



Hamish Taylor

BUSINESS LEADER

Most large organisations recognise that their next move has to come from outside their own industry playbook. They struggle to do anything with that recognition. Internal teams default to peer benchmarks, customer research that confirms existing assumptions, and innovation pipelines that produce incremental product features rather than reframed propositions.

Hamish Taylor is a former CEO of Eurostar and Sainsbury's Bank who helps organisations rebuild their customer proposition by deliberately importing ideas from outside their sector.

Hamish Taylor's 2026 Biography

Why organisations work with Hamish Taylor

- Operator authority across three unrelated industries at CEO level: aviation brand at British Airways, cross-border rail at Eurostar, and retail banking at Sainsbury's Bank, all reached before he turned 40.
- A specific innovation method, not a generic call to think differently. The "Masterthief" approach pairs a defined business problem with an unrelated sector that has already solved a structurally similar problem, then translates the mechanism back.
- Concrete cross-sector transfers he can talk through end to end: yacht interior designers brought into British Airways cabin design, Disney queue management applied to airport experience, rugby refereeing brought into banking risk and compliance.
- Senior advisory standing that matches the room. Chairs the EMEA advisory board for Emory University, Non-Executive Director of Chartered Brands, Trustee of the Robert T Jones scholarship, and recipient of Emory's Sheth Distinguished International Alumnus Award.
- Works the full audience range, from board and CEO level to frontline operating staff, with the same material translated for each layer rather than a single fixed deck.

Biography highlights

- Former CEO of Eurostar Group, having joined as Managing Director of Eurostar (UK) Ltd in 1997 with a remit to reverse heavy losses.
- Former CEO of Sainsbury's Bank, the joint venture between J Sainsbury plc and the Bank of Scotland.
- Former Head of Brand Management at British Airways, responsible for First, Club World, Club Europe, Concorde and Shuttle, including the introduction of flat beds.
- Rail Professional Business Manager of the Year, 1998, for results at

AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Speaking

HAMISH'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Business Strategy & Growth
- Change Management
- Customer Experience & Marketing
- Innovation & Disruption
- Marketing & Branding

LANGUAGES: English

Eurostar.

- Sheth Distinguished International Alumnus Award, Emory University; Chair of Emory's EMEA advisory board.
- Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Transport.

Biography

Eurostar was three years old and losing money heavily when Hamish Taylor took over as Managing Director of the UK business in 1997. Within two years he was running the Eurostar Group across the UK, France and Belgium, and had been named Rail Professional Business Manager of the Year. At 36, he had already been Head of Brand Management at British Airways, where the relaunch of Club World, Club Europe and First Class included the introduction of flat beds.

By the end of 1999 he had moved again, this time to run Sainsbury's Bank as CEO, the joint venture between J Sainsbury and the Bank of Scotland. Three industries, three CEO-level remits, all before he turned 40. The pattern across them was the same: an organisation that had stopped looking outside its own sector for answers, and a customer proposition that had drifted from what the customer actually valued.

That pattern is the basis of his current work. The Inspired Leaders Network titled him "Masterthief" for the way he runs innovation as a translation exercise. Yacht interior designers helped redesign aircraft cabins. Disney's queue management informed airport experience. Rugby refereeing logic was applied to banking risk and compliance. Each transfer was a structural match between a problem and a sector that had already solved something equivalent.

Today he advises corporations and governments on innovation, customer focus and people leadership, chairs the EMEA advisory board for Emory University, sits as a Non-Executive Director of Chartered Brands, and is a Trustee of the Robert T Jones memorial scholarship. Emory has recognised the work with its Sheth Distinguished International Alumnus Award.

Key speaking topics

- Cross-sector innovation and idea transfer
- Customer-led business transformation
- Brand strategy and customer proposition design
- Leadership of organisational change
- Service innovation in regulated industries
- Growth strategy after a turnaround

Ideal for

- CEOs and executive committees rebuilding a customer proposition after a structural shift in their market
- CMOs, brand and customer experience leaders translating strategy into operating reality
- Innovation, transformation and strategy leads who need a working method, not a culture talk
- Boards in regulated sectors looking for an external operator's view on customer and growth

Audience outcomes

- A specific technique for sourcing innovation from outside the sector, with worked examples from aviation, rail and banking.
- A clearer view of where their organisation's customer proposition has drifted from the customer's actual definition of value.
- Concrete language to describe the difference between sector benchmarking and structural problem matching.
- Reference cases from BA, Eurostar and Sainsbury's Bank that translate into their own context rather than sit as anecdotes.

Hamish Taylor's 2026 talks & topics

The Customer Promise

A working method for placing the customer at the centre of organisational activity rather than at the end of the process.

Key takeaways:

- Where standard customer research reinforces the existing proposition rather than testing it
- How to read soft customer signals that quantitative work tends to filter out
- A blank-sheet approach to proposition design that survives the operating reality

Masterthief

The cross-sector innovation method, illustrated by transfers Taylor has run himself across aviation, rail and banking.

Key takeaways:

- How to identify a sector that has already solved a structurally equivalent problem
- The translation step that decides whether the borrowed idea will operate in the new context
- Why most internal innovation programmes default to incremental features and how to break the default

Playing Reverse Football

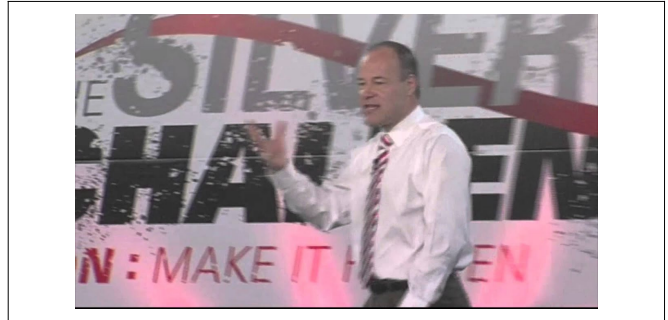
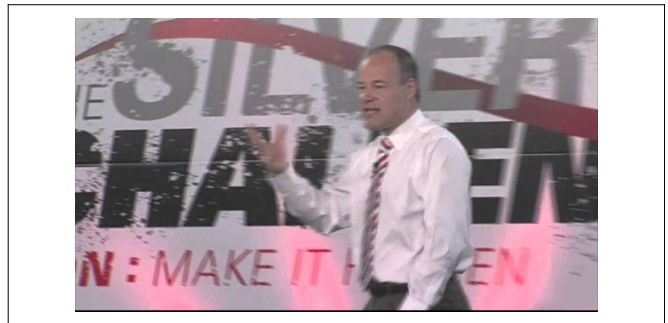
Employee engagement during organisational change, framed around ambition, simplicity and customer-focused design.

Key takeaways:

- Why change programmes lose alignment between strategy and frontline behaviour
- The role of ambition as a coordinating mechanism in distributed teams

- How to keep customer outcomes legible to staff under operational pressure

Hamish Taylor's Videos



What Hamish Taylor's clients say

In terms of the quality and profile of companies worked for, jobs done, education and achievement, Hamish Taylor... takes some beating.

The Times

Hamish is everything we could wish for in a speaker - and my biggest concern is if he will set the bar too high for the other speakers

Maersk

One of the best presentations I have ever seen, let alone had the good fortune to Chair

Chairman, Economist IT Directors Conference

Hamish shared some wonderful insights using great real life stories which resonated with the full audience group. Even 2 weeks after the conference, individuals in attendance are still speaking about and referring to his content and applying it to their own daily behaviour and work... would recommend him without hesitation to other companies.

Swiss Re

Hamish Taylor's 2026 speaking fees

Specific fees fall within the ranges shown. These are presented as a guide only and are subject to change without notice.

	EUR	GBP	USD
Home Country	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
Asia Pacific	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
Europe	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
Middle East & Africa	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
South America	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
United Kingdom	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
US East Coast	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
US West Coast	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
Virtual	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000