

THE RZ FINANCIAL NETWORK STORY

New RZ Financial Network fosters innovative idea-sharing along with traditional back office, marketing support for independent producers

Sharing successful ideas might not be the norm among independent producers — a notoriously independent lot — yet Nathan Zuidema and Ed Prewitt have formed the RZ Financial Network to change that. They formed their enterprise with two key goals: to provide independent agents with traditional back office and marketing support, and yet more significantly, to create a flood of business-growing ideas from a nationwide network of industry professionals meeting regularly to share their industry knowledge.

A LOGICAL STEP IN MARKET EVOLUTION

It's a concept new to the industry, Prewitt explains, and a logical step in market evolution. "RZ Financial Network looked at what's been done in the past, and what's needed in the future. We looked at how our networking relationships and industry partners help us achieve our parallel goals." They concluded that the industry needed the RZ Financial Network.

Their idea: being an independent producer doesn't mean being alone.

Number one: they formed RZ Financial Network to give producers proven, professional service. Number two, to give producers a feeling of belonging, of being part of a network of professionals who come together in an environment where the main focus is to share new ideas about how to generate more clients, lower costs, increase overall financial success and improve their insurance practice.

Thirdly, the network defines commitment to producers. The network is about providing solutions. Zuidema explains: "We want to simplify a producer's life. In a world of product pushers, what separates us from the competition is what we're providing more than just product. We're providing new ideas and solutions

to what producers face in their daily practice."

The key to those solutions is the network, Prewitt says. "You have many producers in the network who want to help, all at your fingertips. The independent advisor, the CPA, the lawyer — we're bringing them all together into a centralized hub, which allows you to create relationships with industry experts, business resources and motivated producers in the network."

RZ Financial Network is "pioneering a new idea," Zuidema says, "that we're out there, trying new ideas, while measuring them in the field."

Prewitt concurs: "We're always listening to you, the producer. We're finding what is successful. We're encouraging insurance professionals to share their ideas with each other. This is not the norm," Prewitt says. "Other marketing organizations hide their successful producers."

A NEW KIND OF MARKETING ORGANIZATION

Zuidema and Prewitt say they're trying to change industry perceptions of how a marketing organization operates. Many producers, approached by a marketing organization, feel that the marketing organization is just out to snag a contract. Unfortunately, there are marketing orga-

nizations out there that just push product and contracts down agent's throats . . . they take, without giving back. The RZ Financial Network stance is to promote solutions that work best for the current situation.

"The industry has evolved for a new breed of marketing organization," Zuidema explains. "We are that choice. Our owners are agents, not board room junkies. We work for the independent producer and we are directed by our network."

The RZ Financial Network welcomes the freedom of being an independent producer while offering all the advantages of being part of a group. Through the network, producers get all the traditional marketing tools, Zuidema says. "Like everyone else, we have the latest in turn-key seminar systems, the highest level of commissions, perks, trips, and all the incentives and back office support."

Prewitt encapsulates their concept: "Many marketing organizations continue to do things from fifteen to twenty years ago, and wait for an idea that they can steal and act like they created it themselves. Our job is to bring the latest industry changes and products to the table, so that the independent producer continues to earn and grow more. We're saying, 'tell me your problem, your pain, your issues. If I can't resolve it right away, at least I know where to go for help.'"

The company's goal is quite simple, Prewitt says. "At the end of the day, our producers are growing and succeeding in sales and clients, because of what they are giving and receiving from the network." ■