it looks to add several new lines of business, *The Insurer* can reveal.



The specialty insurer was launched in July 2021 as a new unit of Ohio-based super-regional carrier Westfield Group, and is led by former Sompo International CUO and global insurance CEO Jack Kuhn.

Kuhn made the move to set up Westfield Specialty after a brief stint with Bermudian start-up Vantage Risk.

Talking to this publication, Kuhn highlighted the significant traction in the build-out of Westfield Specialty, which is now an organisation of almost 100 employees.

Westfield Specialty's executive leadership team appointments

Hire		Location
	Tony Chimera, chief talent officer	Alpharetta, Georgia
	Krista Glenn, chief claims officer	Alpharetta, Georgia
	Ray Hannan, chief of corporate underwriting	Berkeley Heights, New Jersey
	Brad Kass, chief operations officer	New York
	Mike Master, chief pricing actuary	New York
	Manoj Jain, CIO	New York







In addition to assembling his senior executive team, the bulk of the hires so far have been frontline underwriters, underwriting assistants and other supporting roles.

Senior underwriting hires include Joe Rainone and Steven Parker to lead the E&S excess casualty team; Dan Wadley, Jeff Kulikowski and Dennis O'Connell to head up professional lines; Fred Cooper and Brian Finnegan to head up financial institutions; Ray Ash to lead management liability; and Andy Hendrix to lead E&S property.

Executive team hires include Tony Chimera as chief talent officer, Ray Hannan as chief of corporate underwriting, Brad Kass as COO, Mike Masters as chief pricing actuary, Manoj Jain as chief information officer and Krista Glenn as chief claims officer.

Kuhn said the platform is now focused on building out other areas including its information technology, claims operation and modelling capabilities.

Westfield Specialty select senior UW hires

Business line	Executive	Position	Previous
E&S Property	 Andy Hendrix	EVP – E&S property	Argo
E&S Excess Casualty	 Joe Rainone	EVP – excess casualty	Vantage/Sompo International
	 Steve Parker	SVP – excess casualty	Vantage/Axis
Financial Lines	 Fred Cooper	EVP – financial lines	Vantage/Sompo International
Professional lines	 Dan Wadley	EVP – professional lines	Sompo Pro
Cyber/E&O	 Jeff Kulikowski	SVP – E&O/cyber	Sompo International
Financial Institutions	 Brian Finnegan	SVP – head of FI	Arch
Management Liability	 Ray Ash	SVP – head of management liability	Sompo International

Source: *The Insurer*, company announcements

Cross-cycle profitability

Westfield Specialty is currently underwriting in five lines of business: E&S property, E&S excess casualty, financial institutions and Westfield Pro – which includes cyber and professional liability – and commercial management liability.

But while the insurer is looking to add more lines this year, Kuhn said there is not a defined blueprint of what those lines will be or exactly how the ultimate underwriting portfolio will be constructed.

“We’re looking to probably add another two or three lines of business, but it depends on finding the right talent and whether it’s the right opportunity,” said Kuhn.

“It’s always been about finding opportunities, whether that’s bringing in top level teams, or looking at acquisitions and seeing how they fit within the overall portfolio,” he continued.



“It’s about building a portfolio of profitable businesses that can really generate a profit through the entire cycle. That’s why I want people that are underwriting-centric and really focus on the profitability of the portfolio and not about having the biggest scale”

Westfield Specialty president Jack Kuhn

And he emphasised that the core driver of the business will be focusing only on opportunities that have a clear path to sustainable profitability, rather than the pursuit of top-line growth.

“It’s about building a portfolio of profitable businesses that can really generate a profit through the entire cycle. That’s why I want people that are underwriting-centric and really focus on the profitability of the portfolio and not about having the biggest scale,” the executive said.

Asked about current conditions and the longevity of this phase of the pricing cycle, Kuhn cautioned against market-wide generalisations.

He also said the carrier would not take a blanket approach to the market.

“You have to look at each line of business you’re in, because they’re on different paths in the cycle. The problem is when you start saying to your underwriters: ‘There will be no premium reductions at all, you can’t go below flat.’

“You can have something that’s priced extremely well but underwriters are following orders from the guy in the corner office saying no premium reductions. We’re getting a sense that some companies are starting to do that, and that leads to opportunities for us,” he commented.

At Sompo International, Kuhn grew the insurance division from \$450mn of P&C business when he joined to \$3.1bn of P&C business when he left.

Kuhn said he is proud of the accomplishments at Westfield Specialty so far, but also focused on continuing to build a substantial and profitable platform.

“We are nearing the one-year mark at Westfield Specialty and I am very pleased with how we have built out our business, talent and brand. We will continue to focus on opportunities to provide business solutions to the specialty market and broaden our expertise, delivery and scope.”

Selective MGA support

Although the main focus is on building out its in-house underwriting capabilities through individual hires, talented team additions and M&A where it makes sense, Westfield Specialty will also selectively consider providing its capacity to MGAs.

As previously reported, M&A insurance specialist Euclid Transactional announced last month it had added capacity from Westfield as well as Hudson Insurance Group to its North American program.

“That was important for diversification and they’re a well-respected MGA that has close alignment to our underwriting culture and practices,” said Kuhn. “That line of business is very specialised and a lot of infrastructure is needed to compete and understand the risks you’re taking.”

“Jay [Rittberg] and co have invested quite a bit in their own platform and that’s why we felt pretty good about aligning with them, because they have a very strong and profitable track record,” he continued.

While Westfield Specialty will consider other opportunities like that, “it’s not a primary focus for us as we are building out our portfolio”, said Kuhn, with the emphasis instead on finding the right underwriting teams to put in-house.