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Chairperson's Corner

By Eric Sondergeld

Thank you for being a member of the Marketing and Distribution (MaD) Section. In this brief article, I will share our 2016 theme, some of our planned activities, and encourage you to get involved in the section.

THEME FOR 2016

Early last year, we surveyed MaD members to assess satisfaction and to determine our focus. We received a great response and the number one topic was “using analytics to find, advise, and sell,” which has become our theme for 2016. We surveyed the members again this February to find out what areas and activities within that broader topic we should cover this year. Preliminary results suggest members would like information on industry practices and applications of marketing and distribution analytics (e.g., lead generation, cross-selling, personalizing solutions, etc.) as well as how to apply actuarial skills to analytics.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

While we focus on analytics, we also want to continue educating and bringing new information to our members, especially those who aren't marketing or distribution experts but need to understand how these important functions work in the insurance and financial services industry. We communicate that in a variety of ways, including this newsletter, session-sponsored sessions at SOA meetings, and webinars.

For example, two of the articles in this issue of *NewDirect* cover important distribution-related topics: wholesaling and social security. Wholesaling has become an increasingly critical function in intermediary channels and is a function unfamiliar to many actuaries. There are more ways to claim social security benefits

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than you might know. While the rules are somewhat complicated, they provide an opportunity for advisors to assist their clients in making decisions around when and how to claim retirement benefits. The article also describes the impact of some changes being implemented to the rules this year.

MaD is planning to sponsor three webinars this year. One will be a joint webinar with the Long-Term Care section. Another will cover the Department of Labor's proposed fiduciary rule (which may be final by the time of this publication). A third will be on the 2016 analytics theme.

GET INVOLVED

There are lots of ways to get involved with MaD. Of course, we hope that you read these articles, attend our webinars, and attend MaD-sponsored conference sessions. Here are several other ways you can contribute.

- Join the SOA Marketing & Distribution Section group on LinkedIn and contribute to the conversations there.
- Volunteer to write a *NewsDirect* article or volunteer to speak at a section-sponsored conference session or webinar.
- Become a “friend of the council” and attend monthly section council calls and get involved in section activities. Consider running for MaD Section Council. Nominations are typically due by late May so if you're interested in getting involved in some way, please reach out to me or any section council member. ■



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