



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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OUTGOING CHAIRPERSON'S COLUMN

BY ROB STONE

As the outgoing chair of the Marketing and Distribution Section, I want to thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this section's leadership. It has been an exciting year to be closely involved with all of our section activities. I especially want to thank the other council members for their help with all we accomplished this year: Van Beach, Ian Duncan, Chris Hause, Nancy Manning, Brian Louth, Jeanne Daharsh, Juliet Sandrowicz and Leonard Mangini. These are the people who have helped make decisions, and they continue to volunteer their time to lead our efforts.

This has been a year of change. As the Society of Actuaries continues its restructuring and development, your next section chair, Van Beach, plans to parallel that development within our section. We underwent a change in name and mission. Going from Nontraditional Marketing to Marketing and Distribution is as much about repackaging ourselves as it is about signaling our intent to embrace all marketing-and distribution-related issues. It's all a part of us marketing our new take on marketing!

Our name change is indicative of movement that has occurred in our industry. Recently I was reviewing the results of some industry research on distribution trends over the last 35

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years or so. One of the points made was how relatively simple the product offerings were in the early 1970s and how high the profit margins were on each product sold. The rest of the research underscored the changes that have taken place since then and the ramifications of those changes. The sweeping generalization is that product offerings have become wider and more complex, competition has increased and profit margins have become rather slender.

These ideas don't come as a surprise. And with a larger variety of products, greater complexity and stiffer competition, it is also not surprising that marketing activities have taken an increased role in the financial services industry. The key for us as actuaries, then, is to step up to the table and take our place among marketing decision-makers in the same way we've always been a part of the financial decision-making process. Marketing roles like these are ones some of you already fill. Those positions that haven't met the right actuary yet, however, will have plenty of choices going forward.

I invite you all to join Van and the rest of the Section Council in planning and implementing the next year's activities. I'm looking forward to another year of being part of it all, too. ■



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Editorial Correction

NewsDirect gratefully acknowledges the contributions of authors who have made presentations or have been published previously. Our September issue included incorrect information about the identity theft article by Greg Vlazny. Here's the full, corrected information.

Identity Theft: The Problem and the Solution
By Greg Vlazny

This article is based on a presentation made by Greg Vlazny at the Annual Conference of the Professional Insurance Marketing Association (PIMA). Greg Vlazny is regional sales director for Coverdell and Company. He can be reached at (502) 895-8944 or gvlazny@coverdell.com. ■