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Headlines and Information

1. Update Your Entries - 2010 Solution Provider Directory Underway

Each year, ACORD works with Tech Decisions Magazine and National Underwriter to produce an ACORD Solution Provider Directory. This is a concise document listing all the latest information from ACORD solution provider members.

"For anyone looking for a solution for their company and wanting to remain ACORD compliant, this is the source. We encourage all of our members to keep their entries up to date so that we can provide that data to the industry. This is a great opportunity to show companies what you can offer and what standards you use to help them be more efficient," said Dominic Caccioppoli, Director of Member Operations.

All information must be updated no later than February 24, 2010.

Directions

1. Go to the www.acord.org/spd.
2. Log in using the link at the top right on the page.
3. Click on the link that says "Online Adoption Report and Survey Administration".
4. View your company overview. You can now edit that information.
5. Once completed, click on the button that says "Save and Go To Products/Services".
6. You can now enter information regarding your company's specific product(s) and/or service(s). There is no limit to the number of products you can enter.
7. Always be sure to click on "Save" before exiting the screen.
8. When completed and saved, you can then go to other parts of the ACORD Web site or sign out.



2. Experts: Caution and Self-Examination Are Critical For Insurers Delving Into Social Media: Part 1 of 2

By Ara C. Trembly

Few developments have stirred the interest and imagination of companies and individuals as much as the recent outbreak of social media and other Web 2.0 entities. Even the normally reticent insurance industry is dipping its toes into the social media waters. Yet many in our industry are also reluctant to make a big splash—often because they have no idea where to start or how to go about incorporating such technologies into their plans.

For many in our industry the array of technology choices seems overwhelming. Internal blogs, wikis, and social networks are one thing, but what about the opportunities and risks of public social media like Facebook, Twitter and Second Life? Karlyn Carnahan, principal at Novarica, notes that more than 80 carriers are now "tweeting" (using Twitter). Typically, however, most carriers start their social media efforts with some sort of internal collaboration.

First Things First

For those who are seriously considering tapping into social media for marketing or other purposes, Ms. Carnahan recommends a return to square one, where each insurer should focus on its own overall marketing strategy. Then the question becomes: How do I take these new tools and techniques and embed them into my strategy?

A good place to start, she notes, is by simply monitoring the conversations on social media that are relevant to the company. "Start by listening. Web 2.0 is like a gigantic conversation. Even if you're not participating, people may be talking about your company or your competitors," she says.

The next step is to create a governance mechanism for communicating on social media, consistent with the mechanism that operates within the company as a matter of policy. A key question to be considered is who has the right and authority to communicate on behalf of the company, says Ms. Carnahan. The insurer must then set about putting together a social networking policy for its employees.

Other questions come to mind as well, she notes. What is my strategy for using social media? Why am I doing this? How will I measure success? For example, social media outlets could be used to build brand awareness, identify customer service issues, or get input on product development.

"Develop metrics for measuring the success of your social media goal. Consider metrics such as Web site traffic, number or type of comments, number of followers or fans, engagement with customers, retweets, or prospect lead quality. A variety of metrics are available; the trick is to make sure they align with your goals," she states.

Insurance companies must also consider how social media participation may affect compliance and corporate culture, Ms. Carnahan says. "Compliance is a huge issue, especially in the life insurance realm where FINRA regulations may apply. Disclosures may be necessary and you have to keep archivable copies of everything," she pointed out, adding that social networking sites themselves don't usually provide for such archiving.

The bottom line is also an issue, especially in these troubled economic times. Thus an insurer must also identify what kind of return it will get on its investment of time and resources in social media, she adds. Part of that consideration will be to identify which individuals will be working on the social media effort, as well as how much it will cost to have the work done.

"Our research is showing enormous growth-going from 4% up to 25% in the past year-among insurance companies using some form of social networking," says Ms. Carnahan. "Twitter is being used for brand building, and for communicating disaster messages. Product announcements, job postings, customer service and other useful information can also be part of a social media initiative. Lurking [monitoring comments anonymously] lets you see who is unhappy."

According to Ms. Carnahan, such monitoring may also be useful for fraud investigation. "If someone is claiming a soft tissue injury, then you see them doing the limbo at a party on Facebook, that would be a valuable piece of information," she says.

Next week: Part 2 - Strategy

Ara C. Trembly is the founder of Ara Trembly-The Tech Consultant (www.aratremblytechnology.com), a writing, consulting and advisory practice focusing on technology for the insurance industry.



3. The Match Game (*Tech Decisions*)

While vendors are making strides meeting needs in some areas, insurers continue to demand more improvements in their policy admin systems. Insurer representatives and analysts say carriers would like to see further improvement in the areas of straight-through processing, configurability, and standardization.

Courtesy of

Techdecisions
FOR BUSINESS

In a new report, analyst firm Celent offered views on what can be expected in the near future. Improvements in business automation, configurability, and usability and design were among the latest trends, and insurers acknowledge vendors have made strides in these areas in recent years.

One of the report's authors points to other new features now available, such as electronic communication with agents and customers. But when it comes to what carriers really are looking for when they choose to upgrade systems, he points out insurers are not focused intently on some of the newest trends and peripheral features, and they do not make a decision to upgrade based on them. "They want better, faster processes for rolling out new products," he says, reducing the time frame to weeks instead of months.



AUGIE

4. Workflow and Technology Use Focus of 2010 AUGIE Survey

What is the state of automation in the industry today? What can be done to develop and promote improved workflows? How can we drive increased efficiency?

These are just a few of the questions that will be answered by agencies, carriers, solution providers and other members of the industry in the 2010 AUGIE Survey launched today at augiesurvey.artizan.com.

The last AUGIE survey was held in 2006. Now, four years later and with advances made in technology and workflows, it's time to once again survey the industry for updates on the use of technology. Findings from past surveys have led to greater agency involvement in ACORD standards development, better dialogue between agents, their carriers and vendors, the Real Time Campaign and a unified approach to technology. It led to doubling of activity for such things as Real Time Rating and Inquiry, Personal Downloads, and Commercial Downloads.

"This year, we want everyone - CSRs, producers, systems staff, principals - to take the survey and make their voices heard," said Lisa Goth, Vice President of Charles P. Leach Agency and head of the AUGIE Survey committee. "Everyone who is involved with selling or servicing customers has a vital role to play in the industry and in this survey. Everyone who writes insurance, supports the industry and develops products is needed. We want to hear from each and every one of you so go out today to augiesurvey.artizan.com and let your voice be heard."

To make that even easier this year, we've reduced the number of questions will be presented based on your role. "If you're a CSR, you won't see the same questions as a manager person since your roles are different. We know you're busy and don't want to waste your time with questions that don't have anything to do with you or your role so the AUGIE survey is now interactive and intelligent. It conforms to you," said Goth.

The online survey will be available from February 16, 2010 to April 15, 2010 and will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. "You will have the ability to stop and resume the survey. We know everyone is busy and gets interrupted so now you can handle that important call or put the kids to bed, log back into the system using a username and password that is created when you begin taking the survey at augiesurvey.artizan.com, and pick up where you left off," said Goth.

The results will be released at this year's [ACORD LOMA Insurance Systems Forum](#) on May 24 in Las Vegas.



5. AUGIE - Plans for 2010 and Beyond

What's in store for AUGIE in 2010? At the recent AUGIE meeting in Tampa, outgoing rotational chair Jim Armitage laid out the goals and objectives for the year.

From its successful meetings and its well known survey to the numerous documents and tools provided to the industry, AUGIE has a history of achievement. Building on that foundation, AUGIE Leaders have set out a specific set of goals for 2010 with committees to guide the activities and report on milestones.

"AUGIE is working to become more focused and more goal oriented by establishing these committees and chairs," said Jim Armitage, outgoing rotational chair of AUGIE, a principal with Arroyo Insurance Services Inc., and president of AMSUG. "By establishing these specific goals, each with its own leader, we will be able to get more accomplished, maintain momentum, and better serve the participants and the industry."

Commercial Lines Download

Chair: Ted Joyce, Board Member, Nexsure Users Group

This group is focused on educating agents, carriers and solution providers on the benefits of Commercial Lines Download and providing the tools and techniques to help them achieve it. They are also holding webinars throughout the year to further understanding.

Real Time

Chairs: Cyndy Smith, Haylor Freyer & Coon, Inc. and Karen Youngman, Don Allen Agency, Inc.

The focus will be on the ongoing efforts of the Real Time campaign (www.getrealttime.org) and the 21 Day Challenge. They will also be working on tracking implementation of real time and reporting the data.

AUGIE Survey

Chair: Lisa Goth, Charles P Leach Agency

This group worked to help launch the 2010 AUGIE survey on February 15 and will be working to compile the results. A report on the survey will be issued at the 2010 ACORD LOMA Insurance Systems Forum.

Engaging Carriers Webinars

Chair: Ron Binning, Binning & Dickens Insurance

This group will be investigating the possibility of offering webinars to regional carriers that cannot attend the meetings that have taken place thus far and will continue throughout the year. The focus is on explaining why agents want real time and how to increase productivity for agents and carriers.

AUGIE Communications Task Group

Chair: To be announced

This group is focused on communicating AUGIE's message, accomplishments, and activities to the industry through various means. They will also be working on increasing understanding of AUGIE's mission and engaging industry participants in the activities.

Strategic Plan and Vision

Chair: Jim Armitage, Arroyo Insurance Services Inc. and AMSUG

This group will continue to develop these goals for 2010, monitor activities, and plan for 2011.

To get involved, please email Cal Durland at cdurland@acord.org.



ACORD in Australia

6. Australia Update

As activity and interest continues to grow in Australia, ACORD will be going "down under" for two important events in the coming months. Be sure to mark your calendars and meet ACORD members and staff.

ACORD Framework Seminar in Sydney

February 22, 2010

Sydney Harbour Marriott Hotel at Circular Quay

As announced last week, ACORD will be holding a free ACORD Framework Seminar in Sydney on February 22, 2010. The half-day session will be held twice that day so registrants can select morning or afternoon to better fit their schedules.

The seminars will focus on the ACORD Framework and address its use in the development and implementation of standards in Australia. Space is limited so registration is necessary.

[Click here for morning session](#)

[Click here for afternoon session](#)

12th Steadfast Convention 2010

March 13-16, 2010

Perth Convention Exhibition Centre

ACORD will once again be participating in the annual Steadfast Conference held this year in Perth, Australia. In attendance for ACORD will be Alan Stitzer and Cal Durland along with ACORD Board Chair John Leonard of MEMIC. Steadfast is Australia's largest Insurance Broker Cluster Group and is owned by its shareholders - more than 280 insurance brokerages Australia wide.

For more information, visit the Steadfast site at <http://www.steadfast.com.au>

Special Note: For those who in the know down in Sydney, Action Man will be on hand to meet with you.



Life, Annuity & Health

7. Want to Be Healthy? Grow Organically (*Insurance Networking News*)

It's no secret that many life insurers and annuity providers are ratcheting up efforts to grow organically, especially in light of weakened investment income due to the economic meltdown. Some of these growth strategies are originating from otherwise unlikely places. For example, in a bid to boost customer retention and add new customers, some insurers are turning to customer relationship management and customer profitability technology.

Courtesy of

Insurance
NETWORKING NEWS

They also embracing technologies such as voice signature, which though not directly associated with organic growth, have helped them increase their number of policies and more quickly close sales. For other life insurance and annuity providers, simply making transactions more streamlined can be an important driver for organic growth. And greater automation gives staff and clients the ability to do business with one another with relative ease. Take Sun Life, for example, which has enhanced internal growth by automating a variety of processes that make it "the easiest place to do business."

More than half of the business that the firm places - and about three quarters of its premium volume - is now done so electronically.



ACORD Event Update

8. Advisory Committees Help Enhance Forum

This year, two ACORD LOMA Insurance Systems Forum Advisory Committees were formed to help enhance the event and bring greater diversity and interest. These groups have met several times already and are still actively involved in fine-tuning this year's conference and those going forward.

ACORD INSURANCE
LOMA SYSTEMS
FORUM

"These are people out there every day, working in the industry, speaking to other industry participants, and therefore having a great wealth of information that they were willing to share with us to continue to elevate the quality and breadth of the Forum." said Beth Grossman, Assistant Vice President, Education and Training. "We looked to these committees to give us input and let us know of the latest trends in the industry today to help us formulate sessions and enhance networking opportunities for all of our attendees. We've also received ideas on ways to enhance the exhibit hall experience, bring in more attendees, and make the Forum an even greater overall experience for all who come."

The first group consists of insurance carriers, leading industry analysts, and media representatives. The second group is made up of solution providers.

Below is the current list of organizations serving on the Advisory Committees:

Applied Systems Inc	Manulife Financial
Ara Trembly, The Tech Consultant	Microsoft
Camilion	Nationwide
Capgemini	Novarica
Celent	OneShield
Conning	Oracle
CSC	Partner Re
Deloitte	PilotFish Technology
Duck Creek Technologies	PlanetSoft
ebix Inc	Prima-Solutions
Ernst and Young	Progress Software
Forrester	Prudential Financial
Gartner	PWC
GenRe	Selective Insurance
HCL Technologies America Inc.	Stone River
Hewlett Packard	Strategy Meets Action
Hyland Software	Tech Decisions
IBM	Thunderhead
Informatica	Vertafore
Insurance and Technology	Zurich
Insurance Networking News	



ACORD's Anniversary: 40 Stories for 40 Years

9. What Does ACORD Stand For?

In celebration of ACORD's 40th Anniversary, we'll be bringing you trivia, history and other items from our past. See how much you know about ACORD!

So what does the acronym ACORD stand for?

Today, ACORD stands for Association for Cooperative Operations Research and Development. But that wasn't always the case.

In the beginning, ACORD stood for Agent-Company Organization for Research and Development. During 1997-1998, the acronym ACORD changed to reflect the broader and more inclusive membership. ACORD grew from just agent-company data communication to include Life, Annuities, Reinsurance, Large Commercial, XML, AL3, and much more. That growth continues today.

