

# Choosing an Agency Management System

Adapted from 2009 Presentation at Small Agency Conference, Fort Worth

## Reasons to Have an Agency Management System

- Centralizes your customer information
- Improves E&O documentation
- Makes your workflow more efficient
- Provides for extensive management information
- Enhances marketing and sales efforts
- Increases the value of your agency

## Technology Necessary for a Modern Agency

- Desktop Operating System: User applications, user interfacing (i.e. Windows XP Professional)
- Server Operating System: Platform for multi-user, networked applications. File & printer sharing, website services, e-mail exchanges bundled with Web servers, e-mail exchanges, imaging, efficient allocation of it resources between desktops and servers.
- Data Base Software: Agency Management System, Access
- Interface Software: Translate data between systems, (i.e., IVANS, XML)
- Carrier Proprietary Software
- Comparative Rating Software
- Imaging Software
- Fax Software
- Prospect Software
- Miscellaneous Desk-top or Network add-ons (i.e., Adobe, Blackberry, McAfee Antivirus, etc.)

## Factors to Consider When Comparing Systems

- Agency Workflow
  - Compiling, filing and retrieving customer, carrier, and third-party information
  - Work-flows
    - Prospect management and sales process – new business and cross-sell
    - New business: quotes, proposals, application, binding, billing
    - Certificates
    - Policy changes
    - Renewals: automatic, reviewed and shopped
    - Claims reporting and tracking
  - Suspense/follow-up
  - Transactions: documenting (source, operator, context,) cataloguing and recovering
- Accounting functions and integration with work-flow, financial reports
- Reporting capabilities (and search function): sales and marketing analysis, productivity, procedure audits
- Digital processing and communicating: download, real-time, desktop faxing, imaging, e-mail
- Integration and interdependencies of the following
  - Desktop
  - Servers
  - Internet
  - Carrier
  - Software associated for each
- Platform: Server based or Application Service Providers (ASP)
- Security: levels, password management
- Carrier interface: companies, products. Acord and/or carrier specific codes

- Price versus efficiencies
- Data conversion
- Training
- Maintenance
- Upgrades
- Vendor track record and future direction

## Outline of the Evaluation Process

- Understand your current work flow process.
- Get input on what your staff would like to see in a new system. Have staff representatives participate in all of the steps of the evaluation process.
- Create a description of the agency: organizational structure, current operating processes, book of business descriptions, growth expectations to share with prospective vendors.
- Observe real workflows in real agencies using different systems.
- Develop a score sheet listing the essential functions desired.
- Identify and demo vendors.
- Visit agency users of preferred vendors.
- Evaluate user groups.
- Select vendor.

## Scorecard

Feature	System A	System B	System C	System D
Client Information				
Policy Information				
Coverage/underwriting data				
Schedules				
Creating/Tracking Submissions				
Creating Integrated Proposals				
Invoicing				
Issuing Binders				
Issuing Certificates				
Integrated Form Letters				
Integrated Fax in/out				
Activity Tracking				
Suspense/follow up				
Renewal Applications				
Download				
Claims				
Attaching e-mails				
Attaching document/policies				
Real Time				

## Resources

- Agents Council on Technology: [www.independentagent/act](http://www.independentagent/act); [www.acttech.org](http://www.acttech.org)
- Steve Anderson's TAAR Report [www.taareport.com](http://www.taareport.com)