



CLEAR VIEW



a best practices newsletter

November/December 2007 — Volume III, Number 6

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- CLEARVIEW INDEX - THREE YEARS OF ARTICLES

Bringing you the best ideas from around the insurance and financial services industry

Can We Get Back To The Basics?

When insurance was “invented,” there were groups of similarly employed or otherwise conjoined people who pitched in to help each other out. When one family had a death or a fire, their “fellows” helped them out. That’s really the basics of what insurance does, is help people out when the unexpected happens.

The fundamentals of Customer Expectations are these:

1. That the insurance they buy covers the risk they want it to cover and what they were told it would cover;
2. That the producer and the company will continue to provide them with the service they need, when they need it;
3. That the insurance they could afford at a given time will remain affordable, given flexibility for the vagaries of the U.S. economy; and
4. That when the time comes to make a justified claim, the company will still be there, and will stand behind its contract and pay the claim.

The antithesis of these qualities is, unfortunately, what some people believe is the real truth about insurance.

- 1. That producers or companies misrepresent (read that lie) about their products, the coverage, and the value they provide;
- 2. That producers sell something and then move on to the next target, rather than also working to retain the relationships they have, and that insurance companies are cold-hearted corporations that may only provide appropriate help or service if forced to do so;
- 3. That even if a product is affordable today, by the time they really need it to pay a claim, they will have had to drop or lower the insurance coverage because of spiraling prices; and
- 4. That when they do make a claim, the company will try to “screw them” out of the benefits they believe they’ve purchased.



How does any division of the insurance industry get back to the basics and help their producers build, or build back, the trust of the consumer? And if the industry is to meet those four Customer Expectations listed above, how does a company or an agency or a producer find out the first Basic Need: what risks does the potential customer want or need to cover?

The answer to both questions is the same. Listen.

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A SERVICE OF CLEAR Market Practices

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Producers will be required to listen to the customer. Agencies will need listen to what their producers say about those customers. Insurers must listen to what the customer tells them about their producer, their products and their service; and also listen to what their producer and agency tells them about the customers, products and service.

Not that producers have ever been shy about communicating to the company what they don't like. Providing them with regular, formalized methods of feedback could help the company actually put more of their good suggestions to work. Feedback opportunities such as focus groups during conventions, Producers Councils, and regular surveys can organize and focus the flow of ideas so that patterns emerge for the company. If information is gathered and then some action is taken on appropriate items, the process not only improves the company, its products and its sales methods, it builds more loyal field personnel and, long-term, a more loyal customer base.

Consumers, all too often, will complain by moving their premium dollars elsewhere. If, however, producers, agencies and companies provide customers with convenient ways to communicate and listen sincerely to those communications, the consumers' dissatisfaction may be resolved within a complaint process.

Receipt of complaints is almost always to be preferred over business going out the door. If the company gives a consumer enough value in addition to the policy or contract value to build loyalty, the best-case scenario is that the customer will come to the company with the complaint.

Every complaint is an opportunity. Many customer service personnel will say that sometimes it's only an opportunity to improve their patience! However, each justified complaint certainly gives the producer, agency or company the chance to examine the causes of complaints and fix them at the roots. Improvements can be made in training on products, in the sales or descriptive materials, in the products, or even in the complaint-handling process itself. Customers who have had complaints resolved fairly, to their reasonable satisfaction, are much more likely to stay with the company than if they had "walked" instead of "talked."

Listening is an art, a skill, an acquired ability. Whether one-on-one or on a corporate, formalized level, good listening can be developed. Here's how one producer puts it. "I don't practice a "sales pitch." I sit with my customers and listen to them. They talk about their families, their goals, their dreams, their concerns. When they ask a question, I answer it or go find the answer. I do it day in, day out. I listen. And when they've told me what they want to tell me, I offer possible solutions, tools, to help them protect what's valuable to them, help manage or decrease their risks, and help them reach their goals. That's all I do."



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CLEAR Market Practices

ATTENTION TO DETAILS!!!

Yes, CLEAR's latest product, the CLEAR Compliance Calendar (C3) is about ready for launch! We have been beta testing this for several months and believe we have MOST of the bugs out.

Imagine a "generic" tracking system, much like CLEARTrack but open to use as you see fit. Think about using it to track the status of Market Conduct Exams or advertising compliance. Any internal process could be coupled with this tool to track progress or compliance. However you envision using it is probably possible.

Working much like CLEARTrack, but with the ability for the user to assign issues, insert summaries and attach documents, C3 can be used to track any issue to completion.

If you were a subscriber to CLEAR by the end of 2006, we will provide your company with a FREE subscription to C3. If you recently subscribed, or are just a reader of CLEARView, you may still purchase C3 at a very reasonable cost.



To learn more about this product, email us at info@clearreport.net or call us at 877-474-3664. We're excited and think that you will be, also.

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CLEARView Index November 2004 - December 2007

Contains three full years of article names, keywords and templates that have appeared in the free Best Practices newsletter, CLEARView. Please peruse and check out any articles that ran prior to you subscribing!



ISSUE	TITLE	KEYWORDS	TEMPLATES
NOVEMBER 2004	How can your company have some assurance of field compliance?	field, producer, compliance, background check, certification, attestation	Field Attestation Template
NOVEMBER 2004	How does your company communicate the ethical culture?	field, producer, employee, ethics, compliance, communicate, communication	Code of Ethics for Home Office
NOVEMBER 2004	How does your company "reward and recognize"?	reward, recognize, recognition, Quality Business Award	
DECEMBER 2004	What's up with Ethics Awareness Month?	ethics, activity / activities, March, aware / awareness	
DECEMBER 2004	What are Delivery Receipts Doing for You?	receipt, protection, risk, require, issue	The Policy Delivery Template
DECEMBER 2004	Do You Know Who's Using What?	supplies, forms, advertising, monitor, report, download	
JANUARY 2005	How do Your Customers Know You?	communicate, communication, policy delivery, receipt, survey, welcome letter, collect and use information, MAP	Customer Communication of Ethics Template; The Policy Delivery Survey Template
JANUARY 2005	A Simple Idea Adds up to Savings	complaints, response time	
JANUARY 2005	Communicating Ethics to the Field Force	field, producer, ethics, attestation, reminder	Pledge of Professionalism Template
FEBRUARY 2005	How do Your Customers Know You? (Second Installment)	customer service, postcard, survey, cancellation, collect and use feedback	Postcard Samples
FEBRUARY 2005	Does Your Company Stack Up?	best practices, culture, compliance	Best Practice Scorecard
FEBRUARY 2005	When is a Consistency not a Hobgoblin?	template language, complaint, disclaimer, rating,	
MARCH 2005	How do Your Customers Know You? (Third Installment)	conservation, focus group, council, language, website, communicate, communication	
MARCH 2005	Why Best Practices?	bottom line	List of Reasons for Best Practices
MARCH 2005	Complaint Response Letters	timeliness, open-ended, warmth, ownership, template	

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ISSUE	TITLE	KEYWORDS	TEMPLATES
APRIL 2005	Personal Best Practices		
APRIL 2005	Make it Easier to Complain	complaint, telephone, written, grievance	Customer Feedback Form
APRIL 2005	Got Ideas?	technical training, producers, field, computer, on-line	
MAY 2005	You Got a Problem With That?	problem, decision, right thing, monitor	
MAY 2005	Communicating With One Voice	communicate, communication, marketing, compliance, field, producer	
MAY 2005	Complaints...Best Practices Notes	defining, compliant, inquiry, recording, report, producer, regulator	
JUNE 2005	What Can Contracts do for your Company?	contract, privacy, ethics, violation, complaint, advertising, replacement	
JUNE 2005	Complaints...R.A.T.s (Reporting, Analyzing and Trending)	complaint, report, trend, analyze	
JULY 2005	Agent Statement with Application	identity, underwriting, needs based, advertising, replacement, disclosure, privacy, ethics, required	
JULY 2005	Does Your Producer Know What to Expect?	ethics, agreement, discipline, behavior, warning, termination, levels	
JULY 2005	In a Few Words...	ethics, discipline, problem, profits	
AUGUST 2005	Compliance Department Models	compliance, audit, legal, marketing, monitor	
AUGUST 2005	Internet Advertising Best Practices—Part 1: Basic Advertising Practices	internet, advertising, customer experience, website, home page, producer	
AUGUST 2005	Life Insurance Awareness Month	September	
SEPTEMBER 2005	What's a Compliance Team?	representatives, departments, function, input, output, procedures, producer	Compliance Team Outline; Compliance Team Quarterly Meeting—Sample Agenda
SEPTEMBER 2005	Internet Advertising Best Practices—Part 2: Solicitation and Linking	email, hyperlinks, solicit	
OCTOBER 2005	Internet Advertising Best Practices—Part 3: Archiving and Monitoring	website, archive, monitor,	
NOVEMBER 2005	How Do You Keep In Shape?	audit, training issues, privacy, concerns, "BQR"	Business Quality Review — Policy Files Business Quality Review — Complaint Files
NOVEMBER 2005	How Does Your Company Encourage The Best?	communicate, procedures, recognize, reward	
DECEMBER 2005	"Ground Zero" for Insurance Law	FTC, truthful, deceptive, provable, fair, penalties, internet, advertising	
DECEMBER 2005	Marching in again is ethics awareness month	March, ethics, activities	
JANUARY 2006	That Four Letter Word: Suitability	suitability, appropriateness, sales, training, producer, producer statement	
JANUARY 2006	Compliance Crossword		
FEBRUARY 2006	Preventing (and Monitoring) Complaints	tail, product, sales, distribution, producer, log, monitor, report	
FEBRUARY 2006	Writing Best Practices	clear, concise, helpful, style	
MARCH 2006	Analyzing Needs Analysis	needs, seasoned, producer, odds, delivery receipt, survey, retention	
MARCH 2006	Guidelines for Appropriateness	age, need, needs analysis, business, product	

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ISSUE	TITLE	KEYWORDS	TEMPLATES
APRIL 2006	Finding the Best Producers	standards, guidelines, communicate, background, credit, criminal, disclaimer	Guidelines for Producer Appointment
APRIL 2006	In the Beginning: A Tale for All Insurance Lands	life insurance, lawsuit, ethics, monitor, value, non-life insurance	
MAY 2006	Why Best Practices? (reprint from March 2005)	bottom line	List of Reasons for Best Practices
MAY 2006	Changes to the Law - Closing the Loop: Concept 1	law, regulation, compliance, tracking, monitoring, responsible, communicate, solution	
JUNE/JULY 2006	Schedule of Communications: Concept 2	advertising, selection, agent, producer, disclosure, complaint, delivery receipt, ethical, fair competition, needs analysis, replacement, communication	Regular Field Communications Sample Schedule
JUNE/JULY 2006	What's a Hallway Test?	employees, culture, morale	
AUG/SEPT 2006	Compliance Team, Concept 3	representatives, departments, function, input, output, procedures, producer	
AUG/SEPT 2006	Life Insurance Awareness Month	September	
AUG/SEPT 2006	Do Your Ad Markups Help The Creatives?	marketing, compliance, advertising review, language, push-back,	
OCT/NOV 2006	Looking at Producers-How Does Your Company Do It?	producer, application, protection, background check	Producer Attestation
OCT/NOV 2006	FREE! FREE! FREE!	marketers, free, insurance	
DEC 06/JAN 07	Do You Do What You Say In Your Advertising Review Procedures?	policies and procedures, routine notification, ratings, exams,	
DEC 06/JAN 07	Best Personal Business Practices	Four-Way Test, truth, fairness, good will, benefits	
DEC 06/JAN 07	Timely Reminder	Ethics Awareness Month, March	
MAR/APRIL 2007	Business Quality Reviews, Concept 4	compliance, reviews, schedule, audits	Business Quality Review — Policy Files Business Quality Review — Complaint Files Sample BQR Schedule
MAR/APRIL 2007	What is a Best Practice, Anyway?	efficient, improvement, law, market conduct, compliance, industry, culture of compliance, IMSA	
MAY/JUNE 2007	How Does Your Company Communicate with the Field?	appointment, guidelines, expectations, email, sanctions, reminders, commitment, ethics, compliment log, internet, communication	Levels of Sanctions Chart
JULY/AUG 2007	Are You Smarter Than a....?	legal, category, play	Self-Quiz
JULY/AUG 2007	The Best Practice of Continuous Improvement	hire, promote, message, changed mind	
SEPT/OCT 2007	Getting More Bang from Your Audit "Buck"	quality control, bad guys, good guys, pressure, regulators, compliance, suitability,	
SEPT/OCT 2007	Want Some New Ideas about Producer Relations?	tips, forum, C.E., privacy, compliance, termination	
NOV/DEC 2007	Can We Get Back to the Basics?	producer, company, consumer, trust, risk, needs, listen	
NOV/DEC 2007	INDEX NOVEMBER 2004 - DECEMBER 2007		