



NAIFA Webinar

Life Insurance Awareness Month: Educating and Empowering Policy Owners

Presented by [Proformex](#) and NAIFA's Business Performance Center



- Marc Byrnes, Chairman Emeritus, [Oswald Companies](#)
- [Ken Leibow](#), CEO, Founder and Chairman, [InsureTech Express](#)
- [Mike Pepe](#), Founder, [Proformex](#)
- [Ryan Pinney](#), President, [Pinney Insurance](#)

Recounting the history of the life insurance industry during his career in the business, Marc Byrnes told webinar attendees: "A lot has changed in the last 44 years, and it's going to change even more as we go forward."

In coming years, consolidation of companies in the industry is likely to continue, impacting the portfolio of product offerings for consumers and the way producers serve their clients.

There is also a shift in priorities for the companies, Byrnes said. "They're all looking for assets under management," he explained. "They're training their agents in the world of managing investments, not necessarily training them to become prolific in life insurance sales."

Ryan Pinney said that the impact of COVID-19 is accelerating the evolution of insurance and financial services. "Where I think the industry has gone in the last five or six months is where I thought we'd go in the next five or six years," he said. "Simplified underwriting has become the new in-vogue product and we're seeing a repeat of some of the stuff that was happening in the late '80s when companies were trying to be super competitive."

He agreed that mergers and acquisitions in the industry are likely to accelerate, and a good portion of it will be driven by advances in technology. "It means that brokerage agencies and advisors need to start becoming very tech savvy," he said. "I heard a quote – I'm going to steal it but this is from somebody else: Technology will not replace advisors, but advisors who use technology will replace those who don't."

CONSUMERS AND THE NEW NORMAL

Ken Leibow said: "Since millennials will be the biggest consumer base, one trend for sure will be more consumer self-service technology for buying and applying for life insurance, but with on-call availability of a professional agent to assist as needed."

"It's harder to get face-to-face," said Mike Pepe, "so advisors are leveraging technology for staying in front of your clients, getting back to the basics of protecting the client's needs. ... The older generation, as well, is getting used to technology and the new way of doing business, and I think it's here to stay."

The flip side of that, said Byrnes, is that more people are accessible remotely. Higher level executives, for instance, may have more time to take meetings during COVID-19 restrictions than they have had in the past. Fewer people are traveling, so they are open to virtual meetings.

THE ISSUE OF ONGOING CARE

Consolidation and changes in the industry can complicate the ability of advisors to provide ongoing care to existing clients.

“There’s a huge challenge in our industry, both at the advisor level and at the carrier level, that it’s really hard to get accurate data,” Pinney said. “Especially as there’s been this consolidation of carriers.”

For a client who bought a policy 15 years ago, he said, “I can never remember who to call. Which carrier bought who, then who bought them and then who bought them. We start going through this chain, and hear, ‘Oh, well we actually didn’t buy that block, that block went somewhere else,’ and so it gets really frustrating and difficult to try to manage these policies.”

“There’s a huge opportunity for the industry, and I really give a shout out to Performex here, what you guys are doing is designed to fix that problem for agents that care about their clients.”

It’s important that addressing the problem involves increasing engagement with clients, not just automating processes, Leibow said.

“We as agents and advisors really need to take the responsibility for what we sold our clients and what the industry sold to our clients,” Pinney said, “and make sure we’re doing a good job and educating both the consumer and each other to know what’s happening.”

Byrnes agreed that it’s important for advisors to help “clients understand what they have to continue to put into these policies in order to sustain them.”