



The Claims and Risk Management Working Group met at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Washington, DC on Tuesday, February 8th as a part of The Council's Legislative and Working Group Summit. This was the first time the group has met in person since this event two years ago.

The group started with an introductory exercise, followed by peer share, and concluding with a presentation from Redhand Advisors.

There were 3 main themes the group discussed: fostering and maintaining company culture virtually, training and retaining employees, and self-care.

Culture

Culture is an intangible, but critically important part of any company. The pandemic has reinforced that culture cannot be static; however, questions of holding onto cultural mainstays, instead of evolving with technology, have been plaguing the insurance industry for the last two years.

The energy and vibrancy of an office can easily be lost in a virtual space. Remote culture is possible, but it requires more effort and dedication to build than in office culture. Being deliberate about happy hours, camera-on meetings, and human connection is incredibly important.

As companies are shifting to hybrid models, they are attempting to inspire people to come back to the office. A formal, flexible work process on a departmental level is key. The one-size-fits-all model isn't applicable, and departments will have better energy (in office or virtually) if everyone has a say.

A list of suggestions to foster a virtual culture:

- Take time in meetings to catch up, don't jump straight to the agenda.
- Express a moment of gratitude before every meeting, to refocus away from the negatives.
- Schedule a 'temperature check' meeting, where everyone shares something personal, professional, and something with the family. Focus on the question, 'how are you doing?'
- Block off dedicated time on everyone's company calendar to have lunch or stop working. This is the idea of 'dead time' where everyone is encouraged NOT to work.
- Plan virtual events, such as Happy Hours, game nights, etc. DURING working hours. Bring joy back to workdays, rather than expecting people to do it on their own time.
- Be deliberate about making lists and creating deliverables for employees, so they have something to work towards.
- Trust your employees to get the work done.

Training

Training and onboarding are tied directly to company culture. A pain point of the virtual environment is the loss of internal, in person learning opportunities. Especially for 'green' employees, it's very easy to feel like their role is transactional. Being proactive in creating a formalized, virtual mentorship or apprenticeship culture will be a huge competitive advantage for the industry. Zoom office hours, to replicate working next to a mentor throughout the day, is a great way to begin to address this problem.

A large percentage of turnover in the industry is from people who were hired just before or during the pandemic. This directly impacts the 'war on talent,' because these individuals don't have the same understanding of firm culture or sense loyalty to their teams and are more likely to leave after a few months.

differences that come with technology. Understanding what the workforce will look like in the future, informs the investments firms are making today.

Self-Care

Managing stress levels in a virtual environment is extremely difficult. Many people noted that the hardest part about remote work is knowing when to stop. Especially when days are filled with Zoom meetings and email inundation, it's difficult to accomplish tasks. Additionally, multiple communication streams (i.e., email, Zoom, and Slack), can cause people to miss messages, resulting in employees who are over connected, but under engaged. This can lead to feelings of isolation.

Over connectivity directly impacts creative problem-solving and the quality of client relationships. When meetings are one after the other, and there is no 'windshield time,' so preparation for meetings and time for reflection are inevitably lost.

A list of suggestions to limit stress in a virtual environment:

- Separation of time and spaces. Designate rooms for work and life.
- Create a morning routine, like in office days.
- Don't multitask. It will be more rewarding to solve one thing and move onto the next, preventing burnout.
- Create deliberate schedules for distraction. An example would be taking a walk outside while listening to your favorite podcast.

Following the peer share, Patrick O'Neill of Redhand Advisors presented on Risk Management Information Systems (RMIS). Redhand Advisors is a RiskTech consulting firm, that has expertise in several specialized solutions and software to improve business function. Redhand Advisors provides actionable guidance to accelerate tech adoption, integration timelines, and create sustainable processes to analyze risk-based information.

Learn more about Redhand and their annual RMIS Report [here](#).

Other Resources

Download the Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers Q4 P/C Market Survey report [here](#).

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