

## Focusing Underwriting, Customer Service and Claims On Profitable Sales and Revenue Growth

Many insurance companies are missing a big opportunity to increase sales and significantly improve their revenue because they have not organized or motivated their internal core business operations properly. Underwriting, customer service and even claims can have a huge, positive impact on your sales results if you only let them. More and more companies are recognizing this. They are turning their companies, almost every department, into marketing organizations.

If you are one of these companies . . . congratulations. You have a competitive advantage that is hard to overcome and it probably didn't cost you a penny.

If you are not, here is a checklist of things you might want to consider changing. Most of them are worth changing on their own merits, regardless of your opinion about transitioning your core business departments.

- The most important change you can make is to build a “partnership relationship” with your agents. Becoming partners with your agents to provide the best possible products and service for your customers and policyholders will create a powerful marketing advantage. Underwriters and customer service reps need to work closely with your agents to service your policyholders. Both should have the same goals. This means agents should have easy access to decision-makers and be treated as valuable members of your team. It also means that underwriters must have the time and resources available to provide on-the-spot advice, counsel and training to ensure the agents are best equipped to provide excellent advice and service.
- You may need to change the way you're organized. Units that focus on performing tasks and activities should be replaced with teams that focus on attaining business goals and results. Assembly line work processes and one function units should be eliminated. Teams of office people dedicated to attaining profitable growth with specific agencies or in specific geographic areas usually provide the best results and are exciting to watch. When changing your structure, less management is almost always better than more. Require professionalism and competency from each team member. Treat them as adults.
- You will definitely need additional core success measures that recognize the team's new accountabilities in sales, retention/persistency, revenue growth, and agency success. These new measures, when combined with your old measures (loss results, expense control, efficiency, service standards, etc.) will create the balanced focus you need to ensure profitable growth.
- You may want to also consider going the next step in this journey and make these areas mini-profit centers. This concept ties everything together, allows you to consider team based incentives and ensures that this new focus will have the most momentum.

If you decide to consider the ideas presented in this letter, please feel free to call me. I'd be happy to discuss how to make these changes in more detail. Also, please visit our web sight at [McDonaldConsultingGroup.com](http://McDonaldConsultingGroup.com), where you'll find further explanations of these ideas (and other exciting ideas) in our Concepts and Ideas section.