



Caution & Commissions

Travel insurance covers your client and your agency

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance offers peace of mind, and big commissions.

I Never Thought It Would Happen To Me

Before you read this column, make sure you have read the 2004 Industry Report on Travel Insurance Titled: Always Prepared - Selling Travel Insurance is Vital by Anita Draycott. Once you have done that, this column will make more cents – as in more commissions.

Between the Lines

As you read the Industry Report – did anything jump out at you? Was there information you didn't know about, such as the changes in our health plan that negated coverage here and there. Were you fully, one-hundred per cent, up-to-speed with your insurance do's, don'ts, pro's & con's? Chances are the answer is no – and that leads to the next paragraph.

I Never Thought It Would Happen To Me

This phrase, "I never thought it would happen to me" , is often heard on the TV news, uttered by someone who's life just did a 180 and sometimes a 360. Could have been their fault or someone else's. Wrong time, wrong place? Fact is, they didn't see it coming and were not prepared for it.

Travelling without insurance is an accident waiting to happen. Letting a customer travel without insurance is litigation waiting to happen. Make sure you are not featured in an interview where you are uttering those famous words: "I never thought it would happen to me..." as lawyers are asking you why you never mentioned travel insurance. Be prepared. Study up. Learn how to suggest, discuss, sell and close your client to buy insurance. You too will sleep easier at night.

Five Steps To Getting The Word Out

1. Negative Marketing: One way to prompt your clients into asking questions about insurance is to engage in what might unfortunately be a scary tactic for some and that is negative marketing. This means to promote the potential outcome if the right insurance is not purchased. Such advertising would be similar to the car crash ads shown on television to wake young drivers up to the dangers of speeding.

2. Window Banners: If you have a street front window you can employ this glass and turn it into a large billboard. When I say window banner – I am not thinking a small 8 x 11 sheet of paper taped to the window. I am thinking a large banner or window lettering or hand painted sign that shouts out to passersby the downsides of not buying insurance. Try a few slogans like these:

- If you cut out travel insurance – that next cut could cost you an arm and a leg!
- Heart attack = savings attack. Buy travel insurance and travel safe.
- 25% of Canadians are wrong about travel insurance! Ask us. We know.
- Don't settle for a band aid when you need the real thing. Buy travel insurance and be safe.
- Travel with someone who cares. (name of your insurance provider here). We'll introduce you.
- Are you covered? Latest news about travel insurance. Find out before you travel. (This slogan would be better in caps, using red lettering against a white back ground.

3. Newsletters: If you publish a paper-based or e-newsletter then you can employ this marketing tool to spread the word about health plan changes, costs of not buying insurance etc. You should use the same type of slogans to jolt your clients into reading about the consequences of their not paying attention to their insurance needs.

4. Websites: Naturally you have "click here" link on your homepage that will whisk the clickeree to your insurance page. If you are techno-savvy you might be able to add video to this page and feature various people being interviewed; scenes of recent events that would cause someone to think about insuring themselves or their love ones.

5. Email: As you know, 99% of those using the internet use it for email. Chances are there are numerous emails leaving your agency everyday without a message about why travel insurance is a must buy. Add your comment at the top of your email. Have your techie embed the slogan so that, like your signature or agency logo, it travels with the email automatically. Make sure you change the slogan or call to action each month.

Insure Your Knowledge

The Industry Report mentions comments taken from an Ipsos Reid survey. You should take a click there: <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/results.cfm?search=travel%20insurance> and read the reports. A brief intro from one survey is this: *Canadians (84%) agree buying travel insurance is worth the cost to have peace of mind on vacation however, forty-five percent of those who travel to the U.S., say they "rarely"(9%) or "never"(36%) purchase travel insurance. More than one-quarter (28%) believe that their medical expenses would be 100% covered if they were to have a medical emergency in the U.S.*

The Fear Factor & Reality

With our ever popular news channels preaching daily fear factors and don't travel advisories you have some, albeit misguided, help in sowing the seeds of "what-if" thought provoking situations for your client to ponder and ask you questions about. So with the travelling public being fed their daily does of fear by the media they should be more open to your recommendations – if you mention it. It is not a matter of feeding off the fear factor and you do not need to compromise your personal values – however, your job is to protect your clients and the agency you work for. Travelling and risk is a reality that we now face more than in the past and the need for insurance is perhaps heightened by all the fear mongering.

One More Reality - Your Closing Ratio

This could be a fear factor for all agency owners and managers! Generally the closing ratio in our industry is low. Internal surveys suggest that agents close insurance sales 40% of the time. Some might reach 60%. The reality is that there is an awful lot of commissions left on the table and worse than that – hundreds of Canadians are wandering the globe with out protection for themselves or their loved ones.

It Can Happen To You

I have mentioned many times in past articles and workshops that I have personally experienced a close relative, my dear Mum, suffering a heart attack whilst flying from London to Vancouver. She had taken out insurance. Without that piece of paper, my parent's savings would have been wiped out and my wife and I would probably have lost our house in order to pay the bills. When that happened to us I sent every blessing possible to the travel agent who encouraged my parents to take out that insurance.

Lost In Translation?

One last reminder to study hard. Learn the language of insurance and what translates into what, how many, who for and what the cost / benefit ratio is. Best cost/ratio benefit = LIFE! Have no fear. Speak into that ear. Go tell and sell. And you'll do well!

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