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FEATURING

Going Goliath

Consolidation ups the competition for every player. What are you doing to capitalize on the M&A activity?

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About counterpoint

CounterPoint is the proprietary publication of MarshBerry. The magazine offers eleven editions annually and is published for independent insurance agents and brokers, national brokers, private equity firms, banks, credit unions, insurance carriers and specialty distributors.

The Rapid Pace of Consolidation

Consolidation within the insurance brokerage space has become a force to be reckoned with, and often might feel like a David and Goliath situation. Across all industries, there have been nearly 14,000 total deals in the U.S. in the past 12 months,[1] with more than 630 of those transactions occurring within the insurance brokerage space alone.[2]

While not every deal is as large or as publicized as USI Insurance Services, LLC's recent acquisition of U.S. Risk Insurance Group, LLC, it is important for leadership at every firm, no matter your size, location, niche or specialty, to understand how consolidation is impacting your everyday operations.

Whether you have a rock-solid perpetuation plan or think you might test the Merger & Acquisition ("M&A") waters in the near future, it is of the utmost importance that you consider the rapid pace of consolidation.

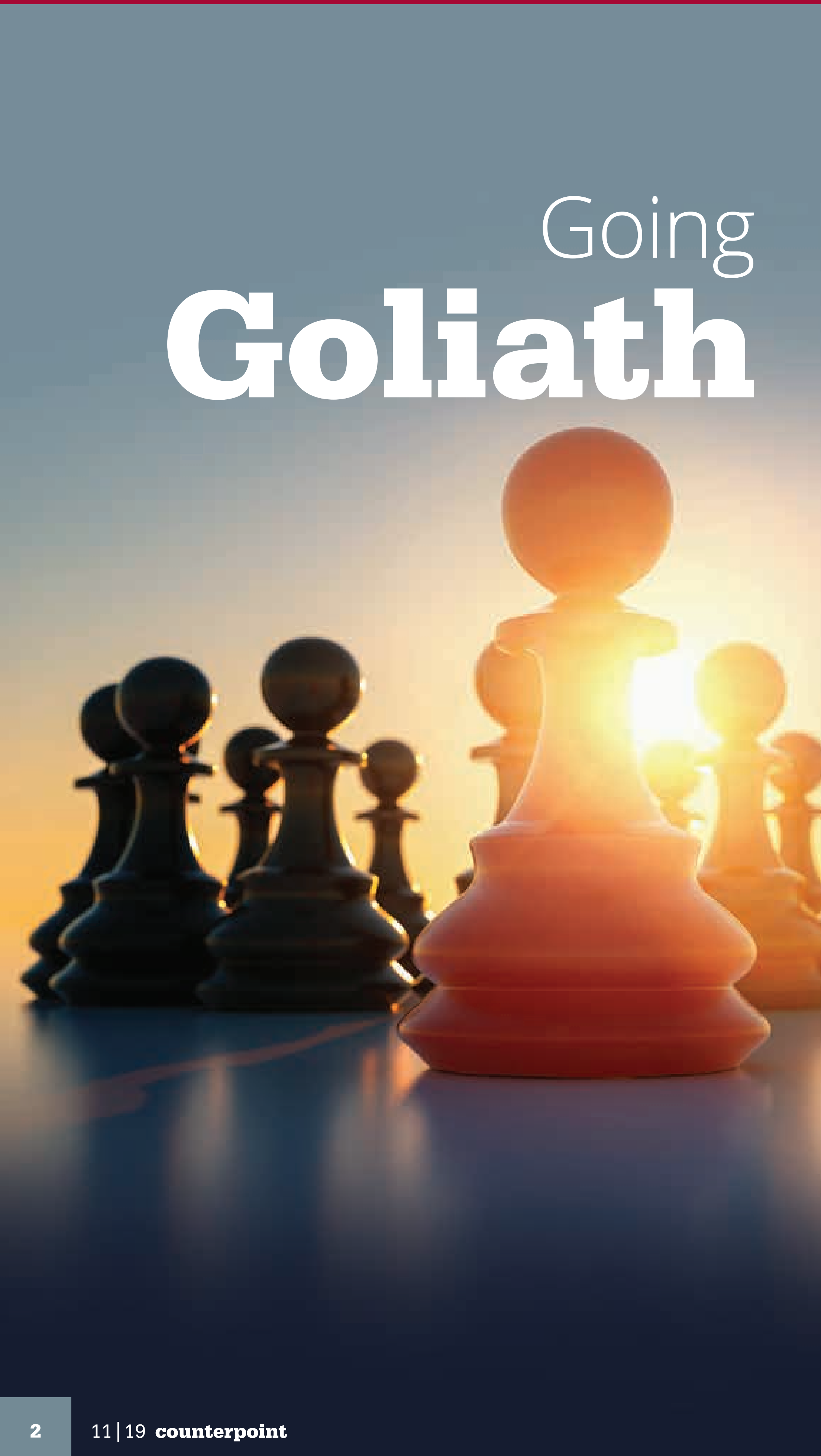
It impacts not only how business is done today but how it will be done in the future. Within this issue of *CounterPoint,* we examine several ways in which the buying spree across the insurance distribution space is impacting your firm, whether you have realized it or not. When the rival shop down the street sells to a big-name private-equity backed broker, the direct and indirect repercussions are undeniable, ***therefore it is mission critical that you develop a plan.***

As the top brokers in the industry continue to grow in both size and resources, it is important to keep in mind that it's possible to not only survive, but to ***thrive,*** whether you remain independent or choose to partner with a larger firm. No matter the decision, you must do something. Consolidation is happening, and there's no stopping it. The only bad strategy is having no strategy at all.

Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, MarshBerry

[1] *Factset Flashwire U.S. Monthly, August 2019, https://www.factset.com/hubfs/mergerstat_em/monthly/US-Flashwire-Monthly.pdf*

[2] *S&P Global Market Intelligence*



Going Goliath

By **Brad Unger,**
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Consolidation is a common theme many industries share — local businesses folding into national portfolios, family-owned operators exiting by sale. We've watched how consolidation has significantly altered airlines, banks and wireless carriers. Large players have the power to reduce costs and implement enhanced technology. They can also enhance revenue, but in doing so the firm being acquired must recognize change is coming.

Change is coming whether you participate in consolidation or not.

Acquired competitors, with suddenly deeper pockets thanks to their well-resourced "parent," might gain an edge because of technology, operational efficiencies, inroads to attractive accounts or more robust support services. Suddenly, the firm up the street has more extras. ***How will you keep up?***

On the other hand, a competitor who is acquired by an organization that isn't so strong can represent opportunity. The independent brokerage with local knowledge can connect with clients and understand the market.

The thing is, there's no way to predict which of your competitors will sell and what business will acquire them. So, what top-performing agencies must do in a landscape where Goliath is knocking on doors is to plan for aggressive growth and execute on that strategy.

The Low-Down on All the Roll-Up

Consolidation isn't news, though record Merger and Acquisition ("M&A") deals are certainly raising eyebrows.

The insurance agency and brokerage market is large and fragmented, consisting of roughly 30,000 firms. Of those, the 100 largest have revenues greater than $25 million.[1] During the past 10 years, insurance has experienced an increasing volume of M&A transactions, and 2019 is likely to surpass previous years' deal counts.

There are a number of factors driving consolidation, including demand from private equity-backed investors who appreciate the recurring revenue and stability they find in the insurance industry. Not to mention, public companies and private owner-operated buyers are growing through acquisition and expanding their market footprints.

Consolidation isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, for some firms it's a strategic win to be bought by a competitor or national firm because they can grow stronger without the financial outlay. They can acquire resources without investing everything they've got. And, some owners appreciate removing certain back-office tasks from their plates and rely on the "system" to do the work. When bought by a like-minded partner, consolidation can bring together synergies and make a once-independent firm stronger, bigger and more competitive.

You see, ***"compete"*** is the key word.

Firms get bought out because they can't or are unable to compete. Firms that want to better compete buy in to a new partnership. They might feel the stress of these national competitors and figure, why not join them? There are many variables at play, but overall, a desire and need to compete is a driving factor in consolidation. That's exactly what is needed to drive independent firms who want to stay that way and perpetuate.

Consolidation can bring together synergies and make a once-independent firm stronger, bigger and more competitive.

Yes, You Need a Plan

Suddenly, you're competing on a national scale. Sound surprising? It shouldn't. Think about it:

The local firm up the road sells to a national firm, and now they've got a fancy tech platform and already-built systems in place. They're even bringing in a team of consultants to retrain producers.

The reality is, with consolidation on the rise and no signs of slowing, you are competing against the big guys even if you play in a small pond and are determined to remain independent. So, what are you doing to enhance your services? How are you improving your operations so you can work smarter and capture cost efficiencies that allow you to compete with national firms that have resources and infrastructure?

You need a plan:

1 Assess Your Operations

How are you doing business? What areas of your operation are lagging or causing financial leaks?

Are there aspects of your business that could be automated — how could technology alleviate a burden on your people and free them up to provide better service? Take a good, hard look at every aspect of your firm and identify what systems and infrastructure are missing that would improve efficiency and profitability.

2 Invest in Change

You might need to invest in software or various technologies to stay up to speed with sophisticated competitors who have such systems. You might need to invest in talent. Based on the assessment of your operations, you'll need to tune-up areas of the business — and that requires capital. Be willing to do so if you plan to compete in today's market.

3 Partner with Resources

Tap into resources that can take your operation to the next level. That could mean developing partnerships with service providers so you can offer risk management or compliance services. It could mean forming an agreement with another firm or bringing on staff to perform such roles. MarshBerry offers Connect, an executive peer exchange network that serves as a platform allowing members to take advantage of services and products so they don't have to "build it." If your goal is to remain independent and perpetuate, there's tremendous value in networking with like-minded peers who are focused on high performance and sharing resources.

Just Do Something

Consolidation is happening. There's no stopping it. We see this as an opportunity for independent agencies to grow stronger — and for firms that are interested in being part of the activity to find a business partner. So, what are you going to do?

The only wrong approach may be to do nothing at all.

If you are committed to staying independent: Plan to fine-tune operations, invest in infrastructure and partner with resources. Perform a competitive analysis and take stock of your strengths and weaknesses. Be willing to change.

If you are interested in consolidation: Take the time to do your homework. Enlist an adviser who can help you vet potential buyers and carry out the necessary, thorough due diligence. Don't settle for the first offer — remember, this is a record-breaking M&A environment, so as a seller you have choices. And remember, you can't sit back and do nothing and expect to be bought at a fine price. Companies looking to expand their footprint don't want to buy dead weight. They're looking for talent, local knowledge, insurance expertise and a record of organic growth.

Do something. Plan. Prepare. Execute. Then, you'll truly compete in this dynamic marketplace.

[1]2019 Business Insurance 100 Largest Brokers of U.S. Business, Ranked by 2018 brokerage revenue generated by U.S.-based clients.

METRIC OF THE MONTH

Don't be Soft in a Hard Market

MarshBerry generally defines a "hard market" when the Net Written Premium (NWP) growth rate increases by three percentage points and the increase is sustained for two years. Typically, this change is attributable to a high demand in insurance coverage during a time of limited supply. Carriers will potentially increase premiums or issue a limited number of policies.

Even in times of great demand, and potentially increased business, carriers can only take on so much risk; and, with each additional customer comes additional risk that carriers need to consider. Therefore, as their risk increases, they can only write a limited number of policies in order to stay under or equal to premium capacity. As the demand for insurance policies outpaces the carriers' ability to supply them, clients must pay more in premiums for their coverage.

So, what happens to your book of business during a hard market? Interestingly, as the hard market conditions set in, we see slow improvement in average leakage rates. This shift may seem counterintuitive; wouldn't a firm lose accounts during times of increased prices for the exact same services? The answer is could be yes – however, it's also possible for the increased gains from the rate increases seem to outweigh the losses.

The 7 Habits of Highly Successful Producers

New business is what separates great producers from good ones — and consistently growing a book of business by 15% each year is what differentiates high-performing producers in successful firms from the average. Adopting these seven habits can help producers stay on top of their game.

1 KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Stay up to date on your annual revenue goal, closing ratio, average sales cycle length and average account size.

2 HAVE A "ROBUST" PIPELINE

Focus on successfully keeping a full pipeline so you can close enough deals to predictably achieve your goals.

3 HAVE A WRITTEN PLAN

Build a robust pipeline by having a written plan that includes your ideal account profile, how many prospects fit that profile, what level of prospecting activity you need and how you will obtain your self-development goals for the year.

4 GET A COMMITMENT FOR THE NEXT STEP

Get a commitment before leaving a meeting. If the prospect agrees to a follow-up, set a date and send a calendar invite right there. Always leave meetings with defined next steps!

5 TRADE UP

Consider transitioning the bottom 10-20% of accounts every year to new producers or a small business unit so you can concentrate on "trading up" and earning new business.

6 SHOOT FOR 25%

You'll naturally experience account leakage of about 10% annually — so in order to achieve 15% book growth, aim for earning at least 25% new business. If you do, you can double your book size every five years.

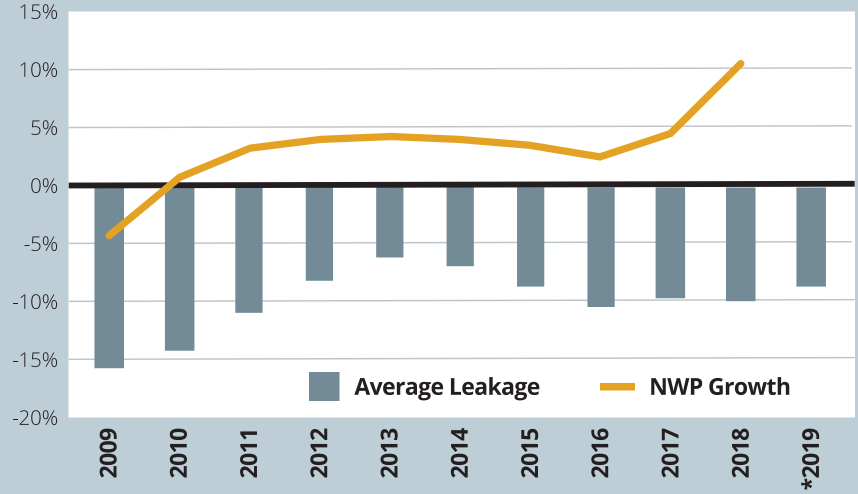
7 END ON A HIGH NOTE

Make sure your last experience of the day is always positive. If you're ready to head home but a prospect hangs up on you, make one more call that goes well.

Are you a sales manager looking to motivate your staff? Download our 10 Tips on Being a Bold Sales Leader at **www.MarshBerry.com/Bold.**

This is prime time for agents and brokers to nurture and maintain existing client relationships. Firms with a strong growth culture can take advantage of this environment to ramp-up sales efforts and pick up new accounts.

LEAKAGE AND NET WRITTEN PREMIUM



*Sources: Net Written Premium (NWP) WP Growth: A.M. Best (2009-2013), ISO (2014 -2018), Insurance Information Institute, Leakage: MarshBerry proprietary financial management system Perspectives for High Performance ("PHP"). *Leakage shown for 2019 is for the twelve months ended 6/30/2019. The 2019 NWP Growth Rate is not yet available.*

Get Your Sales Game On

Sales success is a team effort at Gannon Associates — and the wins are paying off.

By **Christina Moran, PhD,**
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The goal was to close $50,000 in new business.

Gannon Associates Insurance ("Gannon Associates") in Towanda, Pa., had adopted its first sales system and implemented it agency wide (in partnership with MarshBerry) — and the business was finally prepared to develop and empower their producers by using a predictable sales process.

For years, CEO Mark Gannon shares, "We had a small business and personal lines focus with inside sales agents participating in a reactive sales system." The firm was opened in 1973 by his father, Max Gannon, who was joined by his business partner, Tom Abell, in 1977. Employees all know the story of Max and Tom growing the agency out of the trunk of Max's Chevy Vega to what they are part of today. Now Gannon Associates is a $10 million agency with a balance of personal lines, commercial lines and employee benefits. The agency was able to achieve this level of growth by establishing systems and setting goals.

Tom Abell kicked off the agency's first sales system with the first goal set to write $50,000 in new business. Not everyone bought in, and some said, "that's impossible, there's no way you can write $50,000 a year in Bradford County, Pa." Mark Gannon was a part of that first sales team, and he believed in the team's ability to achieve the goals set. "A big part of this is the belief that you can do it — and showing others, 'wow, this can be done,'" he says. "Then, it's asking, 'who wants to do this?' Some did. Others said, 'this isn't for me,' and we found places for them in the organization."

This started 17 years ago, when Gannon Associates had reached a ceiling with growth. "We hit a point where we had the size, but it was going to be tough to grow without a proactive production staff," Gannon says. "Sales don't just happen," he continues, "and for us, this was the last part of our firm that we focused on operationally. All of our service and support areas were structured with processes we followed to make us more efficient. But we tended to think that sales were achieved by just going out there, talking about the product and building relationships. To drive real growth — there needs to be more structure than that."

During the last decade, Gannon Associates has been on a mission to create sales processes, coach and train producers and align sales with marketing. Through work with MarshBerry that initial $50,000 goal has since increased to $60,000 with producers achieving personal goals of more than $100,000. Gannon Associates has evolved into designing a sales process that will support the organization's future growth.

"We need to have 360-degree producers," Gannon says. This means producers who commit to entering data into Salesforce and spend time understanding what their numbers say about their performance. It means preparing for every sales call, going in with questions and getting commitments. And it means collaborating with support staff, marketing and operations.

"It has been a constant effort to get there," Gannon says.

Building a Sales Structure

Gannon Associates called on MarshBerry to look at their sales structure as well as their overall vision to make sure they were set up to support sales and grow.

Work began with the creation of a five-year plan that included staffing. Mark felt the agency's current structure wasn't set up to take them to the next level. "At the time, I was juggling sales and overseeing operations," Gannon says, noting that the advice he received was to name dedicated sales and operations managers.

So, Gannon Associates advertised for these positions internally. One of the top producers stepped up and was named director of sales. "She wanted the challenge," Gannon says. The other director of sales position, focusing on agribusiness opportunities, was filled by an individual who was previously helping the agency through all the changes going on in healthcare. Things had calmed down in the healthcare marketplace and stabilized a bit, which opened time to work with the sales staff. Key moves were made to advance staff into director roles for marketing and operations.

"Having a defined structure is critical, it's what allows individuals to advance and grow. Our agency needed to move from having people wearing many hats, to having individuals focus in specific areas. Our development in sales and marketing has been the biggest changes for us. Meanwhile, the operations team keeps sales focused on providing best-in-class service for existing customers, which leads to more internal opportunities," Gannon points out.

The firm has always focused on relationships, but having a sales system and infrastructure in place gives producers the training, support and tools to leverage those relationships into more new business, he adds. Plus, training and mentoring has played a key role in developing salespeople into "360-degree producers." Gannon Associates never had a true producer workflow — a solid, defined system for what producers should do and how they should do it. Producers made calls, met with prospects and built relationships. But things were done without a plan, on the go, and the results were not consistent. "We needed training and support — we had to set up a structure," Gannon relates.

> "Our agency needed to move from having people wearing many hats, to having individuals focus in specific areas."

"We want to make sure our producers have good organizational skills and a plan for every week — every meeting," Gannon says. Producers have individual one-on-one meetings with a MarshBerry consultant to review what happened during a sales call and tee up for the next one. "They are short, 10-minute meetings, but it allows producers to quickly take a snapshot of what they are doing well and what they are doing poorly, and then come up with a plan to fix it," Gannon says.

Practicing different scenarios through role-playing can feel awkward but it is an important part of becoming comfortable in any situation. Gannon says that bringing in an outside party to conduct those practice sales calls has made a big difference. Practicing allows producers to test their skills without the pressure of being in front of a sales manager or a customer. "Now that we are practicing what to say, our producers are taking the process much more seriously and constantly working on it," Gannon says.

Onboarding has also been a critical component of executing the sales process. It's not uncommon for producers who join Gannon Associates to come without previous insurance experience. With a training program and sales system in place, Gannon Associates can ensure that new team members get the support required to succeed right off the bat.

Planning for Success

How does a defined sales structure change the way producers contribute to an organization?

Gannon shares the experience of a producer who spoke about this during a sales breakout meeting. She told the group, "I used to drive to a customer meeting, listen to the radio and sing along — then I'd zip into the office. I always did a great job of building rapport and getting people to talk. They'd talk for an hour and I'd realize I'm learning a lot — but I didn't get anywhere." The meetings were nice, but they did not end with commitments.

"Now, before I leave for an appointment, I go over my notes and rehearse my game plan," she says. "I go through the information I was coached on, create a pre-meeting strategy, and identify my goals. I research the client in Salesforce and find important information. I still sing in my car on the way to a meeting, but I know I'm prepared and have a plan for success." She continues, "I still build rapport and enjoy the conversation, but I have goals to accomplish and questions I want to ask. When I talk, I get to the things I need to know."

Gannon says this producer's appointment-to-submission rate has improved significantly. "Her closing ratio drastically improved and she is getting more opportunities during appointments." With an organized system, a plan, the data and goals, she goes into meetings with clear direction and comes out with answers.

Additionally, producers are focused on what their numbers mean, Gannon adds. "A baseball player knows his batting average and what to work on to improve his game," he relates. "By knowing how you are doing with that first appointment, how much business you are closing, how much activity it

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Who is Still **Sitting at the Top?**

By **Casey Pont,** Senior Consultant
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Each year, Business Insurance ("BI") publishes the "100 Largest Brokers of U.S. Business" in a special report released each July. The ranking shows the top 100 brokers ranked by revenue generated from U.S.-based clients from the prior calendar year.

Sometimes the list feels like a game of musical chairs, except the number of seats don't change. However, the firms sitting in the seats transition and evolve. What's more, the size of each seat keeps increasing. Consolidation within the industry is a driver behind both — who has a seat on the top 100 list and where firms reside within the list.

Between 2009 and 2019 (revenue reported for 2008 and 2018 respectively), there have been 160 unique firms seated among the top 100. Of the 100 brokerages included on the list in 2009, only 56 remained on the list in 2019. We published similar data in the Leaders Edge Merger & Acquisition ("M&A") Supplement released in April this year, and only 64 remained on the list between 2009 and 2018. While reviewing deal activity involving the top 100 largest firms, we saw more acquisitions of top 100 firms in 2018 than any prior year.

In 2018, the highest number of deals took place involving a unique firm that had been on the Top 100 list. Eight deals were completed, one of which was not announced. Of the seven announced deals, over $1.25 billion in revenue was acquired.

It is no surprise that Marsh & McLennan Cos. Inc. ("MMC") acquired two of the largest firms in 2018. They have held the position of largest firm for the past five years. Aon plc has had the number two spot in the past five years, and Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. and Willis Towers Watson PLC have been between three and four depending on the year. Number five on the list for the past five years is BB&T Insurance Holdings, Inc. These top five firms represent more than 50% of the revenue reported by the top 100 firms.

Will consolidation of the largest firms continue to increase?

Bouchard Insurance and Lovitt & Touche, Inc. were both acquired by MMC and Tolman & Wiker Insurance Services, LLC, was acquired by AssuredPartners, Inc. in 2019. Further, we absolutely anticipate more and more changes in who is sitting in those top 100 seats. For example, Patriot Growth Insurance Services ("PGIS") will more than likely be in the top 100 in 2020. Formed on January 1, 2019, private equity-backed PGIS consolidated 18 firms which made up approximately $50 million in revenue. Based on the report distributed in 2019, they would rank somewhere between #50-55 largest on the list. Alera

2018 ACQUISITIONS OF FIRMS IN TOP 100 (2008-2018)*

Target	Buyer	BI Last Reported Revenue (in millions)
JARDINE LLOYD THOMPSON GROUP PLC	MARSH & MCLENNAN	**$361.8**
INTEGRO INSURANCE BROKERS	EPIC INSURANCE BROKERS & CONSULTANTS	**$205.4**
HAYS COMPANIES	BROWN & BROWN, INC.	**$197.6**
CRYSTAL & COMPANY	ALLIANT INSURANCE SERVICES INC.	**$163.1[1]**
REGIONS INSURANCE GROUP	BB&T INSURANCE HOLDINGS, INC.	**$136.8**
WORTHAM INSURANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT	MARSH & MCLENNAN	**$129.5**
KEY INSURANCE & BENEFITS SERVICES, INC.	USI HOLDINGS CORP.	**$59.1[1]**
TOTAL REVENUE ACQUIRED		**$1,253.4**

[1]*Last reported revenue in Business Insurance was for 2016*

TOP 5 LARGEST FIRMS 2014-2018 (IN MILLIONS)*						
Rank	**Company Name**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
1	MARSH & MCLENNAN COMPANIES, INC.	$5,835	$6,327	$6,615	$6,877	$7,524
2	AON, PLC	5,811	$6,052	$6,066	$4,411	$4,654
3	ARTHUR J. GALLAGHER & CO.	$2,400	—	—	—	—
	WILLIS TOWERS WATSON, PLC	—	$3,981	$3,733	$3,815	$3,954
4	ARTHUR J. GALLAGHER & CO.	—	$2,713	$2,888	$3,132	$3,575
	WILLIS TOWERS WATSON, PLC	$1,733	—	—	—	—
5	BB&T INSURANCE HOLDINGS, INC.	$1,714	$1,676	$1,809	$1,918	$2,016
TOTAL TOP 5		**$17,493**	**$20,749**	**$21,111**	**$20,153**	**$21,723**
TOP 5 % OF TOTAL TOP 100		*54%*	*56%*	*55%*	*52%*	*52%*
TOTAL TOP 100		**$32,255**	**$36,813**	**$38,157**	**$38,697**	**$41,905**

Group, Inc., also a private equity-backed firm first appeared on the list in 2017 at $192.7 million and is now over $400 million according to management which will potentially move them somewhere in the top 15 of the largest firms in the U.S.

Consolidation continues to play a large role in who is sitting at the top, and M&A activity remains the driving factor behind getting a seat on the top 100 list.

**Sources: Unless otherwise noted, all revenue figures and revenue-related metrics are based on information published by Business Insurance in its annual "100 Largest Brokers of U.S. Business" issue. This information is self-reported by brokerage submission and is not audited or verified by Business Insurance. The revenue reported is generated from U.S.-based clients, and to be eligible for inclusion in the report, brokerages must derive no more than 49% of their gross revenues from personal lines business. As the information is self-reported, Business Insurance publishes only the information that is reported to them.*

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Grow People Who Will **Grow Your Business**

By **James Graham,** Senior Consultant
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Do you have a human capital strategy that encourages growth or one that encourages stagnation? What is your human capital strategy? Why should a new person join your firm?

Many firm owners do not have an effective human capital strategy that enables them to become a high-growth firm. An insurance brokerage is a professional services firm that relies on its ability to attract and train human beings to become trusted advisers to individuals making serious financial decisions. Owners sometimes lack awareness that in order to grow, the capabilities of their employees also need to grow. Owners may also miss that growing their firm means opportunities surface for employees to move up and better themselves.

Many low-growth insurance firms employ individuals who have become stagnant. These individuals are not growing their skill-sets at a competitive pace and as a result, their personal compensation often is, in real terms, flat. This is true of their producers, service personnel, support personnel and most glaringly, the executives and owners. Low-growth firms may create a culture of "rent seeking" where employees and owners are concerned primarily with protecting what they have and are fearful of upsetting the apple cart.

In contrast, high-growth insurance firms employ individuals who are pushed to better themselves and consistently outperform their past performance. These individuals are being given tools for improvement, opportunities appropriate for their abilities and excitement about their future. They aren't chained to their current firm because their firm has made them more valuable. A high-growth firm has a culture where hard work, risk-taking, creativity and learning are encouraged and rewarded in a strategic and intentional way.

What are the best high-growth firms doing that is different? How does an owner transition from running a stagnant firm to a high-growth firm?

Here are some recommendations from our experience observing many of the fastest growing firms in the industry.

1. **It starts at the top. If an owner is barely working or not pushing themselves, don't expect the employees to be different.**
2. **Employees need career paths with milestones to mark progress as they become more valuable.**
3. **Long tenure, stagnant employees, are not an asset. Set new-hire targets each year based on revenue growth goals.**
4. **Don't just look for experienced hires. Put effort into growing people by hiring entry level employees and providing a career path that will allow them to move into high-level service or sales roles as they grow.**
5. **Put in place development plans with goals that have a meaningful impact on the business and each individual's compensation.**
6. **Employees at your firm should be considered "best-in-class" by competitors. A high-growth firm is comfortable with losing some employees to competitors because they have the ability to retain many of the best ones and grow new ones. It will also create tentacles throughout the marketplace by maintaining professional relationships with former employees.**

The growth mindset toward employees requires owners to be open to new strategies and take risks. Owners who stress endlessly about every failed hire, rather than focusing on building a system of consistently hiring and growing people, may find themselves hoarding their acorns rather then harvesting a new crop.

The Right Seats

By **Tommy McDonald,**
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Getting the right people in the right seats on the bus starts with redesigning the bus. There has never been a more appropriate time for employee benefit advisory firms to reevaluate their business model and infrastructure to ensure future viability. And it starts with an assessment of the firm's current organizational structure.

Traditional Brokers

Asking difficult questions can bridge structure gaps.

Take a look at your organizational structure and how current and prospective customers are serviced. Do you assign your account service teams based on producer or do you assign account service teams based on alphabet split?

In our experience, these models can create challenges due to the size, sophistication and overall needs of the client. A producer driven or alphabet split assignment process will also create potential drain on quality resources. Why would your best service person work on any account under the top 20% in size or quality? These also cloud the reporting structure and make it more difficult to bring in specialists who are independent from the teams.

New School Consultants

New school organizational structures are built with the goal of institutionalizing the client relationship.

The structure follows three basic philosophies:

- Success starts at the top, so appoint willing and capable employee benefits leadership.
- The sales team is responsible for new business generation and proactive servicing on larger relationships.
- Separate the traditional service team and sales team from the firm's specialized resources.

This structure helps maximize on-staff efforts by implementing a tiered servicing model.

This model involves assigning accounts to client-centric service teams separated, for example, by large group, self-funded, mid-market, small group and individual. The evolution of employee benefit brokers has also spawned several new(er) roles, many of which are on-staff but may also be outsourced.

The addition of these resources help the firm remain competitive and relevant. The quality employee benefits leadership then aligns appropriate, profitable resources throughout the employee benefits book.

Build the bus first; then get people in the right seats.

Get Your Sales Game On

Continued from Page 7

takes to generate your target revenue goal, it helps producers plan, schedule and not make the same mistakes twice."

Strategy is key; there are several levels supporting the strategy at Gannon Associates. Now, every producer has created an individual plan for the year. Internally, producers are kept on track with weekly sales strategy meetings and one-on-one meetings with sales directors. With MarshBerry, producers participate in coaching meetings and monthly training webinars. "Due to our focus and coaching, this year producers have done the best ever with documenting in Salesforce — which is important because now they know where they stand throughout the year," Gannon points out. "I'm excited as they go through this planning phase for next year, coming off of the success of this year and building on that."

"Success means being uncomfortable sometimes," he adds. Kind of like that initial $50,000 goal. "We're seeing our producers go out there with confidence, and they now understand that sales isn't just having the gift of gab, " he says. "It's an art and a skill you have to constantly work on."

Have a story on your firm that you want to share?

Email us at Editorial@MarshBerry.com to share your thoughts!

MARSHBERRY CONNECT

Save the Date!

Mark your calendars now for our invitation-only events.

✓ **April 21-23, 2020**
Spring 2020 MarshBerry Connect Summit
JW Marriott Marquis Miami
Miami, Florida

✓ **September 22-24, 2020**
Fall 2020 MarshBerry Connect Summit
Hyatt Regency Resort at Gainey Ranch
Scottsdale, Arizona

Spring Summit registration will be open to MarshBerry Connect Network members soon!

Not yet a member? Visit **www.MarshBerry.com/Connect** to submit your firm's application today.

MarshBerry Connect membership is for brokers who believe in learning from the successes of leaders who have gone before them. Whether your goal is to double in size every five years or maximize your profitability, there are MarshBerry Connect members who have the same objectives you do.

Among other membership benefits, MarshBerry Connect firms meet twice a year at MarshBerry Connect Summits. These invitation-only events offer Connect Network members the ability to exchange confidential solutions and strategies, network with industry leaders and access the latest thought leadership.

With over 300 attendees, the Fall 2019 MarshBerry Connect Summit was SOLD OUT. Don't miss your opportunity to attend the 2020 Summits — apply to be a MarshBerry Connect member today at **www.MarshBerry.com/Connect.**

Are you interested in increasing value and driving growth in your organization?

To learn more about MarshBerry's Peer Exchange, visit us at www.MarshBerry.com/Connect or call 440.354.3230.

MARSHBERRY PEAK PERFORMANCE

Registration Now Open!

MarshBerry's 2020 Peak Performance event is set for January 27-29, 2020, at the Hyatt Centric Park City.

MarshBerry's Peak Performance event is the preeminent event for specialty distributors and specialty carriers in the insurance space. This intimate networking opportunity allows executives to learn and help improve their business while enjoying the slopes of Park City, Utah. By invitation only.

www.MarshBerry.com/Peak

MARSHBERRY
28601 Chagrin Blvd., Suite 400,
Woodmere, Ohio 44122

ON THE **HORIZON**

Mark your **calendars!**

NOVEMBER 2019

11.11-13 | RevGen Producer Training Workshop, Fort Worth, TX

JANUARY 2020

1.27-29 | Peak Performance Summit, Park City, UT

APRIL 2020

4.21-23 | MarshBerry Connect Spring Summit, Miami, FL

MAY 2020

5.6 | MarshBerry 360, New York, NY
5.12 | MarshBerry 360, Chicago, IL
5.14 | MarshBerry 360, Las Vegas, NV

SEPTEMBER 2020

9.22-24 | MarshBerry Connect Fall Summit, Scottsdale, AZ

NOVEMBER 2020

11.5 | IMPACT Summit, New York, NY

Log on to **www.MarshBerry.com/symposiums** to register for events, view latest news and read back issues of *CounterPoint.*

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