

Tailoring technology to help streamline renewals

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ALTHOUGH the P&I industry is not noted for its volatility, there are signs that change is in the air, writes Ben Shellie.

One aspect of this is the stratification of the players according to their financial strength and, crucially, the reliability of their call predictions.

Another is the success of a select few niche operators.

These developments intensify competitive pressures. Since their products are broadly homogeneous, service offerings and cost efficiencies are important factors through which P&I competitors differentiate themselves.

A vital aspect of service provision is the ability to maintain consistent standards and to innovate by introducing new services when the opportunity is identified. The key to this is visibility of, and control over, business processes.

Technology has a great deal to offer in this area and Chase has worked with a number of P&I clients to improve business processes.

The West of England Club had already invested great efforts in considering its positioning and aspirations.

Its project began with a systematic investigation, supported by our P&I industry modelling tool Scipio, of its processes and ambitions to improve them.

This led rapidly to the client's selection and implementation of Calm C/S as the core business system, aimed at maximising the opportunities presented by the annual policy renewal process.

Every year all the P&I organisations face the major challenge of managing their entire book of business through a renewal process with a February 20 deadline.

The run-up to this is a major part of the year's effort for the underwriters.

The aftermath, in which invoices and insurance documentation must be produced to tight deadlines is very demanding, and in the P&I industry all this back-office work is performed in-house.

West of England devised a new streamlined approach, which entailed the development and implementation of a new renewals processing module within six months to support 2006 renewal cycle.

As a result West of England managed to complete its entire renewal processing effort and issue all documents in record time, with the majority of certificates issued before February 20.

British Marine, part of the QBE Group, is distinguished as the only commercial P&I insurer specialising in smaller oceangoing vessels. It has thrived in recent years under strong new management with clear vision combined with the ability to implement.

British Marine also focused on the underwriting function as the proving ground for process improvement by integrating electronic document and records management with the core business system.

British Marine asked Chase to work on a proof-of-concept implementation, under its own research and development programme.

British Marine made a great success of the implementation with the fundamental cultural change it entailed. An interesting illustration of that success was the use of the system by an underwriter on Christmas Day 2006 to file documents.

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