



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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# Building Community

by Mark Costello

The LTC Section Council believes that one of our primary goals is to build community. As I noted last time, I know that our industry is filled with passionate people; and I ended my column with a plea for you to show me your passion. From struggling as an industry to understanding the potential impact of the CLASS Act to struggling to find articles for this newsletter, the need for a passionate LTC community is as strong as ever. However, I know that the pressures and obligations of our personal and professional lives can sometimes hinder our involvement in the LTC community—involvement that many of us want to pursue. The Section Council must find avenues for you to participate in and enjoy this community by addressing these obstacles.

The LTC Section has formed a LinkedIn group that you were all invited to join. If you don't remember the details, just click on the "connect" link at the bottom left corner of the LTC section page of the SOA website. From there, it's a simple click or two to comment on an existing discussion or even start a new one.

Our thought was that this LinkedIn group can provide all of our members with a low-tech, minimally-invasive, yet comprehensive forum for any number of community-building activities. The CLASS Act is a good example. As we were rolling out the site, this subject was hot off the presses. If you visit the site, you'll see a handful of discussions related to the act—how we, as an industry, should respond; discussion of premiums; discussion of value to consumers; and a plug for an upcoming webcast. At that point, we on the council were testing out the site; so, there are many contributions from noncouncil members. But, think of how you as a member could use LinkedIn when a topic like CLASS comes about.

- Don't know about the topic? Check the site and read up on it.
- Have a question? Start a discussion and ask away.
- Have an opinion? Join a discussion.
- Have you read some pertinent information? Post a link.
- Interested in the pulse of the industry? Read the various discussions. You might note that the industry is trending one way or the other.
- Looking for expertise? Read the discussions and see whose comments/opinions seem valuable.
- Want people to learn about your expertise? Join in and contribute.
- Think the topic hasn't been fully covered? Suggest a webcast, a meeting session or newsletter article.
- Want to get to know your peers in the industry? Just browse around.

We also have discussed the use of LinkedIn in connection with this newsletter. More and more of us are probably getting our news online. We see our newsletter potentially moving more toward that format. We discussed the long-term vision of posting articles on the website as they become available (with one hard copy printout at the end of the year). And, then, much like on the newspaper website that you probably use, we would point to LinkedIn to allow direct commentary on all articles posted.

Perhaps most importantly, LinkedIn can give you, the members, an easy way to communicate with section leadership. What can we be doing? What should we be doing? This site provides you with a quick and painless way to drop us a quick note.

We think LinkedIn has great potential; BUT, it will only be as effective as we as an entire community make it. Sure, it may take a little courage to take that first step and throw out an opinion; but, that leap of faith will contribute not only your own thoughts but will also add validity to the site. The more people who contribute, the more vibrant the site, and the more value it adds.

So, please give it a shot.

Here's the URL: [http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=2768897&trk=myg\\_ugrp\\_ovr](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=2768897&trk=myg_ugrp_ovr)

Go there. Check it out. Let us know what you think about LinkedIn or anything else that may help us be better communicators and build our community. We would love to hear from you! ■



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