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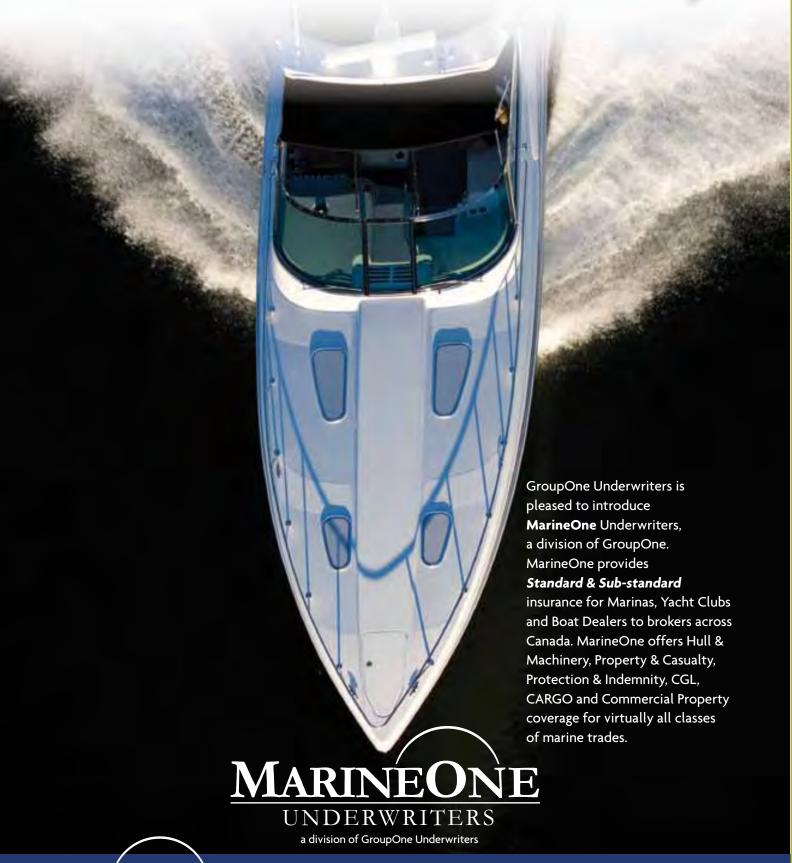
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Much has happened in six months



Pete Tessier, IBAM President

t's been six months since I had the honour of being elected President of the Insurance Brokers Association of Manitoba. Much has happened in that time, the most exciting being the return of the Winnipeg Jets and their inaugural season starting this past October. The Jets represent what many in our province consider a 'return to glory' and I see no reason why insurance brokers cannot share the same feeling.

The past six months have seen the board engage in some hard and difficult work with MPI in regard to our ongoing compensation model. Some of the conversations have been challenging, but both parties agree that our accord is not performing the way it was designed. There are solutions, both short and long term, as the Executive Committee and Board-at-Large are working to provide brokers with the best options for our continued role as the insurance industry authority in Manitoba.

I have had the pleasure of representing our association and province for the past six months and this role involves telling our story to those wanting to understand insurance in Manitoba and beyond. Many people within the financial media will cite new products and players in the insurance industry specifically geared to the new 'ever-changing' consumer. The conversation often ends with the question: 'How will brokers survive?'

In my opinion brokers will not only survive, but also thrive in the future as long as we adapt to change. That is what the consumer expects of us. One story I have been relating to colleagues across the country is that of the mortgage broker. Fifteen years ago this broker channel was seen as a fringe role in the mortgage industry. The growth has been spectacular with industry partners predicting 9% growth in the next 5 years. More importantly the support from industry partners say 97% "see clear benefits for their company in being involved with the broker channel." Mortgage lenders also see the broker channel as providing "access to a wide range of customers as one of the top two benefits.... Other benefits include low operational costs, and putting different lenders on a level playing field." One has to wonder why. It's because consumers demanded more from their lenders, the financial intuitions with whom they thought they had a relationship. As the lenders got bigger and less customer-focused the mortgage broker offered care, respect, a relationship and, most importantly, choice to the consumer. These are the same attributes of service that we, as insurance brokers, offer our customers.

The comparison between the two industries is important, as all who have a mortgage require insurance. As insurance companies ask us to change and evolve for their specific needs (mainly technological evolution), we have to

remind them that it is brokers who know the consumers. For us, customers are people to offer and provide service to because we know they demand choice and expect care.

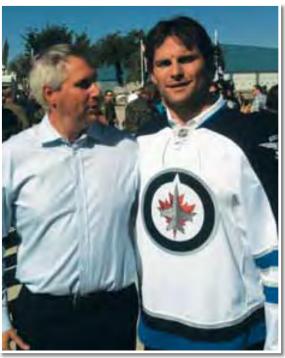
As we move forward as an association, and in our individual businesses, remember to embrace your customer knowledge and experience. Don't just remind our insurance company partners about how customers operate - tell them. Tell them what you need to succeed, and ask them to cooperate with you and other insurers toward a common goal for their chosen line of distribution - the broker channel. Your association mission statement says IBAM is "the industry authority in Manitoba, advocating change and ensuring choice." Reach for this goal every day and brokers will not just survive, they will thrive!



(L-R) MP Laurence Toet, MP Joy Smith, MP Rod Bruinooge, and Pete Tessier at the official unveiling of the team's new uniforms. Peter and CEO Dave Schioler were invited to the event by MP Rod Bruinooge.







Pete Tessier with Jet Mark Stuart



Government backs brokers



Dale Rempel, President, Insurance Brokers Association of Canada

or my first Viewpoint article as President of the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada, I have a great privilege and pleasure in talking about an issue that has consumed our association for almost three years now. As most of you may know, the Government of Canada published on October 12 the regulations that would prohibit banks from promoting, advertising, and selling insurance on their banking web sites. IBAC had raised this issue with legislators in the spring of 2009, as well with the Department of Finance. We had made the case that when the rules were drafted in 1991 that would prohibit banks from retailing insurance directly from their branches, very few transactions were taking place via the Internet. The rules, as drafted in 1991, did not expressly deal with the Internet, or any other form of transactions done through a telecommunications device.

As the market and technology evolved, more and more transactions

were taking place on-line. By way of comparison, in 1993 there were about 4 paper transactions done for every one electronic transaction done in Canada in the financial services sector. Today that proportion is about 6 electronic transactions done for every single paper transaction. That is a massive shift in favour of electronic dealings in the financial services sector. The banks claim that they are cheaper to do, quicker, and more "convenient" for consumers. It seems that this is the way forward for most banks in Canada.

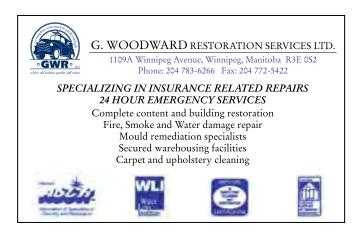
The issue we raised seems quite timely in view of the above shift. The principles that we, as brokers, put forward back in 1991 and ever since, needed to be transposed into the on-line world. Consumers could just as easily be pressured or coerced into considering insurance when they apply for credit; be it sitting in front of a loan officer, or making an application for credit online. We communicated this principle

to legislators as well as the Minister of Finance. In October 2009, the Minister announced that the Government would be putting in place regulations that would extend this consumer protection to the on-line world. As a profession we applauded him and the Government for this principled decision.

We also were pleased to see the publication by the Government this October of the actual regulations. The banks will now have until March 1, 2012 to conform to these rules. We are still asking brokers across the country to keep an eye out for any insurance related materials in bank branches, as we will be keeping an eye on whether they abide by the on-line rules.

This is a huge win for consumers! We applaud the Government of Canada for taking this strong stand in extending this protection to the on-line world. The Minister of Finance deserves credit for driving this file to its end.

"As a profession we applauded the Minister of Finance and the Government for this principled decision."







No rest for the Young (Brokers)

Lindsey Jordan, HUB International Horizon Insurance Young Broker Committee Chair

n August 26, we hosted our annual YBN golf tournament at the beautiful Teulon Golf & Country Club. There were 80 golfers and volunteers in attendance for a great day of golf. This year's event raised \$800 through the silent auction and putting contest with all proceeds going to the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada South Central Chapter. A big thank you goes out to all the sponsors, volunteers and participants that helped make the day a success.

In September, **Dwight Heppner** and I travelled to Minneapolis to participate in the Young Agents Big "I" Fall Leadership Conference. This was an excellent opportunity for us to be involved in seminars, group discussions and various events where we were able to meet fellow brokers and exchange valuable information. The new ideas acquired from this event will be shared with the Young Broker Committee and implemented in

the upcoming months. Overall it was an excellent experience.

At the time of writing, we are preparing for the 8th Annual Young Broker Hosted Education Day, being held November 18 in Winnipeg, MB. The event will feature two seminars, as well as a networking lunch and 'Meet Your Company Representatives' reception. The event is open to brokers of all ages, it not only provides brokers the chance to obtain continuing education credits, but is also a great networking opportunity.

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce the newest Young Broker Committee member. Andru Valpy is currently working at Western Financial Insurance in Winnipeg. He began his career in 2003 with Pet Plan Insurance (a division of HED Insurance Solutions) and continued with them until 2004. In 2005, Andru left the industry to pursue a career in the Communications industry

with Shaw Communications, where he remained until 2010. In fall of 2010, Andru returned to the insurance industry with Western Financial Insurance and is currently a telephone sales customer service agent. Outside of the industry, Andru is actively involved in the community and volunteers with various organizations. Welcome to the Committee!

We are still seeking new members. The YBN is an excellent opportunity to meet other young insurance professionals. If you are interesting in receiving our E-News or becoming a member of the Young Broker Network, please visit the YBN link on the IBAM website. We also have a few open spots on our Committee. If you are under age 37, looking to share your ideas, become more involved in the industry and interested in joining the Young Broker Committee, please contact me at *ljordan@horizoninsurance.ca* or 204-856-2426

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Karl Jaikaransingh, (left) Office Manager Linda Cyrenne, (centre) Senior Commercial Underwriter Sheridan Pawluk, Junior Commercial Underwriter Toll Free 1-800-268-0393.









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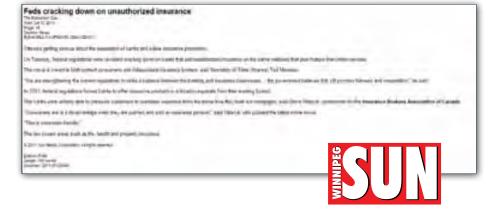
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The federal government is moving to prevent Canada's banks from advertising their in-house insurance products on their web pages. Finance Minister Jim Flaherty has warned banks for years they were breaking the spirit of the law in advertising insurance products online. Minister of State Ted Menzies said current regulations prohibit banks from promoting or selling unauthorized insurance in their branches. But some banks have taken to advertising on their websites. "We want to ensure the Bank Act reflects the new reality of online banking, to avoid attempts by banks to do on their websites what they are prohibited from doing at their branches," Mr. Menzies said in a statement Tuesday. He said the ban will ensure fair competition between banks and insurance providers.

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Political Advocacy

BAM's President-Elect Wyatt 'does his stuff' for IBAM at Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Provincial Election Debate, held September 22 at the Winnipeg Convention Centre.



Premier Selinger speaking during the debate.



NDP leader Premier Greg Selinger



Progressive Conservative Party leader Hugh McFadyen



Liberal Party leader Jon Gerrard





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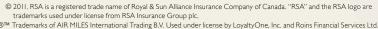
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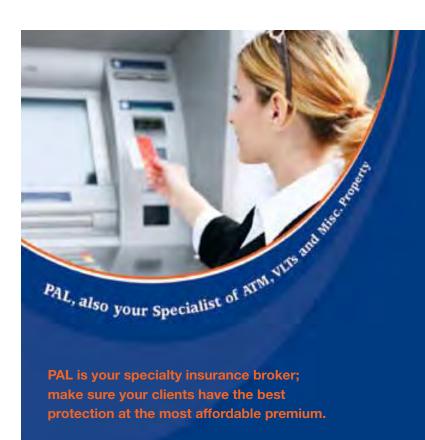
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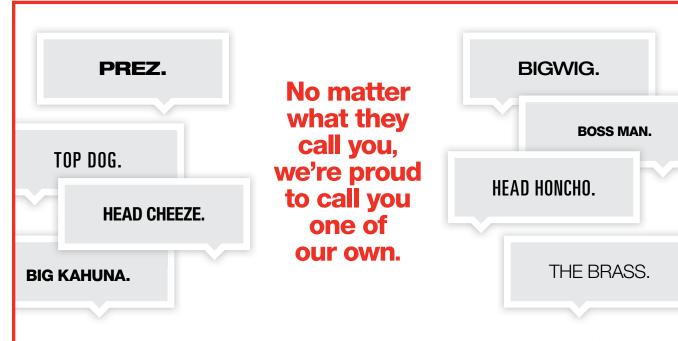
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Congrats to Dale Rempel, born-and-bred Manitoban and newly-elected IBAC President.





Manitoba's **DALE REMPEL**elected new IBAC President

Dale and Lynne Rempel with son Brent

Dale Rempel, President of the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada

he Insurance Brokers Association of Canada (IBAC) is celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2011. The national organization also has a new leader these days – and he's a bornand-bred Manitoban. Former IBAM President **Dale Rempel** of Morris, Manitoba, was elected to the national organizations top post on September 24 at IBAC's AGM in Banff, AB.

Manitoba Insurance Broker (MIB) caught up with Dale recently while he was in New Brunswick in the midst of a very busy schedule. He was gracious enough to take time from that hectic schedule to be interviewed.

MIB - Can you describe the feeling of leading a national organization of your peers?

Dale - It is quite an honor to be elected the President of the Brokers Association of Canada. I have always wanted to give back to an industry that has been so good to my family and me. Over the past 10 years, I have been involved with IBAC as a volunteer on committees, a director and an executive member. My passion has always been Professional Development and I have attended eight annual IBAC PD Conferences. IBAC is a very strong organization and I am honoured to be a part of the organization.

MIB - What are your priorities for your term in office?

Dale - Insurance brokers become successful when they build strong relationships with customers, companies and other industry supplier. I believe building relationship has made IBAC a very strong association as well. But, we need to continue working on these relationships.

My goal and focus for the next year will be 'Fostering a stronger relationship with Industry Stakeholders.' These include government, regulators, insurers, other trade groups and media

Regarding government IBAC`s success has been based on developing strong relationships with politicians and government employees. Now it is even more important as there are so many new MPs in Ottawa. It is important that we contact all new MPs to let them know who we are and what our values are. What makes IBAC different than many other associations is that we keep in contact with MPs and their staff even when there are no current issues or concerns. We don't just run after the politicians when we need something from them.



'The Rempel Clan' – Dale Rempel, Calgary Centre - North MP Michelle Rempel and her husband Jason Rempel



Dale Rempel

In terms of other stakeholders, we feel it's important to ensure that IBAC is the main voice and source of information for the P&C industry. It is important that IBAC provides timely and accurate information to all stakeholders.

MIB - How can Manitoba brokers assist you in your presidency?

Dale - Manitoba brokers can assist by contacting and making personal visits to MPs in their riding. It is important that brokers get involved with promoting the broker channel to the government and other industry partners.

MIB - How is IBAC celebrating its 90th anniversary?

Dale - We celebrated the 90th anniversary at the annual meeting in Banff where I was elected President. The celebration included a video birthday card highlighting the past 90 years. There are no other specific plans during the year.

MIB – What are the current issues that are keeping you busy?

Dale - Anticipating the finalization of the new Web Regulations related to the *Bank Act*.

Closely monitoring the *Bank Act* review (expected to be completed by next spring). We are still advocating no changes to the Act. The *Bank Act* is working well, so we see no need for change. The *Bank Act* properly protects consumers by providing the consumer with choice.

Demutualization - IBAC stressed the importance that Mutuals play in the whole industry and for consumers. Mutuals play a very important role in the insurance industry and losing Mutuals would definitely change the insurance landscape. They provide a stable market place for consumers especially when the insurance market is hard.





Congratulations to Dale Rempel for his succession to IBAC President.

From your friends at Manitoba Blue Cross.











New IBAC President Dale Rempel presents outgoing President Fraser Lyle with a token of appreciation for his leadership

"Thanks Scott"

IBAM Past-President Scott Andrew (Right) recently received a Certificate of Appreciation from IBAC President (now Board Chair) Fraser Lyle for Scott's service on the IBAC Board of Directors this past year. Pamela Gilroy-Rajotte, IBAM's Immediate Past-President, now sits as a Director on the IBAC Board.





Congratulations Dale Rempel!

Enjoy your new role as President of the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada.





DEAL CREATES NEW REGIONAL HUB OPERATION IN MANITOBA

n September 14, 2011, Hub International Limited (Hub) announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire the operations of Horizon Insurance, LP. (Horizon), a full service insurance brokerage firm headquartered in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The acquisition is expected to close in the third quarter of 2011 and is subject to customary closing conditions. Terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.

Horizon will become a new regional platform (hub) doing business as Hub International Horizon Insurance (Hub Horizon) through offices located in Manitoba. **Keith Jordan**, President; **Brent Gilbert**, Chief Operating Officer; **Tony Cesario**, Chief Sales Officer; **Wendy Harrison**, Chief Financial Officer and their staff will join Hub as part of this acquisition.

"This was a tremendous opportunity to join an international brokerage firm," said Keith Jordan. "Joining the Hub team will provide enhanced opportunities for our staff, and we will continue our planned growth in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northwestern Ontario."

Horizon is the largest independent insurance broker in the Province of Manitoba, offering a broad suite of insurance solutions to individuals and businesses through 18 sales and service centres in Winnipeg, Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Whitemouth, Lac du Bonnet, and Pinawa. Twelve of these offices are branded as Horizon Insurance, and the other six operate as Ryan Gateway Insurance (which was acquired by Horizon in 2009). Insurance products and services offered through these entities include home, auto, business, farm, travel, health, life, employee benefits and private client services. Horizon arranges insurance programs for a wide variety of industries including property management, retail, wholesale, construction/bonding, professional services, industrial/manufacturing, group programs, hospitality, fleets/trucking, agriculture, life sciences and more.

This transaction represents a strategic opportunity for Hub to continue to expand its regional footprint in Canada and establish a regional operation in Manitoba. Horizon has grown

significantly during the last five years, primarily through acquisitions. Founded over a century ago by the Aronovitch and Leipsic families, Michael Leipsic and Peter Leipsic will continue on in their present roles with the company.

"This acquisition will establish a new Hub for us in Central Canada, which will give us the infrastructure to build out the Eastern Prairies across to Northwestern Ontario," said **Jim Barton**, President of Hub's Canadian operations. "The team at Horizon has done several acquisitions in the past and is ready to help further build out this footprint as we continue to build the Hub brand in Canada. This firm has roots in Manitoba going back 106 years and supports our reputation of having quality firms as part of the Hub family."

Headquartered in Chicago, IL, Hub International Limited is a leading North American insurance brokerage that provides a broad array of property and casualty, reinsurance, life and health, employee benefits, investment and risk management products and services through offices located in the US and Canada.

We are here and looking forward to it.



For more information about the opportunities with **HUB International Horizon Insurance** email us at:

ACQUISITIONS

Keith Jordan, *CEO* kjordan@horizoninsurance.ca 204-988-4791

HIRING

Robin Steel rsteel@horizoninsurance.ca 204-988-1195





3rd Annual King Insurance Charity Classic Car Show

n August 26, 2011, King Insurance (Steinbach) Ltd. held its 3rd Annual Charity Classic Car Show. Participants paid an entrance fee for the right to display their classic vehicles and take visitors down memory lane. The car show and accompanying pulled-pork BBQ went from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and

raised \$6,400. During the event, a pair of live bands provided entertainment.

All proceeds went to the Four Winds Project, a community outreach ministry of Southland Community Church. Four Winds focuses on supporting those in the community who are struggling with overcoming addictions through its social outreach activities and life skills training.

Congratulations to the staff of King Insurance (Steinbach) Ltd. for putting in countless volunteer hours to make this event a reality. 'Hats off' to Norma Hiebert, Melissa Kehler, Tina Nickel, Diane Reimer and Shelley Perrick.







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2nd Annual Pinawa Celebrity Golf Tournament

BAM was on hand to promote its sponsorship toward community arena development. Everyone had a great time while raising a significant sum for the Pinawa community.



IBAM CEO Dave Schioler and former Winnipeg Jets captain Ab McDonald



Former Jet goalie Joe Daley, current Jet Eric Fehr and radio host Don Percy



(L-R) Reid Carruthers (curling), Joe Daley (hockey), Eric Fehr (hockey), Leslie Wilson (curling), Breanne Meakin (curling), Raunora Westcott (curling), Lee major (TV/radio), Don Percy (radio/ TV), Trevor Kennerd (football) and Ab McDonald (hockey)



Deputy Mayor Clay McMurren, the LGD's Pat Sullivan and Connie Plunkett accept a cheque from IBAM CEO Dave Schioler

Aviva's \$1M Community Fund returns

For the third consecutive year, Aviva Insurance is holding its Community Fund Competition. Ideas for community improvement from across Canada compete for \$1 million in funds. The event was officially launched on September 26 in North Bay, ON. Voting for Round 1 (Idea Entry and Initial Voting) began on October 3 and closed November 30.

Round 2 (Semi-finals & Voting) takes place from December 1 to December 16. Round 3 (Judging) goes from December 17 to January 24. Winners will be announced January 25, 2012.

Aviva's broker partners can vote at www.AvivaPartner.ca. Broker ideas are eligible for \$150,000 in funding available exclusively to brokers.

Any Canadian can vote at www.AvivaCommunityFund.org and for the first time on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ AvivaCommunityFund.

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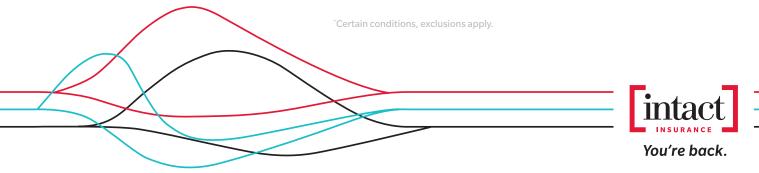
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Winnipeg Jets Home Opener Luncheon

BAM attended Member of Parliament Rod Bruinooge's Home Opener Luncheon for the Winnipeg Jets held at the Fort Garry Hotel on October 9.



Rod Bruinooge (MP-Winnipeg South) and IBAM President Pete Tessier



Ryan Garriock, Wade Garriock, Minister of Public Safety Vic Toews (MP-Provencher), IBAM CEO Dave Schioler and Pete Tessier



Pete Tessier, Merv Tweed (MP - Brandon-Souris) and Dave Schioler



Dave Schioler, Ryan Garriock, Wade Garriock, Brian Gilbert, Rod Bruinooge, Doug Fast and Pete Tessier

Ranger Insurance Golf Tournament



IBAM attended Rangers' annual Golf Tournament on October 11 at Southwood Golf & Country Club. Thanks to Rangers' lead, more than \$40,000 was raised for the Winnipeg Jets True North Foundation. (L-R) Jack Lazareck, CEO Dave Schioler, Jet prospects Jason Gregoire and Kevin Clarke, Mike Yakimishyn and Clay McMurren.

Ditch the Same Old, Same Old

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- Our Personal Lines and Auto Account Managers the customer solutions experts with the right tools to do the job

Wyatt Dowling is changing the face of how brokerages operate in this province. If you want to be part of something exciting, leading-edge and long-term, then we want you.

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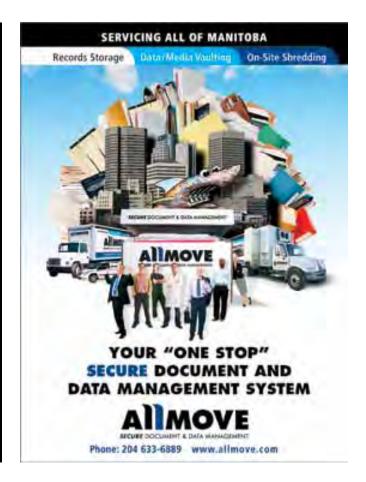
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Time to embrace consumer facing technology

By Scott Andrew, President & CEO, Custom Software Solutions Inc.

ver the last year there have been some promising projects and initiatives that focus on improving the efficiencies in the broker distribution model. The IBAC automation initiative, using the IBAC real-time principles and the CSIO standards, will be delivering a working model of realtime transactions, including but not limited to new, renewal, cancellation, and endorsement transactions, starting in the Broker Management System (BMS) and ending in the BMS. All BMS vendors in Canada have been part of this initiative. The Organization Of Real Time Brokers implementing Technology (ORBiT Canada) is a non-profit broker driven organization with the mission to facilitate collaboration and education between all stakeholders in the broker distribution channel for the advancement of real time, once-and-done transactions to drive efficiencies by way of best practices workflows following industry standards. CSIO has also recently released new standards that allow insurance companies to securely send documents electronically to BMS systems to update client's data files when the documents are received. eliminating time-consuming scanning and filing procedures.

While these projects and initiatives are excellent at improving the efficiencies in the broker distribution model, they focus on the interface between the broker and insurance company. In conjunction with these business-to-business internal improvements, brokers need to embrace consumer facing technology for servicing new and existing clients in an automated online environment. The brokers' primary competition, direct writers and banks, continue to move forward and expand their online platforms and offerings. Traditional brokers are already seeing an erosion of their market share with no sign of this slowing. Much of this lost market share can be attributed to online services provided by the competition. The consumer's use of online purchasing for products and services will continue to expand and encompass even the relationship driven world of the insurance broker. Without a plan to compete online in a true full-serve, selfserve environment, the existence of the broker as it is today will be in jeopardy.

Most brokers have moved forward and established a web presence but the online offering on broker websites is very limited. To date, we have seen development from established software vendors limited to quoting. In the absence of available online tools for brokers, we have seen both broker associations and insurance companies move forward on developing online systems to fill this void. Association initiatives have been focused on quoting and have not addressed added functionality. Insurance company initiatives have the potential to offer more functionality, but are restricted to offering the online services only to the clients the broker has placed with that company. In the case of the company initiatives, the broker ends up turning control of the online experience over to the company. When the broker remarkets the client they are faced with moving to a different company that may or may not have an online presence. If the company has online tools the client will be faced with different interfaces and new user names and passwords.

The broker vision for future online services should include everything they do today as a full-serve broker. The services must be offered in an online self-serve environment in a system that the brokers own and control. This vision of online services owned and controlled by the broker may appear to be a stretch, but many of the tools and most of the information required

to make this work lie within the broker's management systems depending on the solution he/she employs. BMSs need to be fully integrated to work as one and include tools to deliver all services. Quoting, rating and underwriting systems need to be integrated into business and accounting systems all wrapped in a robust client relationship manager. If commercial is to be included, it too must be fully integrated into the BMS. Once you have the management systems integrated and operating as one, the extension to online services is not a huge lift. Exposing the information and automation tools in a secure online environment to the end client becomes the next step for the BMS providers.

The BMS providers will require assistance and participation from companies and brokers to move forward on this next step in service. Companies will need to be involved in development so their systems are automated to provide additional processing capabilities and to allow the broker's systems access to certain types of information. To deliver a system as described, brokers will need to be committed financially to assist in development and fully committed to deployment to the end client. Delivering a usable experience to the client and driving costs down for brokers and companies will rely on how well the integration between the different parts in the delivery chain work; client, broker website, BMS and insurance company.

The extension of full-service online will happen over the next few years, as the consumer will demand it. The end client will have the ability to perform many of the transactions described in the list above. For the broker to ensure their future success providing an online full-serve self-serve will be important. It is now time for brokers, vendors and companies to include consumer facing technology in their initiatives. •

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SEMCI Straight up

By Pat Durepos, Keal Technology

ith the wide gap between broker management systems (BMS) and insurance company back-end technology infrastructure, the Property & Casualty industry has had to rely on a variety of applications to create electronic data exchange. These have involved company portals, broker middleware and data scraping, to name a few. The techniques represent necessary building blocks on the path to Single Entry Multiple Company Interface (SEMCI), but many brokers and, increasingly, insurance carriers now recognize some of their long-term limitations.

These initial attempts at SEMCI addressed a very real challenge facing the broker distribution channel. Brokers and insurance companies have their own perspectives on the data they need to collect and store for transactions. They organize their own data in sometimes subtly different ways. This lack of standardization makes the integration of data between systems more complex. In this environment, real-time electronic data exchange is difficult, if not impossible.

IBAC has rightly set out the parameters for how brokercarrier communications should be streamlined, leaving the vendor marketplace to deliver real-world applications that work. These are coming to market. In fact, some are in place right now.

York Fire & Casualty is one example of an insurance company that can communicate and integrate directly with a BMS without any middleware or third party software required by the broker. Brokers using Keal's sigXP BMS are able to perform Inquiry and New

Business Upload for auto and property directly with York, under a service called 'keal connect.'

'keal connect' uses a connectivity solution provided by iter8 called communic8 that integrates data with insurance company policy administration, staging areas or support systems. This eliminates the need for any broker-required middleware or third party software. Brokers can work solely in their BMS and focus on their own business without worrying about data translation or exchange problems. This greatly reduces duplicate data entry, overlapping broker-company workflow and resultant inefficiencies.

It is important for brokers to test any purported SEMCI solution against the principles enunciated by IBAC. The 'keal connect' service sends CSIO XML data in real-time from the BMS directly to York's broker support systems. The transaction starts and ends in the BMS, with no additional broker software or middleware. The workflow is the same for the broker. Data integrity is maintained at both ends of the transaction process through close adherence to standardized data elements and fields. Most importantly, the broker experiences increased efficiencies in the form of reduced data entry and less 'clicks and screens.'

The next big opportunity is Policy Change and Endorsements. There are many reasons why this is such a complex area for brokers seeking efficiencies in routine but data-intensive transactions. The fact is, however, that modern technology solutions can overcome this hurdle. What is needed is a sharp focus on coordination between BMS and

carrier systems, process orchestration and implementation. Progress in Policy Change is imminent in a matter of

The big picture advantage of true SEMCI solutions for insurance companies is that enhanced broker efficiency means a stronger distribution channel.

Those carriers committed to independent brokers should regard working, functional real-time data exchange solutions as a weapon in their ability to compete with banks and direct writers. It's time to move from shortcuts to investments in realworld SEMCI solutions. •

TESTIMONIAL

After a successful implementation, the President of York Fire and Casualty had this to say about 'keal connect':

"...this project is reflective of our commitment to provide our Broker partners 'ease-of-doingbusiness' tools to help them successfully compete and grow their business...each of the transactions begins, and ends, in sigXP....allowing the broker to work in the environment they are most comfortable with, that is easy to maintain, and ensure uninterrupted service for brokers..."

Martin Delage President and COO of York Fire and Casualty



How will independent commercial-lines brokers compete?

By Steve Pieroway, VP Marketing & Client Services, Policy Works Inc.

he threat of the direct writer is real. A survey conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers, released in December 2010, suggests that independent brokers are losing 0.5% of their market share every year to direct writers. By 2019, the independent broker network's market share will have eroded to 60%.

How are direct writers winning brokers' business? With technology. In a June 2011 *Canadian Underwriter* article, Desjardins General Insurance Group president and CEO **Sylvie Paquette** stated that the technology employed by direct writers offers them a competitive advantage. From predictive analytics to streamlined interactions between CSRs and underwriters, direct writers are using technology to win business.

How will the independent broker network compete? With technology. Sure, brokers have the competitive advantage of being consultants who offer advice and choice, something insureds give-up when they deal with direct writers. But without streamlined, integrated technology,

this may not be enough to compete with direct writers.

Many brokers have automated their personal lines business with broker management systems (BMS). But in commercial lines, the same brokers are still storing data in Word® and Excel® files. Herein lies the problem: this data cannot be efficiently managed to compete. Submissions, proposals, renewals, certificates. Each cut-andpaste in Word® and Excel® to produce any one of these documents not only wastes time, but creates significant E&O risk.

Broker management systems, like TAM and Power Broker, do a great job with personal lines. But they lack the capacity to adequately store commercial lines data. That's why brokers are using Word® and Excel®; these systems act to bridge the gap between what data is needed and what the BMS systems cannot handle.

Regardless of the size of brokerage, principals and commercial lines staff need to automate their commercial business. Commercial management systems (CMS), like Policy Works,

are designed to specifically manage commercial lines business. From small package to medium and large risks, a CMS stores the necessary data in a format that can be easily used for multiple tasks.

Automated brokers are just half of the equation, though. The second half: integration with insurer systems. In 2010, Policy Works and SGI CANADA (SGI) released Canada's first real-time, straight-through processing solution for commercial lines. Policy Works brokers are now able to upload submissions and download quotations when dealing with SGI, all while staying in their Policy Works desktop environment.

The result is an independent broker network that is as technologically savvy as direct writers, but with the best interests of the end insured in mind. For the independent broker network to survive, and thrive, technology must keep pace. Brokers, vendors, and insurers have a mutual obligation to work together to create solutions that eliminate the believed 'competitive advantage' of technology so enjoyed by direct writers. •





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Though Commercial Broker Appreciation Week has officially ended, we'd still like to offer you a FREE t-shirt at policyworks.com/MB



Compu-Quote introduces Sales Focused Broker

ompu-Quote's (CQ) Sales Focused Broker (SFB) is a powerful new service designed to help brokers get the most out of their sales initiatives.

SFB lets brokers monitor and track activity in their sales pipeline by identifying:

- The most effective marketing channel;
- The peak volume of activity by hour and day of the week;
- of their insurers:
- The effectiveness of their abeyance and orphan account mining (by

producer (by policy, risk and dollar volume); · How long it takes a risk to flow through

their acquisition

funnel;

The relative competitiveness of each producer and line of business); The quote volume by their efficiency!"

The most effective producer in their office (by conversion rate, policy count and volume); and

• The average premium volume quoted and sold per producer. "Brokers are exploring new ways of doing business, trying to develop new channels and using social marketing. CQ is right there with them with services like Sales Focused Broker," says Brian Schwab, Executive Vice-President, Compu-Quote, "Sales Focused Broker is just one of a new suite of products and services we are introducing that are designed to energize broker sales and improve

> For more information about what Sales Focused Broker can do for you, or any other CQ product or service, visit www.compu-quote.com or call 1-800-265-0808. •

ABOUT COMPU-QUOTE INC.

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Compu-Quote integrates with third-party data providers, as well as Canada's leading broker management systems and company mainframe technology.



SMI elects to work with iter8

ecently, iter8, an insurance solutions software developer announced that Saskatchewan Mutual Insurance Company (SMI) has selected iter8 as the technology partner on their independent broker download initiative for multiple broker management systems, including solutions from Applied Systems, Keal and Zycomp. The iter8 solution communic8 will be implemented to enable independent brokers to receive accurate, complete download services.

SMI operates in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, providing personal property and automobile coverages, commercial lines packages, including business insurance, contractors insurance, and general commercial policies, and farm policies. Distributing exclusively through independent brokers, SMI plans to undertake several new technology initiatives in the next few years, with download as a first effort to address the needs of its broker partners.

Denise Thiessen, VP of Underwriting and Marketing, stated, "Maintaining strong relations with our brokers is critical to our success. This means we need to invest in technology to facilitate their ease

of doing business, and improve the connectivity between SMI and the broker. iter8 is the right partner for us, with a wealth of expertise in this area and a proven track record, and we are looking forward to a successful on-time, on-budget result."

The project begins immediately, and a fast implementation is planned. iter8 will use communic8 to extract and format data from SMI's current policy administration system, and integrate with the CSIO standards. Brokers will receive accurate and timely download information to align their broker management systems with core SMI data. •



Cost guides help brokers

he Douglas Agricultural Cost Guide has been developed over the past 15 years as a manual to assist in estimating the Replacement Cost New of a wide variety of agricultural use improvements, including:

Dairy Beef
Swine Feed Storage
Poultry Machinery Storage
Horses Produce Storage
Manure Storage Commodity Storage

The costing data contained within the guide is a compilation of actual construction costs, various estimates for agricultural use buildings, and other construction cost sources, from across Canada.

The Douglas Agricultural Cost Guide translates costs into a square footage rate for easy application, with adjustments for extra features and for equipment, where applicable.

There are location adjustment factors, as required, to allow for differences in construction costs between the various provinces. There are also adjustments for unique construction situations. The cost guide includes a physical depreciation schedule.

The Douglas Agricultural Cost Guide is updated on a regular basis. The book version of the guide is re-printed on an annual basis. The electronic version of the guide is a downloadable program, which is maintained on an ongoing basis. The cost figures are updated primarily on an annual basis. However, based on market evidence, the costs are adjusted throughout the course of the year, if necessary.

The guide is utilized primarily by the insurance industry, across the majority of Canada, including Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Other users include Revenue Canada, Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (Ontario), real estate appraisers, contractors, and banks.

The costing manual is intended as a resource for:

- * Assisting with insurance coverage recommendations;
- Assisting with the settlement of insurance claims;
- Financial management;
- * Accounting functions;
- * Budgeting for new construction;
- * Assisting with obtaining financing;
- * Assisting in the settlement of disputes/litigation.

Douglas Cost Guides Inc. has now developed a Residential Cost Guide. The same research and market data investigation, as the agricultural cost guide, has been employed to develop the Residential Cost Guide which includes the compilation of actual residential construction costs, the use of various estimates for residential occupancies, and other construction cost sources from across Canada.

The Douglas Residential Cost Guide employs the same techniques for calculating the Replacement Cost New as well as for additional features, as the Douglas Agricultural Cost Guide.

The Douglas Residential Cost Guide will be updated on an annual basis. An electronic version of the Residential Cost Guide is intended to be available for the end of 2012

The developer of the cost guide, **Karl Douglas**, has been involved in the estimating and appraisal/evaluation of agricultural use buildings and properties for over 25 years.

Karl Douglas will provide consulting services for unusual or challenging situations, if required. Most consultation work can be accomplished through email correspondence with the use of written information and especially photographs, as well as through telephone conversations.

For additional information and a quote on the cost of the book, the electronic version of the guide or for consulting services, call Karl Douglas at Douglas Cost Guides Inc. at 1-877-284-0028 or email *karldouglas@hay.net*. •



Manual for Estimating the Replacement Cost of Agricultural Use Buildings

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The value of being prepared



By John Knotek, BMO Bank of Montreal®



You don't expect your home to burn down. However, you buy insurance to be prepared for the worst. Similarly you do not expect uncontrollable events to disrupt the operations of the brokerage you are in. But if they do, a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) can be the insurance you need to stay afloat during potentially dire circumstances.

Insurance professionals know all too well the impact that uncontrollable events can have on people and businesses. While fortunately, most of us are only touched by these events from time to time – floods in particular come

to recent memory – proper insurance coverage and preparedness are the best way to minimize negative impacts.

If the brokerage you are in is caught off guard by an unexpected event, operating at close to normal may be difficult if not impossible. Now the goal is not to panic but to be prepared. The development of a BCP is a simple and an important exercise that would pay massive dividends. Ultimately a BCP may place brokerage employees in a position to carry on effectively in that:

 Priority services and operations will have been established;

- Employees will have been trained to handle the jobs of co-workers;
- Policies for flexible hours and alternative compensation will have been established;
- A list of alternate suppliers or awareness of their operational directives under a BCP will be available:
- Countless other contingencies that apply specifically to the brokerage you are in will have been considered and planned for; and
- Employees will understand the brokerage's BCP and will be ready to take appropriate action.

"The cost of not being prepared is far greater than the cost of being prepared."

There are numerous government resources and private sector experts available to assist businesses in developing an effective BCP. While utilizing experts for any area that you are not fully proficient is good advice, seven simple steps can be taken by any brokerage to develop a BCP:

- 1. Identify potential threats: a BCP starts by recognizing the potential threats that could impact the brokerage.
- 2. Assess the risks: this involves scaling the probability of a threat and the impact that the threat could have on the brokerage.
- 3. Set business priorities: when an unexpected event occurs, employees must know which business functions are crucial and which can wait.
- 4. Analyze the impact of a business disruption: probably the most in depth analysis in constructing a BCP, this can range from determining how long different functional areas can operate in the brokerage before being materially impacted, to assessing the potential impact of delayed payment from customers and companies.
- 5. Create an action strategy: develop a clear outline of the steps that need to be taken to maintain your services/ functions in the event that a potential threat becomes reality. This should be constructed for the key functional areas of the brokerage: people, operations, facilities and information.
- 6. Implement the action strategy: keep employees briefed on the action strategy and ensure they are trained to meet the increased demands that could be placed on them.
- 7. Maintain the BCP: as the brokerage expands or changes, employees change or new potential threats arise it is critical that the BCP is updated accordingly.

Many people that have been affected by a catastrophic event now understand what they need to do to be prepared to weather other uncontrollable events with greater comfort. There is security in being prepared, but a cost as well.

The same holds true for the brokerage you are in. Being prepared for various threats does take time, effort and money. But as anyone who endured time without power or heat or shelter will attest the cost of not being prepared is far greater than the cost of being prepared. So take the time and ensure the brokerage you are in has an effective BCP in place.

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Morale vs. Execution

By John Treace



Morale – the *esprit de corps* or 'spirit of the body' – is the capacity of a group of people to hold a common spirit of loyalty and comradeship. We think of morale as being deep-seated in the psych of the individual or group. Execution, on the other hand, is the process of reaching an objective as the result of performance. A team's ability to execute is more of a surface measurement that's easily evaluated by an outside observer.

Morale and execution are the cornerstones of powerful sales organizations. Most organizations recognize the importance of a sales team's ability to execute since that is measured by numbers. However, some underrate the importance of morale, which is difficult to measure and is often confused with enthusiasm or situational motivation generated from, for example, a spirited sales meeting. Situational motivation is generally short-lived, but morale is ingrained and tends to have a lasting quality, unless conditions degrade it.

I once asked an applicant for a sales manager position what was more important: a sales team's morale or its ability to execute. His answer was execution – period! He wasn't hired in part due to the fact that I was part of a new management team charged with implementing a business turnaround with a very demoralized sales force. I needed a sales manager who intuitively knew the importance of high morale.

While morale is important, we can't discount the importance of a sales teams' ability to execute. Good teams should be able to execute as long as they have the proper skill sets, sales tools, and business environment. But poor morale is a deal-killer wherever it exists. A sales team with outstanding execution ability but with poor morale will function below its normal standards of performance. And the reverse is true as well: a team with average to low execution skills but with outstanding morale will produce sales results consistently above average for their skill level.

When times get tough (and sooner or later they will for any company) a sales team with high morale will continue to produce even against heavy odds. Sports coaches and military leaders

understand this concept and take extra efforts to develop and maintain a high level of morale amongst their team members. History is replete with examples of underdog teams winning against incredible odds. The 300 Spartans who gave their lives holding off a vast Persian army for seven days at the Pass of Thermopylae exhibited the highest order of morale in defense of their country.

Execution can be taught to a willing group, but morale cannot. Morale, like reputation, takes time to develop and can be quickly lost. Entire books have been written on team morale, but let's review some situations I personally experienced that demonstrate the importance of a team's cohesion and trust in leadership.

I was once a sales rep for a company that changed its sales sample policy every few months. As reps, we never knew what to expect, and this put our sales process in jeopardy: we continually had to relearn how to operate within the company's new rules. This took time away from selling and degraded our sales efforts. We had little confidence in management, as we believed they did

not know the business well enough to understand how disruptive this practice was. Worse, their actions indicated to us that management didn't care about the sales team. These inconsistent or frequently changed management policies damage morale in large part because they make it difficult for reps to anticipate the future. People like to believe their futures are secure, and actions by management that challenge that will degrade morale. Sales reps want to work for leaders who care about them and who keep unnecessary changes to a minimum. This company's sales sample policy struck out on both counts and was destructive to morale.

A different company I was a sales rep for reduced our rate of commission by 20% with no notice or explanation. This not only placed a financial burden on the sales group but also signaled that the company disregarded the value of the service we were performing. Again, people want to work for companies and managers who appreciate them. When managers don't care, they damage team morale.

Since morale is a state of mind, it is difficult to measure, but there are signposts that indicate the vitality of team spirit in an organization. A sales team with high morale will, nine times out of ten, accomplish its objectives ahead of schedule and with minimal resources. Team members will arrive at meetings early and stay late. They will always be prepared in meetings and on sales calls. They will always look and act sharp. In difficult times, they will offer more positive suggestions than negative complaints. They are quick to help other team members without request of reward. In a nutshell, they are ideal employees; you can see it and feel it, and you enjoy their company.

While my point is not to

66 When we keep morale high, the work experience can be enjoyable.

marginalize execution, in the final analysis, morale nudges out execution nine times out of ten as the single most important factor that defines powerful sales organizations and places them above weak ones. Because morale cannot be defined with metrics, a large part of sales management is an art, not a science. Business is tough enough today without a negative, dissatisfied team. When we keep morale high, the work experience can be enjoyable. High-morale teams not only sell more effectively-they are much more fun to be around.

John R. Treace has over 30 years experience as a sales executive in the medical products industry. He spent over 10 years specializing in the restructuring of sales departments of companies that were either bankrupt or failing. In 2010 he founded IR Treace & Associates, a sales management consulting business. He is a member of the National Speakers Association. He is the author of Nuts & Bolts of Sales Management: How to Build a High-Velocity Sales Organization. To learn more, visit www.treaceconsulting.com.



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FAMILY COMMITMENTyields transition success

y dentist used to have a sign on his ceiling so you'd see it when he tilted the chair back. "The dentist can't do what the patient won't do," it said. Unless you practice basic oral hygiene and listen to your dentist's advice, was the message, I ultimately can't save your gums and teeth.

And so it is with family business consultants and their clients. A client hires us with the desire to deal with a problem, ease pain or to prepare for transition. The consultant gathers information-seeking understanding of family and business culture and values, and makes recommendations for processes, decisions and actions, which will help the client achieve stated goals. But sometimes, the client wants the result yet is unwilling to take the steps necessary to get there. The clients say in effect, 'I want to lose weight, but I don't want to exercise, reduce my caloric intake, change my eating habits or undergo surgery.'

What makes me think about this is not frustration about an unsuccessful client engagement, but an experience with a client that has gone exceedingly well

The client engagement began inauspiciously enough. A series of phone calls, much indecision, lack of clarity about desired outcomes, almost a year

between first contact and the beginning of the consulting project.

Once begun, the project went well enough. In the past, efforts to introduce change had not gotten traction. Some non-family executives were skeptical that change could be achieved. Some family owners were frustrated that their ideas had been shot down by their father and that efforts to hold board meetings (Dad and four offspring were directors) led to unresolved conflicts. Dad had a tendency to dominate meetings and talk at length.

The business was strong and profitable (though impacted by the recession), but structure, processes and managerial depth were severely lacking. Some executives were outstanding. Others were overly committed to the status quo or were not right for their positions. There was little in the way of strategic planning and the future was unclear. But the company had great relationships with customers, was a highly efficient operation, no debt, some great people and a moral code built on 'unimpeachable integrity.'

The family was strong, too - despite inter-and intra-generational bickering.

And the need for change was clear to most everyone. The looming generational transition provided an important opportunity to bring

change because business practices and structures were recognized as being inadequate for future success.

A detailed report was written and offered three recommendations:

- 1. The father/founder/CEO said he was ready to let go. He needs to be true to his word, removing himself from management and ultimately from governance.
- 2. The four siblings of the successor generation must step up to their ownership roles and responsibilities, developing shared vision and goals for the business and the family, determining-individually and collectively-what their roles would be going forward. If they plan to continue to own the business, they must commit themselves to becoming an effective ownership team. As owners, they must determine how best to govern their enterprise.
- 3. Given the organizational transformation required to assure the company's on-going success, a CEO who can provide the necessary leadership must be identified and installed.

A year has passed. Dad has retired and ceased direct involvement in the business. Thanks to aggressive estate planning, he now owns a minority of the company's shares.

A new board, comprised of four highly qualified independent directors, the new non-family CEO, and the two sibling-owners who are the highestranking family members in the business, is in place. One of the independent directors is the non-executive chairman. Dad chose not to serve on the board.

During that year, the siblings met monthly to consider crucial issues, develop and articulate values, goals and policies, and make decisions about the family's future. The family (including parents) now meets each month to consider matters relating to the family. The siblings continue to meet quarterly.

The CEO was identified through an extensive search after family executives indicated that they didn't believe themselves qualified to lead the company through the changes required for on-going success. Non-family executives were invited to put their hats in the ring but chose not to. Two nonfamily executives left the company.

Today, the business is moving forward with new momentum. The owning family is thrilled with the progress and the results they have achieved. Family members feel a new sense of commitment to the business and the family. The third generation is beginning to express new interest in careers in the business, and recognizing the need for education and experience if they hope to play a significant role in the business's future.

The independent directors and the CEO are tremendously impressed with the direction chosen by the family owners and their commitment to the process that they've initiated. All are excited about the opportunity to play a role in what they see as a solid enterprise poised for dramatic improvement.

Time will tell how successful this transition proves to be, but the early returns are extremely encouraging. So, what makes this case successful, when others with similar circumstances and advice are not? I think most of the answer to that question is found in the owning family. Here's what they contributed:

- Dad really was willing to step back and watch with pride as his children made decisions taking the company he founded in a very different direction;
- The next generation was willing to step up to the responsibilities of ownership;
- The next generation was able to reach consensus on values, goals and roles;
- The next generation had the ability to function as a team and to reach decisions together;
- Everyone in the family had a modesty about themselves that made them willing to learn and to apply lessons;
- Each family member was willing and able to make realistic appraisals of their own individual abilities and circumstances:
- The family was willing to invest generously in acquiring necessary

- human resources in terms of consultants, directors and executives;
- Everyone in the family was eager to embrace change;
- All of the siblings, in addition to their responsibilities as employees and as family members, provided extensive focused effort in all aspects of developing and implementing the transition plan;
- 10. All of the siblings were willing to differentiate between their roles as family, employees and owners, and all were willing to embrace their ownership responsibilities.

As family business consultants, we did good work-as did the family's team of professional advisors. The CEO and directors recruited from outside the firm have enthusiastically taken on their tasks. The key to success, however, clearly has been in the hands of the owning family and they are using that key to open the door to a new future for their family and business.

Consultants can't do what the family won't do. We often get too much credit for either success or failure. We can be catalysts, coaches and bring experienced insight, but ultimately, the results are not in the consultant's hands.

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Craig Aronoff, a principal consultant with the Family Business Consulting Group, is a leading speaker, writer and educator in the family business field. Craig can be reached at 678-277-9865 or aronoff@efamilybusiness.com.

The Family Business Consulting Group is the leading international consultancy devoted specifically to family owned business with consultants located across North America and Europe.

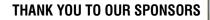




ongratulations to the Young Broker Committee who, once again, staged a successful and funfilled Young Broker Golf Tournament. This year's event took place at the Teulon Golf & Country Club on August 26. A huge THANK YOU goes out to all sponsors who made this great event possible.







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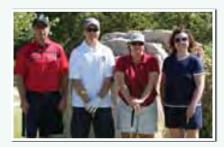
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Longest Drive (Male) contest was won by Raymond Dowse of BSI Insurance-Letellier



Longest Drive (Female) was won by Rena MacLeod of Ranger Insurance



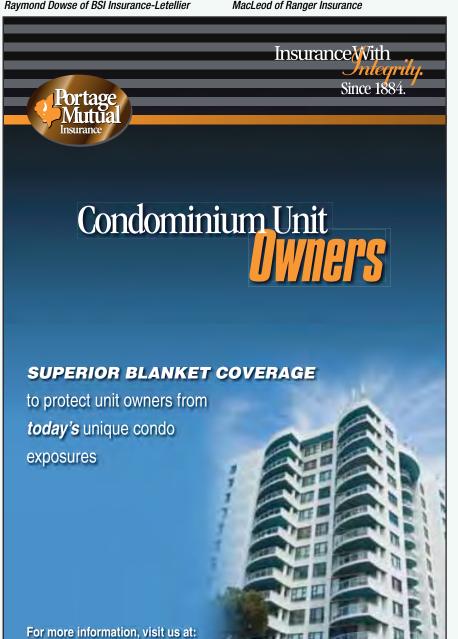
Land in the Pond award went to Randy Owens of Portage Mutual



Land in the Sand was won by Rob Stevenson, Priority Restoration



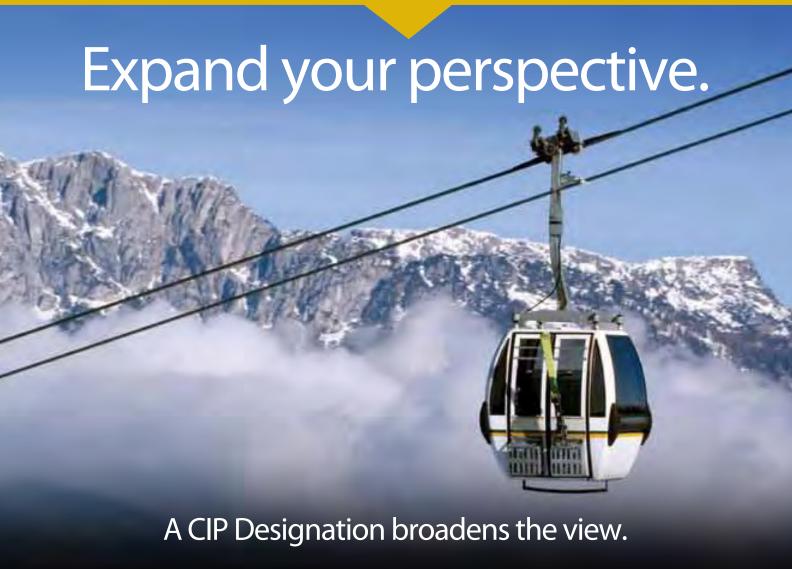
Young Broker Committee Chair Lindsey Jordan working on her putting stroke



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As seen in the Winnipeg Free Press September 3, 2011



Rob Depres, Managing Vice President and John Wright, Executive Vice President Western Region are very pleased to present BFL CANADA's Winnipeg dedicated commercial insurance team.

Sandy Peters Vice President Client Executive

Sandy joins BFL CANADA with 31 years of experience working with both insurance companies and brokerage firms providing unique insights into the servicing requirements and solutions for clients. Sandy's experience includes underwriting, marketing, sales and management with local, national and international brokerage firms both inside and outside of Manitoba. His expertise is in Construction, Manufacturing and Professional Liability. Sandy holds a Chartered Insurance Professional (CIP) designation.

Candace Suski Vice President Client Executive

Candace joined BFL CANADA in our Calgary office in 2005 and has 16 years of insurance industry experience. Following her promotion to Vice President, Client Executive Candace returned to her home province in January 2011 to promote the development and growth of our Commercial office. She has a wide range of Commercial experience and expertise in Transportation, Construction, Retail, Health Care and Life Sciences. Candace holds the Canadian Accredited Insurance Broker (CAIB) and Fellow Chartered Insurance Professional (FCIP) designations.

Joel Davison Client Executive

Joel joins BFL CANADA with over 10 years experience in the insurance industry and has worked with national and international insurance brokerage firms and his past roles include sales and undernvriting. He specializes in providing insurance solutions to the Real Estate/Property Management, Construction, Manufacturing industries and to Public Entities. Joel holds the Canadian Accredited Insurance Broker (CAIB) and Canadian Risk Management (CRM) designations

The BFL CANADA Winnipeg commercial insurance team will be locating to Lakeview Square, 175 Carlton Street Winnipeg.

Contact Information:

Sandy Peters email: speters@bflcanada.ca Ph. 204 298-6200
Candace Suski email: csuski@bflcanada.ca Ph. 204 996-3373
Joel Davison email: jdavison@bflcanada.ca Ph. 204 792-0989
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BFL CANADA's Henderson Highway office will continue to provide full service to Homeowner, Autopac and Commercial clientele.

BFL CANADA Henderson Highway location: 877 Henderson Highway, Winnipeg, MB

Peter Harbun email: pharbun@bflcanada.ca Ph. 204 661-2446

Zurich launches integrated insurance solution for commercial real estate

Real Estate investors and property managers are faced with the responsibility of coping with increasingly complex risks to protect resources from accidental loss and managing uncertainty.

Zurich recently launched the Real Estate Advantage that focuses on the risk management needs of commercial real estate owners and managers in Canada.

"By offering insurance protection customized for the real estate sector covering property, casualty and specialty risks we aim to greatly reduce the risk of coverage gaps or the expense of overlapping coverages," said **Randy MacFarlane**, head of Real Estate for Zurich Canada.

The Zurich Real Estate solution includes more than 35 additional property coverages; builder's risk coverage; and Z-Choice™, a customizable environmental liability insurance product.

The Real Estate Advantage provides a bundled product that benefits customers by offering a simplified program designed to meet the needs of a real estate owner. Zurich has significant capacity to write full real estate portfolios and the underwriting, risk services and claims expertise to foresee the risks faced by office, retail, industrial and multi-residential property owners and investors

To become a part of the online conversation about commercial real estate, contribute to Zurich RealTalk, Zurich's social networking community exclusively for commercial real estate practitioners. Log on at http://www.ZurichRealTalk.com for frank discussions about market trends and industry risks, access exclusive content, and pose questions to a team of subject matter experts.

Please send Industry News items to Managing Editor, Terry Ross.



MIG opens Portage Place office

Officials at MIG Insurance are very excited to report the opening of their new location at Portage Place Shopping Centre in downtown Winnipeg. The new site is at the south end of the skywalk adjacent to the Manitoba Hydro building and MTS Centre.



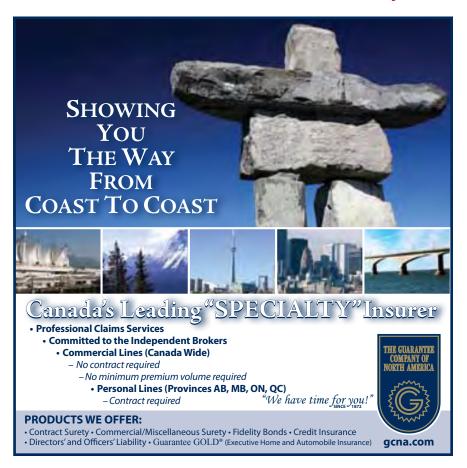
WFG acquires brokerages in MB and SK

Western Financial Group (WFG) has acquired David Duncan Insurance Agency in Gilbert Plains, Manitoba, and Leith & Glassford Agency Ltd. in Rosetown, Saskatchewan.

Agencies will now be operated as Western Financial Group offices in these communities.

"These locations are just another great addition to our Network of offices," said Lana Wood, President of Western Financial Group (Network) Inc. "Our newest Manitoba location in Gilbert Plains will help us continue to provide products and services to its residents at a level they deserve."





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DARRYL LEVY

Curt Vossen, Chairman of the Board, is pleased to announce the appointment of Darryl Levy as President & Chief Executive Officer of Grain Insurance & Guarantee.

Mr. Levy brings over 20 years of senior executive leadership experience to Grain Insurance & Guarantee. In his most recent position, Mr. Levy was Regional President

of Ontario & Western Canada at Rogers Communications. His experience and success in markets across Canada, in addition to his strong distribution channel experience, is a tremendous asset to the Company.

A graduate of the University of Manitoba, Mr. Levy is a member of the Business Council of Manitoba, the Young Presidents Organization and the Executive Advisory Board of the Faculty of Business-University of

Mr. Levy has also been appointed to the Board of Directors of Grain Insurance & Guarantee.

Founded in 1920, Grain Insurance & Guarantee is a leading property & casualty insurer. Headquartered in Winnipeg, this 100% Canadian owned and operated company serves its customers in all 10 Provinces and 3 Territories and is rated "A (Excellent)" by A.M. Best.



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