

# "We Can Do This!"

By Bob Hanes

Several times over the last two to three years, I have managed different teams of colleagues on challenging projects. The projects' objectives and finished products have been typically clearly stated; however, the paths to them were less so. Action plans were created, agreed-upon, and kicked off with the goals in mind—though looming in the not too distant future were the surprises, challenges, and project deadlines that made us scratch our collective heads as to how we were going to be successful in completing our assigned tasks. When faced with these unexpected challenges, I would remind the team that "We Can Do This!" Each time I uttered this encouragement, laughter ensued, but tension was relieved, and good work was performed. I am proud to say that all of the "We Can Do This" projects I have led to date have had satisfactory outcomes.

The long-term care (LTC) industry is in need of such "We Can Do This!" boosts of encouragement. Even as many carriers continue to wrestle with deteriorating experience on their in-force blocks, there are signs that the actively-selling LTC companies are creating new products which will be more stable so that emerging experience is more in line with expectations. Recent stabilizing strategies include offering only limited benefit period policies, eliminating preferred underwriting offers, using updated morbidity, lower interest and lapse rates in pricing. The market has also seen an increasing number of LTC combination products whereby the "use it or lose it" concerns are offset.

Since the need for LTC services will only continue to grow as the baby boomers age and family-support networks shrink, opportunities will continue to grow for LTC insurance as well. Innovative products are on the drawing boards today and different industry and governmental groups are having conversations on how best to meet the future LTC needs. These are good signs. So I offer you, "We Can Do This!" ■



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