

longer an option. They were intimidated at first, but we were able to help our clients evolve with us.

**Will COVID-19 bring any long-term changes to the industry?** Absolutely. During the pandemic, consumers had time to sit down and reassess their insurance needs and cost. Consumers have been more price sensitive and that will increase even after the pandemic because of their lifestyle and work changes. They are also in front of their computers and phones a lot more, giving them more opportunities to shop for insurance.

**If you could change one aspect of the insurance industry, what would it be?** I've been in the industry for a long time and as diverse as it tries to be, it is still a very male dominated industry. I would like to see more females and minority females become leaders and agency principals. The "old boy network" still very much exists in the industry.

### Zachary Schmoll, Ph.D. New England Excess Exchange, Barre, Vt.

**What advice would you give to young people considering an insurance**



**career?** I would encourage young people to give insurance a chance. It is a stable industry that there is always going to be a need for. Also, while insurance may not seem to

be at the forefront of innovation, new industries always need insurance, and as I am a surplus lines underwriter, I get to work on some very interesting accounts. Something new always seems to come across my desk, and it requires critical thinking to determine appropriate coverages and creativity to make things with the right carrier. Even thinking further ahead, how are we going to best insure self-driving vehicles, commercial space travel and other future technologies? Insurance companies will play a key role in managing risk for these innovations.

**What should the industry do to attract young talent?** Insurance already provides the traditional hallmarks of an attractive career: solid compensation, good benefits and a good opportunity for a work-life balance. Since even with those major positives it seems to be a challenge to attract new, young

**"Zachary is an exceptional part of our underwriting team. He regularly brings a positive attitude and great ideas to the organization. We enjoy working with Zachary, and he motivates us to be our best. He also provides our clients with great service and quality insurance knowledge. We're lucky to work with Zachary, and he absolutely deserves the distinction of being one of New England's best young agents."**

**— Todd Wood,  
New England Excess Exchange**

talent, maybe the way to [do it] is to find people who already know certain industries but are in positions where they are ready to move on. You might be able to find a potential underwriter of hospitality business in someone who has worked in restaurants for years, understands the ins and outs of the risks and can think critically about what exposures might exist, but is tired of the difficult hours. Perhaps that means we would be attracting people who are a little bit older and have different backgrounds than we have traditionally looked for, but we can get people who are eager to embrace the traditional benefits of the insurance industry, and our industry benefits from getting people who have the first-hand knowledge that will help them understand risks well. Maybe we have to change our focus in terms of who we are recruiting.

**What part of your job do you like the best?** My favorite part of my job is solving problems. I enjoy looking at the situation, evaluating what needs to be done, and then considering the different markets we work with in trying to find the best solution for the risk. It is a kind of competition. We have to find the best combination of price and coverage that will sell the account to the particular insured through our retail agent partners. I am pretty competitive by nature, and I consider binding an account winning. I try my best to win for my company, the carriers, the retail agents and the insureds.

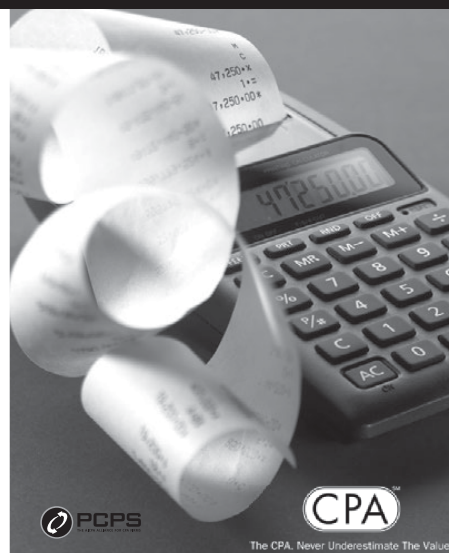
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