



The Future is eWholesaling

as mentioned in



The Next 'no-brainer' for the Life and Annuity Sector

By Matt Essick | Chief Marketing Officer, Ensign™

The COVID-19 pandemic will accelerate the way life and annuity insurance carriers and brokerage firms' wholesale products.

Over a decade ago, during my time at Zurich Insurance Group, we were challenged to develop a new small business quoting platform. We identified over 25 critical success factors (CSF) across six major focus areas. Of course, "broker / agent servicing" was one.

Our biggest innovation? Real-time "virtual" case design between the 'market underwriter' and the broker. Market underwriters and point of sale brokers would have the ability to jointly view and discuss policy design in real-time on the platform. Proposals could be revised and finalized in one service discussion. A perfect fusion of human (underwriter; broker) and technology.

I still can't believe this is now not commonplace.

Release Date: August 31, 2020

However, over the next two years, the COVID-19 pandemic will accelerate the way that life and annuity insurance carriers and brokerage firms' wholesale product – as well as service and support the financial professionals and producers at the point of sale.

Let's look at two relevant shifts underway as an example: the rise of telemedicine and virtual higher education.

The Rapid Growth of Telemedicine

We are now rapidly entering the age of 'telemedicine', such as virtual diagnostic meetings with a general practitioner (GP) via Zoom.

The convenience of meeting with a doctor virtually is now available through practically every major health insurer. The COVID-19 pandemic is driving a massive increase in telehealth consultations. The research agency Frost and Sullivan forecasts "a sevenfold growth in telehealth by 2025 – [and] a five-year compound annual growth rate of 38.2%." [1] A study published in the Journal of the American Informatics Association also cites virtual urgent care visits at the NYU Langone health system grew by 683%, and nonurgent virtual-care visits grew by a staggering 4,345% between March 2 and April 14.

Through telemedicine, the healthcare system is more effectively scaling expertise at the frontline, far away from our hospitals and doctor's offices. The healthcare model will not return to pre-COVID service delivery.

The Coming Transformation of Higher Education

A recent article in Harvard Business Review, "Higher Ed Needs a Long-Term Plan for Virtual Learning", is another bell-weather for the Life and Annuity sector.



SIMPLIFY, MODERNIZE AND ACCELERATE
Virtual Meetings and Digital Sales Strategies

888-986-8157
skern@ensightcloud.com



ENSIGHT™

The Future is eWholesaling

Story Continued...

As we know, "...unable to deliver on-campus learning," universities have scrambled to provide academic continuity through "emergency remote teaching." The Coronavirus pandemic is forcing global experimentation with remote teaching. Many factors indicate this crisis will create a tectonic shift beyond this initial experimentation. Higher education is set for radical transformation if remote teaching proves successful.

We are at the same point in the wholesaling world. Insurance carriers, FMOs and BGAs over the past several months have scrambled to provide wholesaling service continuity on a virtual basis.

Will the most successful insurance carriers and brokerage distributors over the next decade be those that provide the most effective "virtual service" such as live interactive, educational seminars, online tutorial programming, and remote sales assistance for point-of-sale client engagements?

"The eWholesaling shift will happen rapidly in the next two to three years. Start now... to build your team."

Pillars of the New eWholesaling Model 5 Recommendations

Focusing your organization on the shift to "eWholesaling" can help you survive and thrive in the emerging, post-COVID-19 economy.

So, what is the blueprint to build an "eWholesaling" focused business?

Start with prioritizing the following areas:

- Virtual and interactive sales engagements
- Digital platform-based training, education and sales enablement
- Real-time data insight - to drive proactive and targeted wholesaler follow-up

Over the last several months, Ensign™ data shows a 155% increase in virtual life insurance sales meetings. Demand from wholesalers, financial advisors and life producers has been unprecedented.

Like telemedicine and higher education, experimentation starting as a response to COVID-19, is only set to dramatically and rapidly shift current expectations of producer servicing. The rise of the millennial generation – as the dominant financial professional and consumer target audience - will further buttress this speed of change.

For independent distribution, I have five recommendations:

- 1) **Go "all-in" on virtual engagements with producers** – simply put, this is the future. The reality is "virtual meetings" are more effective, efficient and productive – while simultaneously creating more personal relationships over the long-term.
- 2) **Think beyond case management technology** – the technology that will differentiate your organization, whether for producers or key accounts, will be how you enable digital learning and execute virtual, point of sale support.
- 3) **Create your team of "eWholesalers" now** – The "eWholesaling" shift will happen rapidly in the next two to three years. Start now. Millennials, the first truly digital generation, are a good place to start to build your "eWholesaling" team. (*Of note, I am "GenX").
- 4) **Shift from "T&E" budgets to "T&E" investment** – we are rapidly moving past the world where producer incentivization programs actually create ROI. Tomorrow's winners will already be re-steering next year's T&E (Travel & Entertainment) budget into Technology & Education investment.
- 5) **Win prospecting on the "digital battleground"** – the future of attracting and retaining new accounts and producers will be based on your eWholesaling model. Invest to win.

To be clear, when I say "eWholesaling" is the future, I am advocating for a melding of human and technology: a cyborg model. It makes sense for so many reasons. Higher productivity for external wholesalers. Better agency and producer servicing. Better product education. Even better relationships.

One insurance carrier, Pacific Life, and several BGAs have already started down this road. Now more than ever, this should be a priority for every manufacturer and distributor.

eWholesaling is the new battleground for tomorrow's competitive advantage.



ENSIGHT™

SIMPLIFY, MODERNIZE AND ACCELERATE
Virtual Meetings and Digital Sales Strategies

☎ 8 8 8 - 9 8 6 - 8 1 5 7

✉ skern@ensightcloud.com