

Consolidate - Consolidate - Consolidate

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The mantra for Real Estate is Location – Location - Location. For your insurance program, it should be the title of this Tip. It's easy and creates lots of benefits.

Almost all midsize and smaller businesses have purchased their insurance policies over time, as they discover or need new coverage. Today's snapshot of their program looks very haphazard and disorganized – different stand-alone policies, different brokers and/or captive agents, different renewal dates. The usual explanation is their purchases have been *transactional* rather than *strategic*. This is both the problem and the opportunity.

One client recently had an office package with Allstate, business auto with State Farm and some highly specialized coverage with a broker in Boston. There was no coordination, and they were confused about just what coverages they had.

Another client had three brokers: one for Workers' Comp, one for Bonds, and a third for everything else. The third broker had six policies with four different dates. The client felt like they were on an endless treadmill dealing with insurance all the time!

What's the business impact? ~

Imagine the productivity loss in collecting information - often similar and often from the same staff people - at six different renewal times. For staff and management, the need to stop and shift gears again and again to check numbers, fill out applications, review proposals, verify binders and invoices, and write checks can be very difficult. And then there's the hassle of getting Certificates of Insurance from all the different brokers or insurers to provide a complete picture to your vendors and clients.

You CAN get out of this rat race! ~

- If you have different insurance providers, ask yourself, "What's the real benefit to your business?" Are these relationships truly strategic? Often, old relationships don't make sense any longer – your business, products, services and needs have grown and changed. **Consolidate** to one competent, professional broker with all the options and services you now need, and you'll improve productivity – perhaps dramatically.
- Simplify your insurance life and encourage your broker to provide more and broader coverages in fewer policies. Many insurers will write a program to include your property, liability, auto and even Workers' Comp in one package. The property section can include buildings, contents, office machines, and even tools and equipment. You can get a Difference in Conditions policy to replace separate earthquake and flood policies. Contractors can get Pollution and Professional liability in one policy. **Consolidate** your coverages, and you'll improve the depth and breadth of protection and eliminate possible gaps.
- If your policies renew at different times this can cause major confusion. **Consolidate** to one – or at most two – annual renewal dates. You'll be able to focus, make good decisions because you're paying attention, and get it all wrapped up so you can get back to what you do best.