The Independent Agent's Real Time Implementation Guide

Real Time
Make it Your Business.
getrealtime.org

Angelyn Treutel of Treutel Insurance Agency in Bay Saint Louis, Miss:

"Real Time saves our agency time and energy. We have information at our fingertips with fewer keystrokes, which assists in providing faster customer service tailored to each customer's needs. Real Time saves steps in our workflows, eliminates backlog and results in more sales."

I. Introduction to Real Time

What is it?

Real Time is the ability to click on a button from a client file in your agency management system or comparative rater for immediate access to carrier information on that client. The transaction may be a quote, billing inquiry, claim inquiry/loss runs, policy view, endorsements or a request for information. This approach provides a single workflow for servicing or quoting.

Why use it?

- **Single, Consistent Workflow for Multiple Carriers saves TIME & MONEY**
- **Process Policy Transactions from the Client's File** – billing inquiry, quotes, policy view, endorsements, and documentation
- **Claims Management from the Client's File** – claims inquiry, first notice of loss, loss runs
- **Don't Have to Remember Passwords** – automated logons
- **Train Staff on Single Workflow** – rather than on multiple carrier websites
- **E & O Loss Control** – activity record automatically triggered by real-time inquiry/transaction in agency management system
- **NO COST for the Agency** (for most features)
- **Provide SUPERIOR Customer Service** – one-click customer inquiry provides immediate response
- **Enhance PROFESSIONAL Image and Work Environment** of your agency
- **Increase SALES** – frees up time to proactively sell

Lisa Parry-Becker of Parry Insurance in Langhorne, Pa. on Real-Time Inquiry:

"This used to be a three-step process that began when the client called the agency; the agent called the carrier and then returned the client call. We are now able to service most billing inquiries in a once-and-done manner."

II. Functionality

The list of real-time functions available keeps growing. Here are the functions currently available (NOTE: All functions are not yet available in all agency management systems or from all carriers. Speak with your vendor and carriers, or check **www.acttech.org** for what functions are available for your system or from your carriers.)

With the new functionality come new workflows that will **save you time and money!** (NOTE: Workflows may vary slightly depending upon which system you are using.)

Cyndy Smith of Haylor, Freyer & Coon in Syracuse, N.Y. on Real-Time Rating:

"The carrier website approach to rating requires us to log on to each site, remember the unique password, navigate to the proper screen, enter the same data multiple times, and train agency staff on each carrier's workflow. Real Time remedies each one of these inefficiencies. Real Time is the workflow of the future and represents a major step forward in ease of doing business."

Function	Workflow
Inquiry – Billing, Policy, Claim, Loss Run, Etc. No waiting for someone at the carrier to answer phone, no need to look up website ID and password, no need to navigate carrier website!	• Access the customer's file in your agency management system • Select the policy • Click the Real-Time Button • Select the transaction type • The system automatically logs into carrier's website and displays the information you have requested • An activity/transaction is automatically generated in most systems
Automatic Web Logon No need to look up website ID and password! The system automatically logs into carrier's system!	• Click the Real-Time Button • Select the "carrier" website link • Select your carrier

Function	Workflow
Endorsements – Real-Time Bridge to Carrier Website No need to look-up website ID and password! No need to re-key data!	• Access the customer's file in your agency management system • Select the policy • Click the Real-Time Button • Select the transaction type • The system automatically logs into carrier's website • Complete the change on the carrier web-site • An activity/transaction is automatically generated in most systems • Agency system updated by download
Real-Time Rating from Agency Management System No need to look up website ID and password! No need to re-key data!	• Access the customer's file in your agency management system. • Complete an application in the agency management system • Click the Real-Time Button • Select the rating transaction and the carrier(s) • The quote(s) will be returned directly to the agency management system. • An activity/transaction is automatically generated in most systems
Real-Time Rating from Comparative Rating Program No need to look up website ID and password! No need to re-key data!	• Complete application information in the Comparative Rater • Select the carriers to quote • Click the Real-Time Button • The quotes will be returned to Comparative Rater comparison page • Select carrier you want to place the policy with

Function	Workflow
Real-Time Rating from Comparative Rating Program (cont.) No need to look up website ID and password! No need to re-key data!	• Click the option to launch carrier website and complete the application printing and/or policy issue process on their site. • Download policy information into agency management system
Real-Time Rating Bridge *(Data is bridged from the agency management system to a carrier website or a comparative rater, or the data is entered directly into a comparative rater.)* No need to look up website ID and password! No need to re-key data!	• Access the customer's file in your agency management system. • Complete an application in the agency management system • Click the Real-Time/Bridge Button • Select the rating transaction and the carrier(s) • Launches the carrier's website and pre-fills the information from the agency management system. • The carrier website then prompts the agent for additional information to complete the quote. • An activity/transaction is automatically generated in most systems
Policy Issue *(Once the real-time rate is chosen, depending upon the particular system & carrier, the policy can be issued real-time from the agency management system or the carrier website, or by a batch upload of the application overnight.)* No need to look up website ID and password! No need to re-key data!	• Follow the steps related to real-time rating to secure the rate • If the rate is acceptable, you will follow one of these four Issue workflows depending upon the particular system and carrier: (1) hit the Issue button on the transaction results screen in the agency management system and the Policy number is returned from the carrier and populated in the agency management system;

Function	Workflow
Policy Issue (cont.) *(Once the real-time rate is chosen, depending upon the particular system & carrier, the policy can be issued real-time from the agency management system or the carrier website, or by a batch upload of the application overnight.)* No need to look up website ID and password! No need to re-key data!	(2) Issue from the carrier website; (3) On the Comparative Rating Quote Page, select the carrier to issue policy and click on the option to launch the carrier website; or (4) upload application to carrier via batch upload overnight (not Real Time) • An activity/transaction is automatically generated in your system
First Notice of Loss No need to look up website ID and password! No need to re-key data! No more faxing loss notices!	• Access the customer from your agency management system • Complete a loss notice in the agency management system • Click the Real-Time Button • Select the claim and transaction type • The claim is uploaded to the carrier and returns a claim number to the claim detail screen in the agency management system • An activity/transaction is automatically generated in your system
Notifications/Alert Messages Carrier-initiated secure electronic messages automatically retrieved by the agency management system and assigned to the appropriate user without the agency having to access it from the carrier website!	• Agency sets preferences in the agency management system as to where particular types of messages are sent within the agency • Messages appear in the appropriate user activity list or policy/customer activity log for handling

III. Implementation Steps

Now that you understand the benefits and want to implement Real Time in your agency, here is an outline of the steps to take to have a successful implementation and to reap continuing benefits from these real-time tools.

How to get started…

- As with any other technology project, you should secure senior management support to move the agency's workflows to Real Time.
- Management should understand the benefits this tool can bring to the agency. (See www.getrealtime.org for the AUGIE Workflow Timer & Cost Savings Calculator & AUGIE Real-Time Study.)
- Talk to other agencies that have implemented Real Time on the same agency management system your agency uses to discuss how they have successfully implemented.
- Make sure that your agency's systems are ready to begin using the real-time option.
- Consult your vendor, your carriers, or www.acttech.org for the real-time features and functions available on your system. There may be real-time functions and/or features that are only available if you are on the latest versions of your system.
- Verify that policy numbers in your system are consistent with the carrier's format (prefixes, spaces, dashes, suffixes, etc.). If you are downloading policy detail from the carrier system, your policy number format should be correct.
- When you are ready to begin real-time implementation, contact your vendor for setup documentation. These links are found at www.getrealtime.org.

How to get started… (cont.)

- Determine who will handle Carrier Website Password Administration for your agency. This is a very important issue and will have a significant impact on the success of implementation. The real-time tools require that as carrier website passwords change, the responsible person(s) update the program accordingly.
- Determine if there are alternatives from your agency management system vendor. For example, will these passwords be managed by the individual users or by a central administrator?
- Take advantage of whatever training that the agency management system vendor, rating vendor or insurance carrier has to offer on real-time tools!
- Make someone in the agency RESPONSIBLE for the real-time program. You will need an "expert" in the office for people to go to if they have problems. You should also consider having a "backup" to the expert so that if the "expert" leaves the agency, the real-time program is not forgotten.
- Just before you begin, conduct a last-minute check of your vendor-specific software releases and user group training and message boards, so you are as up to date as possible.

Tips for successful implementation…

- To begin, implement with a small group of users in your agency so any problems can be worked out. It makes sense for most agencies to begin with inquiries and then move to the more complicated rating and policy issue transactions. You might even consider starting with one carrier that you have a good relationship with.
- Monitor agent usage to identify any additional training needs.
- Include real-time adoption as part of employee job descriptions and review criteria.
- Reward employees who show quick and steady adoption of Real Time (such as a free lunch program). Such incentives can hasten adoption across all staff.
- As with most technology implementations, know whom to contact at your vendors and carriers should you need help or encounter any problems. (See www.getrealtime.org for vendor-specific troubleshooting procedures and links.)
- Recognize that if you do not have complete and accurate policy data in your agency management system, real-time quoting will not work as expected.
- To further reduce data entry, establish policy pre-fills for the forms and limits typically used in your office.
- Update your procedures and workflows to incorporate the use of the real-time tools.

Ongoing attention needed to keep your implementation as effective as possible…

- If you run into any problems after you have completed the installation, you should contact your agency management system vendor through the normal trouble reporting procedure.
- Keep up to date with new real-time carriers and/or transaction types. Make sure to update your system as these additions become available so that they show up on the menu when you perform these transactions.
- If real-time transactions from particular carriers are slow, their workflows are inefficient or they do not allow you to easily complete the transaction (i.e. move from billing inquiry to make a payment), contact the carrier and ask it to improve its application.
- Use Real-Time Usage Reports where they are available from your vendor and carriers, to determine who in your agency is using the real-time tool and who is not. Train or re-train employees who are not using the real-time tool.
- Continue to re-evaluate your procedures/work flows to take advantage of new real-time tools as they become available.