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ALBERTA **BROKER**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JONATHAN BROWN

Summer is over, fall is upon us and winter is just around the corner. I know I am not looking forward to the cold weather, snow and ice, but I suppose that is why they invented ice fishing. I hope that everyone was able to enjoy this summer to the best of their abilities and are now back in the swing of things after vacation season with renewed determination and drive.

WORK ON THE AUTO FILE

This was a very busy summer for me. As most of you know, a couple of carriers have removed themselves from the Alberta auto insurance market, and this is certainly something that is a concern for us. Although neither carrier was a broker-sold insurer, we want to do all we can to work with the government to ensure that long-term solutions are found, so that no others feel compelled to leave.

To this end, I gave several interviews to different media outlets, and we met with the finance minister's office to present our white paper on Alberta auto insurance and discuss possible solutions to address some of the cost pressures in the system, including:

- Creating an optional coverage in the SPF 1 where insureds could choose either a limited or unlimited right to sue. If they choose a limited right to sue, this would reduce their liability premiums and in the event of a minor injury, they would receive defined benefits including increased care options for recovery instead of simply suing for cash that could take years to be received. Those that choose to maintain an unlimited right to sue would pay higher premiums for their liability coverage and would continue to operate as status quo.
- Updating GRID so that the bad drivers are not subsidized by the good ones.

- Removing the Alberta premium tax on personal auto insurance premiums—an immediate savings of four per cent for all insureds.

These suggestions have been well received by those to whom we have presented them so far, and we hope to continue to work with government and the superintendent of insurance to find long-term sustainable solutions that will keep private passenger auto insurance viable in Alberta.

"Let them know that the ability to operate in real time is what brokers need in order to remain competitive in our digital world ... "

IMAGINE A 50% REDUCTION IN DATA ENTRY TIME

On the technology front, I am happy to report that CSIO is making progress on

the completion of its API standards project. Nearly all of the API use cases have been reviewed and vetted by the committee, which includes brokers, insurers and vendor partners. While this has appeared to be a slow process, I am excited that we are getting ever closer to the day when insurers and brokers will be able to communicate in real time through the brokers BMS system without ever needing to log into a separate portal. This will allow for a reduction in duplicate entry that will save up to 50 per cent of the time brokers currently spend on data entry and allow them to focus on the true value of the broker: relationships and advice. This will also reduce the possibility of errors, as brokers will only need to know one system, and data requirements will be standardized across the carriers.

To this end, I would encourage all members to talk to the business development representatives of their insurer partners. Let them know that the ability to operate in real time is what brokers need in order to remain competitive in our digital world and that brokers are in support of this

initiative and are excited to put this technology into use in their day-to-day operations.

NEW BOARD ROLLING UP THE SLEEVES

In September, the IBAA board held its first meeting of the 2023/2024 term. We have a great board this year, comprised of both new and returning faces, and we are looking forward to continuing and expanding on the work of our predecessors. Our board will be focused on the issues surrounding auto insurance in Alberta, as well as doing all we can to drive broker technology forward. We will also be continuing our work with Ronald McDonald House Charities. This incredible organization does amazing work to support the families of children that need hospital care. IBAA has had the honor of supporting RMHC over the past several years and we look forward to working with them in the future.

I want to thank each one of our board members and members at large who have stepped up for the needs of our industry. They have chosen to commit their time and effort to the continued vibrancy of our industry, and for that, you have my great respect and appreciation.

YOU'RE INVITED

I want to close this article with an invitation to all our broker members: Get involved!

I know that we all lead incredibly busy lives. Our families, hobbies, careers and the unexpected eat up our time and it may seem like there is nothing left to give, but I ask this as someone who experiences all of those same challenges. Getting involved can be as simple as being willing to meet with your MLA alongside one of our board members or sending a letter to the government. It may be completing the occasional IBAA survey, which allows us to understand your needs better or having conversations with your carriers about implementing emerging technology such as real time connectivity through APIs into your systems and workflows. It may even mean being willing to let your name stand for a position on the board of directors.

In whatever way you can, I ask that you be willing to join us to be a part of all the good that is being done to move our industry forward. I am proud to be an insurance broker, to be able to impact the lives of all the people that we work with, even if they don't always see it. I want to do all I can to ensure that brokers remain the absolute best choice for consumers and industry, and I am asking that all of you come alongside us as we strive to keep brokers at the top of our game.



MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Schwartz Reliance Insurance Coaldale

We are happy to announce that Schwartz Reliance Coaldale is our member of the month! A team of three staff members opened the office in November of 2017 and, due to their



hard work and diligence, it has flourished and expanded to a team of eight. Each member of the Coaldale team adds their own special touch to the office and makes it an incredible place to work. When describing them, manager/partner Lori Chogi said, "All of these people make the wheels spin. I do believe in the best customer service, and I truly think that is what separates us from the rest. It took all

of us to make this work.

Every single person in this office, I owe so much gratitude towards."

They are also heavily involved in the local Coaldale community, supporting 4-H clubs, senior organizations, the Coaldale Family Fun Run, the Coaldale Copperheads Junior Hockey Team, and many more. The initiatives



they support establish them as a pillar of their community.

Great job, Schwartz Reliance Insurance Coaldale! We're proud to have you as a member and are excited to see how you continue to grow and support your community. Follow them on Facebook to keep up with their work.



NOT SO FAST

When a Duty to Defend Application Cannot Be Determined Summarily

By Sara Hart & David S. Cowley-Salegio

Courts in Alberta and elsewhere in Canada are encouraging the use of summary judgment to adjudicate claims at an early stage and to save on scarce court resources. However, the appropriateness of summary proceedings can depend on the complexity of the underlying issues, and questions may arise about whether simple issues can be extricated summarily or whether all issues should be dealt with at trial. Accordingly, in a complex construction insurance situation involving 13 separate actions and more than 90 plaintiffs and 20 defendants, is it appropriate for a duty to defend application to be heard summarily prior to trial?

Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Company of Canada v Co-operators General Insurance Company

The Alberta Court of King's Bench in *Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Company of Canada v Co-Operators General Insurance Company* recently considered whether a duty to defend application can be heard summarily or whether it should be adjourned to the trial process and heard concurrently with the underlying actions.

The facts of the case were that APM Construction Services (APM) was the general contractor on a project to expand the Bow River Seniors Lodge in Canmore, Alberta. DCR Inc. (DCR) was one of the subcontractors on the project. In June 2015, during construction work to expand the Bow River Seniors Lodge, an excavator struck and ruptured a live pressurized methane gas line. Gas escaped and ignited, causing a much larger explosion that resulted in property damage on site and to adjacent properties.¹

Numerous lawsuits and applications were launched against various participants in the project, including APM and DCR. One proceeding was an originating application filed by Royal & Sun Alliance ("Royal & Sun"), who was APM's insurer, seeking a declaration that Co-operators General Insurance Company ("Co-operators"), who was DCR's insurer, owed a duty to defend and owed Royal & Sun a duty to contribute financially towards APM's defence. Co-operators filed a cross-application seeking to have the duty to defend application adjourned to be heard at trial with the actions.

At the time of the construction, the principal of DCR had signed a letter of acceptance in respect of the project. That letter was then provided to APM, together with "confirmation of insurance,"



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which was signed by a representative of the Co-operators. In their application, Royal & Sun and APM submitted that, under DCR's commercial general liability ("CGL") policy, APM was an additional insured for claims against it based on the operations of DCR.

At the same time, APM also had a CGL policy with Royal & Sun. APM tendered its defence through Royal & Sun and later requested indemnification from DCR under the letter of acceptance.

In relation to whether APM had coverage under the DCR's Co-operators policy, Co-operators' position was that (1) it had not received a request to add APM as an additional

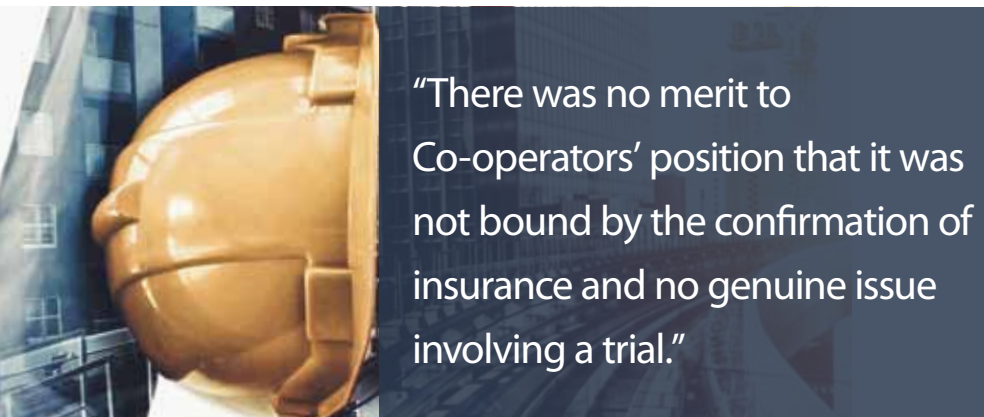
claim for the declaration of a duty to defend and no genuine issue for trial;

- Whether the issue can be dealt with summarily and whether the court has confidence in the sufficiency of the record to do so;
- The strength of the respective positions;
- Whether the court's finding in relation to duty to defend could impact the underlying actions;
- Whether a declaration could cause conflict between insured and insurer;
- Whether there is urgency to provide a defence;
- Whether the party seeking the declaration moved promptly;
- Whether there is prejudice or irreparable harm or inconvenience to any of the parties;

have unintended consequences on the issues in the actions.

- Given the direct claims against APM, only some of the claims against APM would be covered by DCR's CGL policy, which would cause conflict between Royal & Sun and Co-operators.
- There was no urgency, as APM was already being defended by Royal & Sun.
- APM had delayed claiming and filing the duty to defend application.

As a result of the above, the court held that it would not be appropriate for APM and Royal & Sun's duty to defend application to be heard summarily. Rather, the court held that the application should be joined with the other actions to be heard concurrently or consecutively.



insured; (2) APM was not added as an additional insured; (3) the confirmation of insurance was for information only and conferred no rights on APM; (4) DCR assigned its obligations to another contractor; and (5) at the time of the explosion, there was no longer any contract between APM and DCR, and the confirmation of insurance was of no effect.

The court considered the following factors in determining whether the duty to defend application could proceed summarily or needed to be deferred to be dealt with at trial:

- Issues concerning an insurer's duty to defend should be dealt with promptly;
- Whether there is a substantial factual dispute;
- Whether the applicant can meet the Weir-Jones summary judgment test that there is no defence to its

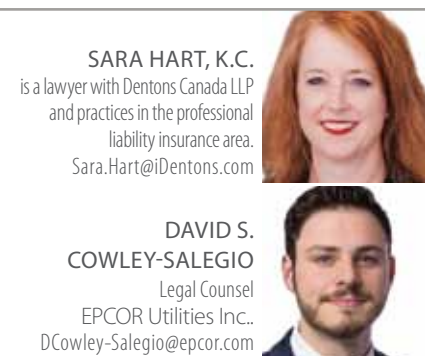
- The status of the underlying action; and
- Whether there is any practical benefit to the declaration.

After considering the above, the court held as follows:

- There was a dispute between the parties on whether APM was an additional insured on DCR's CGL policy.
- There was no merit to Co-operators' position that it was not bound by the confirmation of insurance and no genuine issue involving a trial.
- There was a genuine issue requiring a trial in relation to the legal effect of the certificate of insurance, any rights it conferred on APM and the fact that APM was not designated an additional insured in the declarations.
- There was a risk that a finding on the duty to defend application would

The Take-Away

There are a variety of insurance issues raised by this set of facts and this decision. For instance, the parties debate the authority of Co-operators' representative to bind Co-operators' by signing the confirmation of insurance as well as the legal effect of the fact that APM was never actually added as an additional insured on the declarations page of DCR's CGL policy. It is no surprise that the court in this case found a genuine issue for trial and was not satisfied that the issue of the duty to defend could be dealt with summarily.



¹ *Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Company of Canada v Co-operators, 2023 ABKB 426 ("Royal") at para 1.*



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WEATHERING THE STORM



How the P&C Insurance Industry is Developing Resilience Against the Costs of Severe Weather

BY AARON SUTHERLAND

After a record-breaking year of extreme weather events across Canada, the lesson is clear: It pays to be prepared. Property and casualty (P&C) insurers have a long history of raising awareness of the need to adapt to the increasing risks we face as a result of natural catastrophes. Over a decade ago, Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) made climate change adaptation a national strategic priority. Today, we continue to push for a whole-of-society approach recognizing that governments, emergency management organizations, the P&C insurance industry, brokers and the public all have a role to play in addressing the challenges we face.

Western Canada experienced another year of extreme weather events. In Alberta, there were close to 1,100 reported wildfires, and approximately 2 million hectares were burned. This is a new record that's almost double the previous record (1.35 million hectares) set in 1981. Fortunately, this year's wildfires did not result in any loss of life or large property damage thanks

in large part to the heroic efforts and bravery of firefighters and first responders.

In the summer, several storms swept across Alberta and into Saskatchewan and Manitoba, resulting in more than \$300 million in insured losses according to initial estimates by Catastrophe Indices and Quantification Inc.¹ Of that total, \$90 million—or 30 per cent—went toward replacing or repairing storm-damaged vehicles in Alberta. Since 2020, insured losses to vehicles in Alberta from severe weather now exceeds \$500 million.

Over the past 15 years, insurance claims from severe weather events have more than quadrupled. The new normal for yearly insured catastrophic losses in Canada is \$2 billion, most of which is due to water-related damage. Insured losses in 2022 totaled \$3.4 billion, and we have already exceeded the \$3 billion mark this year.

Overall, the average cost per natural disaster in Canada has jumped 1,250 per cent since the 1970s. A typical

storm or flood that cost insurers roughly \$8 million in the early 1970s now costs them over \$110 million.

We all must do better to protect ourselves from natural disasters, which continue to have an outsized impact on the most vulnerable people in our communities.

How insurers are supporting flood and adaptation advocacy

IBC has been leading conversations with the federal and provincial governments on ways to improve the resilience of communities and better manage the costs of flooding for high-risk properties in Canada. Representatives from 30 insurance companies devoted thousands of hours of expertise and other resources to support the federal government's Task Force on Flood Insurance and Relocation.

The P&C insurance industry put forward options to create a flood insurance program—including a public-private partnership model—to help make affordable insurance available to residents in high-risk areas.

Fortunately, the Government of Canada has begun to take action. The 2023 budget committed \$31.7 million to stand up Canada's first national flood insurance program to help protect Canadians at highest risk of flooding. It also pledged \$15.3 million to create an online flood portal and \$48 million to modernize disaster financial assistance arrangements programs and designate special flood hazard management areas. The funding will help ensure that all residents, regardless of their risk, have access to affordable flood insurance.

On June 27, the federal government released its official National Adaptation Strategy (NAS) and Action Plan, the first of its kind in Canada. The NAS and action plan will strengthen the government's flood program commitment by:

- Expanding the flood hazard identification mapping program
- Enhancing wildfire protection
- Topping up the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund
- Accelerating the use of climate-informed building codes, standards and guidelines
- Delivering climate tool kits and services that increase the uptake of climate-resilient practices and investments in communities.

The NAS is a critical component in delivering the flood insurance program and has the potential to help address the effects of catastrophic weather events on Canadian families and communities. IBC continues to urge the federal government to make the necessary investments to implement this strategy. Along with its members, IBC will continue to engage the federal government to ensure that funding to deliver the NAS is included in the next federal budget.

Alberta must also increase provincial investment in measures that build resilience to the risks it faces.

How brokers can support flood and adaptation advocacy

While the P&C insurance industry enters this critical stage in securing commitments from government to move

ahead in adapting to future risks from the increase in severe weather events, there is a more compelling case than ever for the essential role of brokers.

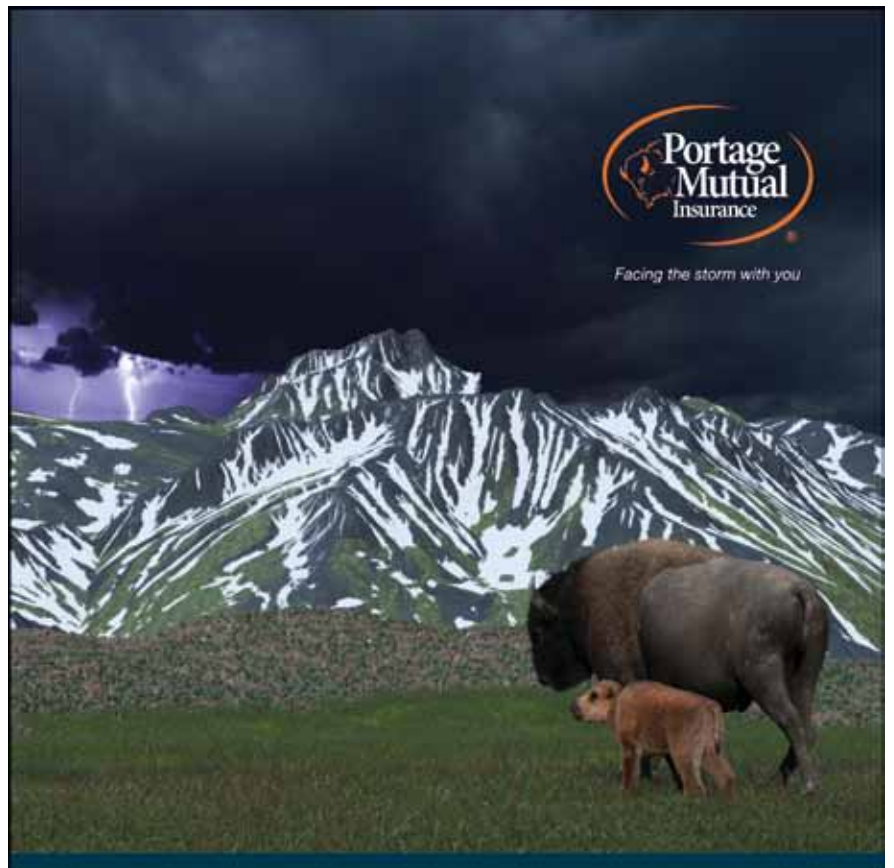
The federal government has made it clear that it wants to launch the national flood insurance program in partnership with the provinces and territories. IBC encourages Alberta brokers—as both insurance professionals and Albertans—to urge their provincial representatives to support this new program. Brokers are in a key position to communicate how the NAS and the flood program

will benefit families across this province. In sharing this message, we can build wider support for a program that will help many Albertans cope with the increasing risks of severe weather events.

AARON SUTHERLAND
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Insurance Bureau of Canada
ASutherland@ibc.ca



¹ IBC.ca; September 19, 2023; Summer storms in Alberta and Prairies cause over \$300 million in insured losses



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HUMAN 101 RESOURCES

By Julianna Cantwell

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Brokers are very concerned about the people-management aspect of their businesses. This (under)statement was made abundantly clear by the packed room at the IBAA convention human resources (HR) seminar and the results of the post-convention survey. Attracting, retaining and inspiring performance of quality staff is vital to every brokerage's success and with today's competitive labour market and shifting workplace expectations, it's even more critical.

With this in mind, we are launching a series of articles that will explore all things HR related. Industry expert Julianna Cantwell, president of Juna Consulting and convention presenter, will share insight and advice with the goal of helping you make the most of your most valuable resource. So that we're all working from the same foundation, Julianna begins with a review of what HR management is.

—Annette Hubick, editor



Someone once said to me,
**“HR is like insurance—
nobody cares about it until they need it.”**

Yep, that stung at first, because I live and breathe human resources (HR) matters in my everyday life and work, and I care very deeply about HR and doing “it” well. Yet, when I stopped to think about it, he was absolutely right. Most non-HR folks don’t understand the value that a strategic approach to HR can bring to organizations—time and money savings happen when “the people stuff” is done well.

SO, WHAT EXACTLY IS HR MANAGEMENT ANYWAY?

Employees come into your organization through your recruitment and selection (hiring) process and leave your company through terminations, retirements and resignations (exiting). I often joke and tell people, “Traditionally, ‘HR’ was known as the ‘people who hire you, fire you and are the policy cops.’ But, not anymore...”

Simply put, HR involves everything an organization does around the employee life cycle (see diagram below).

Being strategic about your HR management is more than hiring and firing people. It also involves:

EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION AND ON-BOARDING

Offering an orientation program that is engaging and accelerates the learning curve of your new employees can shorten new-hire time to productivity.

Orientation involves connecting the new employee to their role during the first week to first month. Top employers also offer robust onboarding that supports the new employee at regular intervals throughout the first year of employment.

DID YOU KNOW?

- 37.9% of new hires resign within a year. Of which, two out of three often do so within the first six months.¹
- New employees who went through a structured onboarding program were 58% more likely to be with the organization after three years.²

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Many employees are motivated to grow and get better at what they are doing, and some also want to learn new skills to help them get promoted into higher levels of responsibilities within your company.

DID YOU KNOW?

“Training” is provided when a company wants its employees to increase their abilities to do their current jobs. Examples:

- customer service / interpersonal skills
- computer systems training

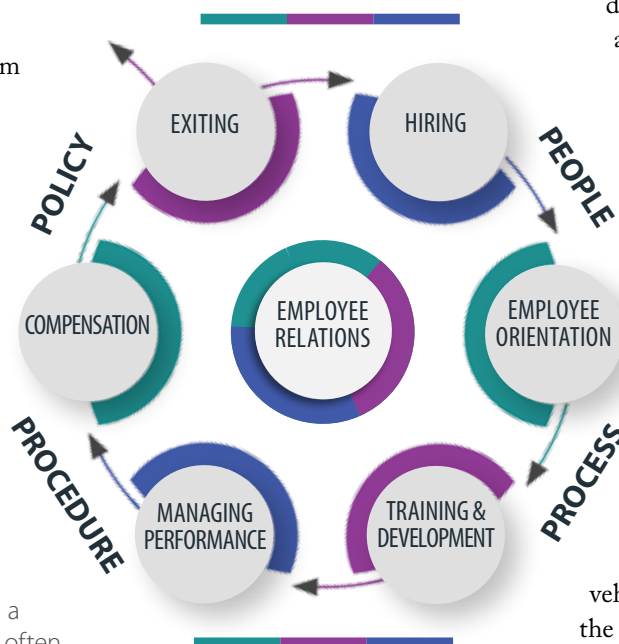
“Development” consists of learning opportunities that build new skills so they can fill future positions. Examples:

- leadership and management skills (delegation, coaching)
- financial literacy (budget development)

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A performance management program’s purpose is to set, measure,

EMPLOYEE LIFE CYCLE



track and, ultimately, improve the performance of individuals and groups of employees. An effective performance management program involves:

- Setting clear expectations for team members
- Providing supportive coaching (both positive and corrective feedback)
- Setting meaningful goals
- Measuring success against goals

The most important document in performance management is the job description. Many companies have outdated job descriptions (or none at

all); thus, it makes it difficult to set clear expectations or achieve results.

DID YOU KNOW?

If a position in your organization has changed more than 20%, then it’s probably time to do a job evaluation to prevent conflict (role clarity issues) and to adjust the pay for the role’s contributions. This is true whether you enlarge the job or decrease its scope.

COMPENSATION

What “total rewards package” are you currently offering your people?

“Total rewards” is HR speak for:

- Base pay (salary or hourly wage)
- Incentives (bonuses, commissions, merit increases, etc.)
- Vacation allotment (paid time off)
- Health benefits (extended medical, dental, optical, health spending account, short term and long term disability coverage, accidental death & dismemberment insurance, life insurance, etc.)
- Retirement programs (pensions, matching RRSP, etc.)
- Other benefits (uniform allowances, training allowances, paid time off for bereavement leave, personal days, sick days, etc.)
- Perks (free coffee, free parking, paid cell phones, laptop computers, company vehicles, gas cards, pizza parties and the list goes on!)

DID YOU KNOW?

Compensation decisions are tricky; they continuously balance two important factors:

1. Stay competitive with the marketplace (external equity).
- AND
2. Keep pay fair amongst employees (internal equity).

Certain positions can be challenging to fill. You may need to “lift” its base pay or offer additional incentives to attract and retain good people. When you increase the pay for

continued on page 16

Unpredictable timelines call for agile innovation.

So, when an influx of insurance claims came rolling in,

the team at Petline Insurance was buried under paperwork.

Then, the "aha" moment from the tech team.

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a position to ensure it gets filled, it can cause imbalances inside your company. This can create an issue of **perceived inequity**, which is a major challenge business owners and managers face.

This is why deciding how to pay employees compared to other organizations in the region (which is called a “compensation philosophy”) should be based on recent salary data, and why it is recommended that you conduct a salary review every three years or so (to make sure you are paying market rates that align with your company’s pay strategy). For example:

- 50th percentile means that a company chooses to pay on par with the average of other similar organizations.
- 75th percentile is considered generous.
- Near the 90th percentile means you’re a top paying employer.

Some companies choose to be below the 50th percentile, but they offer other benefits and flexible options to attract and retain their key people, such as work-from-home policies and flexible hours of work to accommodate work-life balance.

Editor’s Note: *IBAA conducts salary surveys to collect and provide relevant, up-to-date compensation data as a member benefit. The last survey was conducted in 2021, and the results were shared with member brokerage principals and managers. To request a copy, email communications@ibaa.ca.*

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

This is a catch-all category for HR activities that help employees who have day-to-day issues (anything from timesheet protocols to harassment complaints, health and safety policies to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging initiatives). Every interaction your managers have with your employees creates your company culture.

DID YOU KNOW?

You cannot automatically fire someone when they arrive to work drunk or high. If you know an employee has an addiction (or a “reasonable person” would suspect

it based on the employee’s past performance), they are protected under the Alberta Human Rights Act (drugs, alcohol, gambling, pornography, etc. – all addictions are covered under the protected ground of mental disability).

Employee relations matters are often **complex** and **sticky**. That’s why it’s important to get professional guidance. Look for the CPHR designation when hiring an external consultant or an internal HR advisor/manager. It’s also prudent to ensure your outsourced HR consultant has proper insurance coverage, which includes: errors & omissions (E&O) insurance, commercial general liability (CGL) and workers’ compensation (WCB) clearance. Then you have protected your business interests and likely hired a competent HR professional.

Of course, HR does also encompass “hiring and firing,” and there are strategic activities you can do from a business standpoint for these stages of the employee life cycle:

HIRING

Hiring the wrong person can be costly (e.g., a \$50,000/year job can cost a business \$25,000–\$100,000 in net losses). Two key skills hiring managers need to have are:

1. Asking the right questions, using structured interview guides
 - Avoid asking inappropriate questions and unintentionally discriminating.
 - Fully explore a candidate’s knowledge, skills, abilities and attitude toward the work you’re offering.
2. Active listening skills
 - Triangulate answers to uncover potential lies or embellishment of their experience.
 - Hear what is not being said and probe for their motivation to do the job they’re interviewing for.

EXITING

Eventually, employees leave your organization. When they do, they usually have valuable (and often unspoken)

insights into what makes your company tick—the good, the bad and the ugly.

DID YOU KNOW?

Departing employees often tell their current employer that they are leaving to go to a “better” job (more money or better career opportunity). The #1 **actual** reason most employees leave a company is because they quit their boss. Yes, that’s right; they don’t like their supervisor.

It can be a career-limiting move to openly say to one’s manager or the company representative that you didn’t get along with your boss, so people often make up another excuse that will allow them to still get a good reference from your company.

Exit interviews, when conducted by a trained HR professional—whether inside your organization or outsourced—can yield a gold mine about what is working well with your business and what needs improvement. Departing employees feel much safer speaking the truth to a neutral third party. So, if you are currently doing exit interviews, please **DO NOT** have their direct manager conduct these. Have a trusted in-house HR advisor or an external HR consultant perform this task, so you get valuable, honest feedback.

As you can see, “HR” is a vast and complex subject, and we have merely scratched the surface of its multiple facets. In future issues of the *Alberta Broker* magazine, we will be delving into these specific areas of human resources management and tackle timely HR challenges you might be facing. Until next time, conduct your own HR health check (page 17) to assess how in tune you are with the people management side of your business.

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¹ *Andre, Louie; “112 Employee Turnover Statistics: 2023 Causes, Cost & Prevention Data”; [FinancesOnline.com](https://www.financesonline.com), August 15, 2023*

² *Hirsch, Arlene S.; “Don’t Underestimate the Importance of Good Onboarding”; [SHRM.org](https://www.shrm.org); August 10, 2017*



HR HEALTH CHECK

(Self-Assessment)

How in tune are you with the people management side of your business?

What is your organization's employee turnover rate?

- 0-9%
- 10-20%
- 21-35%
- More than 35%

WHY IT MATTERS: Losing an employee can cost a company one half to two times the employee's salary.¹

According to the results of a survey by Centric Consulting, 83% of [insurance] agents quit within three years, while 30% quit within three months.² A healthy attrition rate is usually single-to low double-digits. More than 20% is usually an indicator that something structurally in your organization needs to be fixed.

Your organization's budget for employee benefits is...

- < 10% of salary cost
- 11 - 15% of salary cost
- > 15% of salary cost
- I don't know how much is spent on benefits
- We do not offer benefits

WHY IT MATTERS: Gen Xers, Baby Boomers and older millennials often care more about the benefits programs rather than the wage or salary, especially if they have families to support or are older workers themselves.

Benefits packages can greatly influence a candidate's choice to come work for you. Employees may even accept lower pay in exchange for a more complete benefit program. Best-in-class organizations budget approximately 30 per cent of salary costs for employee benefits (and often have extremely high employee retention rates).

How often does your organization review employee salaries to ensure competitiveness in your industry?

- Annually or every 2 years
- Every 3 – 5 years
- Other
- I don't know, we don't have a set time

WHY IT MATTERS: In January 2023, the Alberta Pensions Services Corporation (APS) applied a 3.72 per cent cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA)* increase.³

¹ Heinz, Kate; "The True Costs of Employee Turnover"; *BuiltIn.com*; 2023.06.23
² Batiza, Travis; "Solving the insurance industry's turnover rate"; *PropertyCasualty360.com*; *ALM Global, LLC*; 2019.08.23
³ "2023 Cost-of-living adjustments"; *apsc.ca*; *Alberta Pension Services Corporation*; https://www.apsc.ca/news/Cost_of_Living_2023.jsp

In today's job market, it is a struggle to find and keep good employees. It is more important than ever to ensure you are paying on par with industry standards so you can attract good people and retain top talent. A best practice in Alberta is to conduct a salary review every three years because our oil and gas-based economy fluctuates, which affects the employee market. * COLAs are an important financial indicator to external pay equity in the province

How much does your organization invest in training per year, per employee?

- < \$250 per person
- \$250 – \$500 per person
- \$500 – \$1,000 per person
- > \$1,000 per person
- I do not know
- We do not offer training to our employees

WHY IT MATTERS: 87% of millennials rate "professional or career growth and development opportunities" as important to them in a job—far more than the 69% of non-millennials who say the same.⁴

Developing and training employees is the best way to keep key talent within your organization. When done well, learning opportunities motivate and engage staff and build loyalty to you and your company. When it comes to your employees, invest in your best!

How much is unresolved conflict costing your organization per year?

- \$ _____

WHY IT MATTERS: Unresolved conflict costs businesses \$359 billion (USD) per year.⁵

Conflict is natural, but it gets in the way of team productivity and hurts your bottom line when it's not properly managed. What causes conflict? Many things: lack of role clarity, ineffective processes, personality differences and poor supervision/leadership skills. Train your leaders on how to manage conflict at work so you can avoid having to manage teamwork issues, decreased productivity, and leaves of absence for stress, including short-term and long-term disability claims.

⁴ Adkins, Amy and Rigoni, Brandon; "Millennials Want Jobs to Be Development Opportunities"; *Gallup.com*; 2016.06.30
⁵ De Haaff, Brian; "Workplace Conflict Costs \$359 Billion, According to Science"; *Inc.com*; *Mansueto Ventures*; 2017.01.27



VIEWPOINT

by Traci Boland

I am extremely excited about taking on the role of president of the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada (IBAC) for the 2023-24 term. I am following in the footsteps of Linda Dolan who has been an amazing leader for our board, and we all thank her for her time and dedication to the broker channel.

Insurance has been in my life for about 38 years. As the child of a broker, I spent most of my summers in the office filing and being backup reception. After leaving my first career path as an international figure skating coach, I returned to London, Ontario, and obtained my broker's license in 2004. Approximately 10 years ago I started the process of purchasing my father's brokerage. Currently, my business partner Jamie Marshall and I own Ontario West Insurance Brokers and Bill Blaney Insurance Brokers Ltd.

I love being an insurance broker, but where my passion lies is in ensuring the longevity of the broker channel for brokers across Canada—whether that means government advocacy, company advocacy, education or technology advancements. I served with my provincial association, IBAO, for over 15 years holding all the volunteer positions available, including president in 2017.

My career goal all along has been to become president of IBAC and to be the voice of the brokers across Canada. Attending my first Hill Day (around 2007-2008), I accompanied then IBAC president Justin MacGregor to our meetings with parliamentarians. As a young broker, the opportunity to be a part of IBAC's advocacy on the Bank Act was huge. This was the beginning of the path that I find myself on now.

The past three years have seen an accelerated pace of change and a range of new and emerging challenges, from workplace transformation and labour shortages to worldwide inflation and geopolitical risks. IBAC has been

able to navigate through this shifting landscape and continue to evaluate the needs of brokers across Canada within our four pillars of federal advocacy, professional development, the broker identity program and technology.

Our message for our 2023 Hill Day included continuing to advocate for the inclusion of Section 416 of the Bank Act in the mandate of the new complaints body for consumers, ensuring that brokers are at the table for the national flood insurance program and the national adaptation strategy. We are also drawing attention to the need for a government-led solution for earthquake risk.

Our national advertising campaign "Works Best" has been launched and is receiving positive feedback. In addition, work continues on our video series "A Day in the Life of a Broker" and highlighting the 35th anniversary of the Bipper.

Technology has moved very quickly in the past year with our work on the data exchange program which included a study that demonstrates and quantifies the tangible benefits of API (Application Programming Interface) connectivity for insurance brokers and carriers. We need the entire industry—insurance carriers, BMS vendors and insurance brokers—to get on board and invest in API connectivity.

Education has seen updates in all CAIB programs this year with the final rollouts of the programs expected by the end of Q1 2024. All CAIB courses will be in a digital format and delivered through our member associations.

I look forward to serving as the national voice and working on behalf of the amazing brokers from across Canada.

TRACI BOLAND, CAIB
President
IBAC
ibac@ibac.ca





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SLAY YOUR TO-DO LIST

CRUELTY-FREE WAYS TO MASTER TIME MANAGEMENT

By Jacquie Surgenor Gaglione

I don't have enough time to do everything.

How many times have you uttered these words? What about:

I feel overwhelmed.

I hear them a lot (and I know I've said them often too).

We waste time and procrastinate in the name of time management (often because we don't know where to start or because we feel overwhelmed).

The challenge with time management is more in how we do the manage part than with the time part. So, how do you manage it effectively? There are tons of ideas if you search

on the internet, but here are a few and how I've used them.

Gather Information

A key element of effective time management is having the information you need. You may have some of this information handy and other data might come in time.

Where do you spend your time?

You might be able to determine this by looking at your calendar or through old tasks lists, or you might need to gather data by paying attention.

What distracts you? You might be able to easily answer this but pay attention over the next few weeks and make notes when you procrastinate, or are distracted, and see if anything else emerges.

Are there certain tasks which you avoid more than others? Make note of these and determine how you can make them better. Sometimes simple awareness is enough to pull you back on course. Other times, you can



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orchestrate your day to make yourself more successful. Some people will want to get these out of the way first, and other people will want to do something more fun first to build up momentum before tackling them.

What system do you use now?

Write down everything you can about the system you currently use. Then look at it and note what works (so you can incorporate it) and what isn't working (so you can change it).

Control Your Calendar

I know someone who says, "Control your calendar or others will control it," which is a great reminder. But how do you control your calendar?



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Put in all your important meetings, tasks, and events first.

Block time for your big projects and any routines you have and create meetings or appointments in your calendar. Create a list of what you do on a regular basis and then block the time to do it. If others can access your calendar, then that time will show as unavailable. If it's just you referencing your calendar, then you know that if someone asks for a meeting during time you have blocked, you either need to find that time elsewhere in your calendar or you need to find a different time to meet.

I have an hour blocked every Monday morning for my Monday planning, two hours once a month for a clarity break, two hours each month to do my month end and I recently added two blocks each month to do content planning and preparation. If I look at my goals for the week, I look at my calendar and allocate the time right in my calendar; if I don't have time available, I need to move appointments and meetings or readjust my goals. When I add something to my calendar, I try to add specifics to the notes of the appointment; for example, if I block time for "learning," then in the body, I'll list what modules of the course I want to work on, what TED Talk or DISC webinar I want to watch (with the link if possible). What I'm trying to do is to reduce friction. I don't want to get to that time block and then waste time trying to remember what is next or what I want to do. This alone can save tons of time.

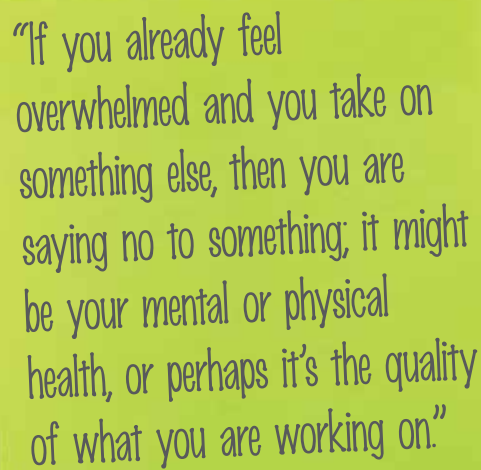
Eliminate Distractions

This one seems obvious, but how many times are you focused and your attention is interrupted by an email floating by on your screen or your phone dings with a notification? **There are lots of apps you can put on your phone or computer to minimize distractions** but try turning your phone over and putting it on silent and closing your email as a quick way to start.

Ensure you have everything you need before you start so you aren't wasting time looking for things.

Do you need a book or a certain pen? What about something to drink or eat. Don't let yourself get pulled away by things you can gather beforehand.

Look at your environment with a critical eye. Do you need a quiet place with a door? Are you trying to finish a project while people are coming in and out of your space? Set up boundaries. Many of us are working from home now, which comes with new distractions. Maybe you need to get



"If you already feel overwhelmed and you take on something else, then you are saying no to something; it might be your mental or physical health, or perhaps it's the quality of what you are working on."

out of your main space. I have a local coffee shop that I love and I know that when I'm working there, I am more focused and the change of scenery is a nice break—and bonus that I can savour their amazing chai tea while I work (I'm there now writing this).

Use Technology

Technology is a double-edged sword; it's made our lives easier in many ways but it's also made distractions easier.

I use email rules to move newsletter emails into one folder and I sort by sender. This keeps these emails out of my main inbox (which helps me avoid email overwhelm), but also helps me go through them quickly. While sometimes I'm interested in what a certain store might be selling, often

I'm not so I can just look at that folder a couple times a week and delete them quickly.

You can **set up focus times** in Office 365 (and I'm sure something similar exists in other platforms). You can also get analytics about where you spend your time which will give you valuable insights.

Use the **focus or do-not-disturb functions** on your phone.

After you've tracked where you spend your time and determined what your distractions are, it is easier to address those. If you find yourself scrolling social media, move the app off your home screen or set it up so you have to enter your password each time you log on. Those small barriers can be enough to catch yourself before you get sucked into mindless scrolling (James Clear does a great job talking about this in his book *Atomic Habits*).

Batch Activities and Avoid Multitasking

Starting is often the hardest part, and once we get going, we are in the groove. See where you can batch activities so you can get more done in one smaller chunk of time. For example, I try to plan my social media once a week; by the time I log into the different websites I need, I can easily (and often quickly) get a few posts prepped. My mind is focused on this task and adding a few extra similar tasks does not add in a bunch of extra time.

Think about what other activities you can group (and then add them to your calendar). I will often batch tasks in a bucket called "small things" and allocate an hour. These tasks are those small things which eventually need to get done (and may eventually become time sensitive), but that I avoid as they are tedious. I'll set a timer for 60 minutes and then see how many I can get crossed off (bonus that I can generally cross off quite a few which is motivating for me).

Build in Rest Time

We have a productivity maximum. We can't just go forever. So, figure out where you start slowing down or get distracted and stop before that time. That length of time might differ depending on activity so that's OK.

Build in breaks to your schedule.

It's so easy to just jump from one thing to the next with virtual meetings or working on our computers. Your brain (and your body) needs an opportunity to look away and to move, so build those into your schedule. Sometimes five minutes might be enough, but

other times, you will need more time. Pay attention to what activities drain you more and build in longer breaks when you do these activities.

The Pomodoro® Technique is a great method; choose one task and work on it for 25 minutes and then take a 5-minute break. After four rounds, take a longer (10- to 15-minute break).

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Prioritize

This can often seem like the most challenging—everything is important, isn't it? It might feel like that, but we can't thrive in that environment.

Michael Bungay Stanier asks a question that I think is **one of the best questions to help us prioritize: "If I say yes to this, what am I saying no to?"**

If you already feel overwhelmed and you take on something else, then you are saying no to something; it might be your mental or physical health, or perhaps it's the quality of what you are working on. **We do not have unlimited resources.**

I often coach people to ask about timelines when people ask them to do something. Often, we feel like we need to do something right away, and maybe they don't need it until next week. Be clear about their expectations and whether you can meet them. Recently, I've been practising this when people ask to meet; I ask if it is time-sensitive and if not, I try to schedule it for

the following week to ensure I keep capacity to meet the goals I've set for that week. If it is time sensitive, then I look for open blocks in my calendar, and if I don't have any, then I need to decide what I'm saying no to if I book the time to meet. Typically, people just set the meeting and dig themselves a deeper overwhelm hole.

The "Eisenhower Box" is a great tool for prioritizing tasks (see image below). To use it, you categorize your activities and tasks on whether they are:

- Important or not important
- Urgent or not urgent

That gives you four quadrants which allows you to prioritize:

- Important + urgent=do these now
- Important + not urgent=schedule these
- Not important + urgent=delegate these (if possible)
- Not important + not urgent=delete these

Track What Works

In the beginning, you will need to spend extra time prepping, organizing

and creating a system that works for you. Don't be afraid to throw out ideas that just don't work (but give them a fair chance first).

Spend time brainstorming routines you already do and ones you want to do. Think about what activities you do on a regular basis (or you want to do regularly).

Create a system to track your tasks. Maybe a weekly list on a pad of legal paper is great for you, or perhaps you use Outlook Tasks. If you don't use anything, then start with something and build in time to reflect on what felt easy and where there was resistance, and then adjust to reduce the struggle.

Start small and try to improve one thing at a time. We have a tendency to want to do it all and then we crash, because it's not sustainable all at once.

Time management is an ever-evolving process. While the core ideas will remain, how you implement them may change. You will add or delete routines, or perhaps you need different focus or break times.

Next Steps

"The hardest part is starting. Once you get that out of the way, you'll find the rest of the journey much easier."

— Simon Sinek

Just start somewhere. It can feel overwhelming (notice the trend here?), but starting is often the hardest part, so start with one thing.

Gathering information is a great beginning. Block time in your calendar (preferably this week) to do this. Then at the end, identify the next step and block that time. Then just play and experiment.

Let me know what is working for you!

JACQUIE SURGENOR GAGLIONE is the founder of Leadership and Life, an Alberta-based coaching firm dedicated to creating strong leaders and healthy teams. For more information, visit leadershipandlife.ca or email jacquie@leadershipandlife.ca.



	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<p>DO <i>Do it now</i></p> <p>Tasks with clear deadlines and significant consequences if not completed in a timely fashion.</p>	<p>DECIDE <i>Schedule a time to do it</i></p> <p>Tasks with no set deadline but that bring you closer to your long-term goals.</p>
Not Important	<p>DELEGATE <i>Who can do it for you?</i></p> <p>Tasks that need to get done, but don't need your expertise in order to be completed.</p>	<p>DELETE <i>Eliminate it</i></p> <p>Tasks that distract you from your preferred course and don't add any measurable value.</p>



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Industry Comes Together to Refine CSIO's eDocs Descriptions and Improve Broker Efficiency

By Kathryn Sinclair

In developing CSIO's multi-year strategic plan last year, the board of directors identified an opportunity to further improve standards development and corresponding implementation guides to ensure there is no room for differing interpretations. As part of this initiative, the standardization of eDocs was a priority because CSIO discovered inconsistencies between insurers in labelling eDocs codes into the broker management system (BMS) and the code did not always reflect the document's contents. Brokers would need to open the eDocs to determine if they required action and relabel the eDocs in their BMS. This takes valuable time away from them to focus on what's most important—their customers.

CSIO's eDocs is the industry's most widely used technology solution, allowing brokers to receive electronic policy documents at their fingertips.

It provides smooth, fast downloads of documents directly from an insurer's or vendor's system to a BMS via CSIONet.

To eliminate inconsistencies with eDocs, CSIO launched a project addressing unclear data standards to improve broker efficiency. By refining eDocs descriptions, brokers and insurers can communicate effectively, and brokers can quickly identify a document's contents in their BMS. Here are the steps that CSIO and its members took to make this happen.

The Collaborative Process

During the first part of 2023, CSIO conducted the following to address ambiguity for eDocs descriptions:

Discussions and discovery sessions

Multiple sessions were held with brokers, insurers and BMS vendors to gather feedback on unclear eDocs use case descriptions. This included:

- Working with brokers and vendors to discuss eDocs workflow processes and ways to improve eDocs code selection.
- Contacting insurers to assess their existing code selection process and capture current use cases.
- Creating, publishing and promoting a form on CSIO's website for members to report ambiguous standards.

These sessions led to CSIO updating descriptions and identifying 17 of them that were not required.

Broker surveys and focus groups

CSIO surveyed hundreds of brokers across the country and hosted focus group sessions to gather input on proposed eDocs descriptions. Each session focused on a specific BMS, ensuring that all use cases were accurately captured, and confirming if the proposed eDocs labelling is clear for each use case.

eDocs Working Group meeting

Brokers, insurers, and BMS vendors from CSIO's eDocs working group convened to reach a consensus on a list of refined eDocs descriptions for all use cases. These include billing, claims, policy transaction, cancellation, lapse and underwriting. Following this, CSIO successfully completed a business requirement document for insurers and vendors to consult for implementation.

The Result: Refined eDocs Descriptions

Thanks to the effort of the eDocs working group, CSIO met its 2023 objective and finalized eDocs descriptions to be used in the eDocs standards for all use cases, all within a short period of time. Clearly labelled eDocs will save brokers and insurers time and money and build industry confidence that everyone is speaking the same language.

"As a broker, we are thrilled to see this eDocs initiative come to fruition," said Jeff Roy, president and CEO at Excalibur Insurance Group. "The refined eDocs descriptions will not only reduce friction but save valuable time and money, which allows brokers to spend more time having meaningful conversations with clients. The industry has demonstrated how collaboration

with brokers, insurers and BMS vendors can make a difference in ensuring eDocs codes and descriptions are clear and consistent."

Brokers will be able to benefit from the refined eDocs standards once their insurer and BMS vendor partners program these standards in their systems. The table below outlines the 40 eDocs descriptions that capture all industry use cases:

USE CASE	NUMBER OF eDOCS DESCRIPTIONS
Billing	15
Claims	7
Policy Transaction (Policy dec & liability certificate)	12
Cancellation	5
Underwriting Request	1

"The industry coming together and CSIO's structured approach to this initiative was instrumental in reaching a consensus and advancing the standardization of eDocs descriptions in a short period of time," says Aly Kanji, president and CEO at InsureLine Brokers Inc. "The output from the eDocs working group will ensure a standardized industry approach, which will provide further

opportunity for automation within the broker's workflow while providing brokers with an enhanced experience."

The **eDocs Business Requirements and Certification Document** is now available for insurers and vendors to program in their systems.

Brokers can learn more by taking CSIO's upcoming professional development course or accessing its useful **eDocs Codes Broker Resources Guide** (with updated descriptions) on the CSIO website. They can also speak with their insurer or vendor partners about programming the updated eDocs standards in their systems. CSIO is working with insurers and vendors to scope the effort required for the changes and support their implementation of the eDocs standards.

The dedication, knowledge, and collaboration of the eDocs working group made this achievement possible. Thank you to all of the brokers, vendor partners, and insurers for your contribution to this important industry initiative.

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WORDS OF WISDOM



The Best Advice Shared With Young Brokers

By Jamie Johnston

Starting in a new industry is always intimidating, and insurance is no exception. Between the jargon, endless coverage packages and new emerging exposures, it is easy to become overwhelmed. A key way to combat those panicked emotions that start to surface when the insurance industry becomes too ferocious to handle, is to lean on experienced brokers for support. With that in mind, I polled my fellow PYIB board members and asked them to share the best pieces of advice they've received from experienced brokers. Their answers revealed common themes, which I've compiled and shared below.

It is okay to push back with your clients.

At the end of the day, you're the professional and the expert, just because a client doesn't agree with something does not mean it is not correct. It's important to keep this in

mind and to lead your client with confidence. Ultimately, this can help you to provide them with the service they are paying for, even if it means disagreeing.

Though it is important to constantly be learning, you'll never know everything.

Given this fact, subsequent advice is that it is valuable to build a strong support network. Having other brokers and underwriters to use as resources will help fill in gaps in areas you don't understand. This can save you time and frustration, as well, allow you to perform stronger. Joining an association or attending networking events is a great way to build this network beyond your coworkers. The Professional Young Insurance Brokers of Alberta offers several networking events throughout the province over the course of the year. These are exceptional (and fun) ways to meet other young professionals in the industry. Accepting that you can't know everything does help one understand the benefit of specializing in a specific area. As a specialized broker, you can offer support back to your network.

Mistakes are inevitable; however, it's how you handle them that will set you apart.

Being able to set pride and ego aside and take accountability for your actions shows maturity. Acting with this humility is essential to working as part of a team and working with clients. It also stands out when you can address a mistake immediately and offer a solution. Dwelling on a situation only causes worry and stress, and the stress can completely stagnate you. Instead, be forward thinking and show initiative, which also helps take focus from the mistake.

Mentoring opportunities are valuable.

Being a mentor teaches you how to communicate and how to lead. Additionally, mentoring opportunities provide you with another broker's perspective and may open your eyes to different solutions or improvement opportunities. The true measure of your knowledge on a topic is if you can teach it back to someone else and with mentoring you have this chance.

It Goes Both Ways

Experienced brokers aren't the only ones able to offer advice! Here's some words of wisdom from a new broker to their more experienced colleagues:

It is important to keep an open mind.

Joining a new industry, trying new things and accepting different opportunities have added depth and value to our careers. Embrace change as best you can and capitalize on new tools.

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IBAA AT WORK

WHAT'S GOING ON BEHIND THE SCENES AT IBAA?

With the end of 2023 in sight, the IBAA team has continued to work on a number of exciting initiatives that will set the foundation for the new year to come.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We have initiated an audit of our current professional development (PD) offerings and processes to ensure we continue to offer high quality education and career support. As part of this initiative, our PD team has met with several of our sister associations to discuss education trends and best practices. The information gathered during these discussions and throughout the audit will help guide our PD team as they determine the direction of our education over the course of the coming years.

Alongside the audit work and inter-provincial collaboration, our PD team has been working on filling the spring 2024 calendar with free broker-centric offerings. Reach out to our education team at education@ibaa.ca if you have a new topic in mind, would like us to work with a specific facilitator, or would like us to bring back a past course.

In order to further national coordination, two members of our management team will be meeting

with representatives from each province during IBAC's Professional Development summit in Ontario late November. We look forward to seeing where continued collaboration with our sister associations will take the national broker channel.

IBAC

On a national level, IBAC has released an exciting new marketing campaign called "Works Best," which is designed to highlight brokers from around the country and how they impact their clients and communities. For complete campaign details visit worksbest.ca.

As well, the IBAC Tech website is no longer locked behind a member portal and is now available to all brokers across Canada. This change is driven by IBAC's desire to ensure that community discourse and innovative digital resources are more easily accessible to the national broker channel.

IBAA

On an association level, our president and CEO are planning to make visits to member brokerages as soon as possible. If you wish to secure a specific meeting day or time, or would like to raise a question in advance of their visit, reach out to them at brokerhelp@ibaa.ca.

CONVENTION 2024

We are excited to announce that planning for our 2024 convention is well underway. Convention 2024 will be held from May 7-9 at the Banff Springs Hotel. More information will be released near the beginning of December. If you are a vendor looking to participate in our 2024 tradeshow, please contact our convention planning team at convention@ibaa.ca.

ADVOCACY

Our advocacy team has been thoroughly engaged over the past few months with the changing provincial insurance landscape. The best way to stay informed about our government and industry advocacy is to subscribe to our weekly newsletter, *Brokerworks*. Email communications@ibaa.ca if you would like to stay up to date.

Thank you to the 15+ people who have volunteered to be part of the Broker Advocacy Taskforce, our newest community advocacy initiative. We appreciate your time and dedication.

As always, thank you for your continued support and engagement. We are lucky to work with and support such an incredible network of dedicated, community driven professionals.





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