



Acknowledging the success of the captive insurance industry and the important role that CICA has played in it, Nick Hentges of Captive Resources says we must embrace change and look to the youth to shape the industry's future.

Fifty years of captive industry advocacy, guidance, and innovation is an achievement indeed and I wholeheartedly congratulate the Captive Insurance Companies Association (CICA) for its leadership and perseverance.

We've all benefited in some way from its work. I'm grateful for my association and involvement with CICA through the years and there is much I could relate here about those experiences. However, in the last several years, promoting careers in captives and attracting young people to our industry has truly resonated with me and fueled my passion for the industry even further.

We acknowledge and look back with pride on the history and evolution of the captive industry. To continue to thrive—particularly given the workforce challenges we currently face—we must look to the future and be thinking every day about how we can shape our industry into what we want and need it to be.

What is the future of our industry? It is not me or those like me who have been fortunate enough to have enjoyed a long, rewarding career in captives. Rather, it is the young professionals of today who will determine the future of our industry, and I believe that it is our responsibility to recruit, develop, and show them the great careers available in



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captive insurance. To do this, however, we must embrace change and become more comfortable implementing it in our organizations.

An image problem

In 2018, we began to grapple with the staffing shortage—the “talent crisis” arising from the 400,000+ retirements projected for the insurance industry by the Bureau of Labor Statistics over the next several years. The industry became painfully aware that Millennials and the next generation of young professionals were not finding a career in insurance particularly interesting, often because they lacked familiarity with insurance and the careers it has to offer—and they most certainly knew even less about captives.

So the gauntlet was laid before all of us in the captives industry—we must find a way to reach and educate young professionals about our industry and its many interesting and rewarding career paths while competing within the broader insurance industry for top talent to fill the massive gap.

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**NICK HENTGES,
CAPTIVE RESOURCES**

In 2019, within the captive insurance industry, CICA led the way with the introduction of its NEXTGen initiative, the objective of which is to develop the next generation of captive insurance professionals. CICA reached out to young professionals to become involved in planning and advising on their educational and networking needs to advance their careers in captives.

The initiative is growing as young and new professionals respond, and CICA continues to encourage them to become involved and to develop broader opportunities for engagement.

Change presents opportunity

One of the biggest paradigm shifts I’ve witnessed in my career is the dramatic change taking place right now in our workforce. The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to and accelerated a major shift in how corporate America works and conducts business. The way people work and the way they want to work is changing all over the world, and it’s created a new power dynamic.

In response to this, companies have adopted more expansive work-from-home and remote work policies supported by increasingly sophisticated technology, greater flexibility for improved work/life balance, and several new initiatives which, at first, seemed born of necessity.

Over time, however, we can better understand the true value of this change which presents an opportunity for the captives industry: the more we recognize what workers want and embrace and incorporate these new ways of working, the more attractive we are to candidates.

This is one way as an industry to demonstrate that we’re on the cutting edge of the new paradigm, which may help attract younger professionals to our industry. This can and should be a focus for the captives industry, or we risk losing



the best candidates to other professions that are more accepting of and adept at implementing change.

Building diverse and inclusive workplace cultures

A discussion about careers and workplace dynamics must include the subject of diversity and inclusion. While complex and with deep roots in social justice, at its core, diversity is the composition of an organization, while inclusion is more about integrating and valuing the contributions of different groups of people.

There are numerous reasons beyond “It’s the right thing to do” to incorporate true diversity and inclusion in our workplaces. If the moral argument is insufficient, then consider some of the other benefits based on research, such as higher revenue growth, employee retention, and greater innovation and creativity, to name a few.

It also translates to a greater talent pool for us to choose from, as we focus on the true contribution that people can bring to our businesses.

Building diverse and inclusive workplaces will help the captives industry to attract and retain top talent, and this is another area in which CICA has provided leadership and advocacy. Its Amplify Women initiative is aimed at addressing the gap in female leaders in the insurance industry by fostering education, influence, and networking among women in the captive insurance industry.

Expanding our reach

There are other ways we can reach and attract young and new professionals to the captives industry and increase the probability of retaining them. To begin with, we cannot be apprehensive about hiring more young people.

Yes, it is an investment not without risk, and some of us may be tempted to bring on more experienced individuals so they can more quickly support our work. But I would argue that the rewards far outweigh the risk. There are numerous benefits to

hiring Millennials. They tend to be well educated, tech-savvy, trainable, flexible, eager, and intrinsically motivated.

I enjoy the fresh perspectives and creative solutions they bring to the table. Keep in mind that we were all young once and someone gave us the opportunity that set us on the path to a career in captives.

Hiring is not enough, however. We must nurture our young colleagues and help ignite their enthusiasm by involving them in our industry early in their careers. Be a mentor, provide coaching, develop or participate in an internship program at your company. Help them to seek out educational opportunities like those offered by CICA, the International Center for Captive Insurance Education, and other industry organizations.

Let’s not forget academia. As an industry, we should encourage and support more collegiate risk management and insurance programs and promote the inclusion of captive insurance in the curriculum. For years I have spoken to groups of university students to promote careers in captive insurance and have found it extremely rewarding. I am always pleasantly surprised by how much I learn from young people.

Conclusion

Jobs, careers, and workplaces have changed dramatically over the last few years, and there can be little doubt they will continue to evolve. We should not pine for “the good ol’ days”. Instead, we should acclimatize to the “new normal” brought on in part by the pandemic, and anticipate and prepare for the next big change—because like death and taxes, change is ever-present.

The pandemic has reminded us to be open and accepting of change. It’s no secret that the most successful organizations are the most resilient and adaptable—accepting of and able to most nimbly effect change.

Change often presents opportunities, and it is those of us who love this industry and owe so much to it, who are in the best position to effect change that will help us to leave it to the next generation even better than it is now, paving the path for its continued success.

We can all assert positive influence every day and draw inspiration from the words of Mahatma Gandhi: “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”



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