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RCCAQ

REGROUPEMENT DES CABINETS DE COURTAGE
D'ASSURANCE DU QUÉBEC

DECEMBER 19, 2016



IN FOCUS

Chairman's message

Dear RCCAQ members:

I am very pleased to be communicating with you via our e-magazine Liaison +.

As you know, we have lots of work ahead of us in the coming year. As the news media keep reminding us, we must remain vigilant if we are to successfully carry out our mandate of defending insurance brokers' socioeconomic interests.

We saw a recent example of this when the federal government introduced Bill C-29 in early December. It appears that certain provisions thereof took some people by surprise. Bill C-29, which seeks to amend the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, also makes changes to the Bank Act by removing banks from the scope of application of Quebec's Consumer Protection Act. Establishing a federal legal framework for consumer protection ensures uniform standards from coast to coast, but it could also weaken existing protection measures in Quebec and elsewhere.

Last week, however, under pressure from the Quebec government and the Senate, the Trudeau government reversed course and withdrew the controversial provision.

The insurance sector is not directly affected by Bill C-29, and my goal in raising this matter is not to deliver a judgment on the legislation as such. However, this episode is instructive insofar as it demonstrates that the banking lobby has clout with decision makers and must not be underestimated. It also serves as a reminder that we must keep up our own lobbying efforts at the provincial and fed-



eral levels in order to promote insurance brokers' interests and rights.

We are still waiting for Quebec's Bill 188 to be introduced. For the time being, all we can do is remain vigilant and maintain our contacts with key decision makers. Other battles lie ahead, with one of the largest being the review of the Bank Act in 2019. Although that may be two years from now, a good deal of lobbying work must be done in the interim.

As a result of one of the more recent amendments to the Bank Act, banking institutions were able to obtain an easing of the restrictions, thus enabling them to venture into the insurance sector, albeit with some major limitations. In 2016, however, RBC and National Bank sold off their insurance divisions to Aviva Canada and Belairdirect respectively.

Whatever might have motivated those moves, a number of other banks continue to offer insurance and it is very likely that these financial giants will be undertaking further lobbying efforts designed to modify the legislation to their advantage. Our job will be to demonstrate that the banks' reinforced presence in the insurance sector would lead to the disappearance of many brokerage firms and smaller insurers, all of which would be unable to compete effectively with the big players. This would also lead to a drastic offer in the insurance offer.

Over the past three years, the RCCAQ has launched a number of initiatives aimed at defending its members' interests in the areas of tax harmonization, mandatory training and the illegal practices of some auto dealers. Each time, our tenacious lobbying of the government and the regulatory agencies, combined with your own mobilization efforts, delivered concrete results.

By applying this approach, we have boosted the RCCAQ's strength and credibility with respect to the key issues we face, both now and in the future.

In the near future, we will be implementing our Bank Act action plan and resuming our lobbying efforts in Ottawa. Against that backdrop, the strength of our network and the support of all brokerage firms for the RCCAQ's initiatives will be crucial. As we did over the past 12 months, we will be calling on you in 2017 to remain mobilized as we fight side by side to defend our profession.

Your efforts are greatly appreciated!

Kathleen Ann Rake
RCCAQ Chair



RCCAQ IN ACTION

REAP THE BENEFITS OF THE IBAC'S NEW ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN!

By Gladys Caron

Starting on January 9, insurance brokers will be appearing on various TV networks across the country as part of a new advertising campaign encouraging consumers to do business with brokers when purchasing insurance.

The campaign will emphasize the fact that brokers are ideally situated to defend consumers. Demonstrating the value of brokerage professionals, the ads will feature the slogan «Your best assurance is an insurance broker».

A notable feature of the campaign strategy this year is that the ads end with a call to action: consumers are encouraged to look for nearest brokerage firm on trouveruncourtier.ca.

The Bipper, insurance brokers' trademark symbol, is also featured prominently in the campaign. It is interesting to note that this symbol is now widely recognized by the general public. According to an Ad Hoc Research survey conduc-



ted this past fall for the RCCAQ, 82% of people who are familiar with the Bipper say that it inspires feelings of confidence.

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE REFERRAL OPPORTUNITIES!

The fact that the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada (IBAC) is unveiling a new campaign to promote brokers is excellent news. The next step is making sure that you reap all of the benefits!

All those who attended the Ad Hoc Research presentation on November 23 at the RCCAQ convention will surely remember that one of the key issues facing brokers is maintaining online visibility when consumers are looking for a service provider to do business with. Since the Internet is the main information source for 40% of consumers, all firms must ensure that their online presence is highly effective.

Ensuring that your firm's name appears in the top search results is always a challenge, especially considering the huge online investments made by the direct insurers!

That's why it's essential for all firms to reap the benefits of the extraordinary referral opportunities that the IBAC's campaign will bring.

DRAW UP YOUR ACTION PLAN TODAY!

To maximize the campaign's impact for your firm, make sure that your website is in tip-top shape by early January. Here are some helpful hints:

1. Update your firm's profile on the RCCAQ's website. The information in your member file also appears on trouveruncourtier.ca. Only you can update this information, using the access code and secure password that you already have. If you don't, please contact us without delay.
2. Make sure that your site is up to date and promotes your services effectively.
3. Carefully select the page to which you will be directing consumers.
4. You are an RCCAQ member and have the privilege of using the Bipper symbol. Please don't forget this! Always display the Bipper to establish a link between your website and the IBAC's campaign.
5. Make sure that when consumers visit your webpage, they can easily figure out how to contact you.
6. If you have a tool enabling consumers to request a quote online, make sure that it is easy to find.
7. Tell consumers what sets you apart and mention any honours or distinctions that you've received. Did you win an award recently? Be sure to tell consumers about it! It's a way of providing objective proof of how good your firm is!
8. As mentioned in an article in *The Informer* in September, your home page, or whichever page you will be directing consumers to, must be esthetically pleasing and user-friendly in order to maintain consumers' interest. Keep in mind that 93% of consumers regard a website's visual appearance as the key factor when deciding whether to carry out a purchase.*

You may not be able to take care of all of these details by January 9. Still, be sure to make this a priority in the coming months.

A UNIQUE ADVANTAGE FOR RCCAQ MEMBERS

Directory listings on trouveruncourtier.ca are only available to RCCAQ members. Firms that are not RCCAQ members are not listed. So be sure to seize this opportunity and maximize this advantage provided by the RCCAQ!

* Source: www.idboox.com

AN AMAZING TOUR!

By Gladys Caron

Flashback to fall 2015. Guy Parent has been the RCCAQ's general manager for two years and wants to get a better understanding of members' realities «on the ground.» To that end, he puts together (with the help of operations director Catherine Rioux) a tour enabling them to visit as many firms as possible over the next few months. "We were very enthusiastic at the idea of setting off on this tour,» says Catherine. «We're in continuous contact with our members, but going out to meet them in person gives a whole new dimension to our relationship."

In fulfilling its mission to defend brokers' interests, the RCCAQ must maintain close ties with its members while understanding their needs. According to Guy, the regional tour is essential: "It gives us an opportunity to rub shoulders with RCCAQ members and to discuss the issues they're facing and how the RCCAQ can do an even better job at contributing to their development."

7,214 KILOMETRES COVERED IN TOTAL!

Known for their high energy levels and for being 100% dedicated to the RCCAQ, Guy and Catherine organized their itinerary so they would be able to meet with the greatest number of firms as efficiently as possible. That meant planning the schedule in detail in order to get the most out of each day. "Everything was carefully timed," notes Catherine. "The distances between the firms we were visiting were calculated and optimized with a view to maximizing efficiency. Of course, that doesn't mean that the unexpected didn't happen, such as our breakdown in Quebec City. But in general, we stuck to the schedule!» Some 60 meetings were held in the Eastern Townships, Montérégie, Chaudière-Appalaches, Quebec City, Saguenay/Lac-St-Jean, Laval and Montreal regions.

The most intense part of the tour came in April 2016, with three days of meetings scheduled on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Guy and Catherine met with seven firms in Quebec City on the Wednesday and the Thursday, which is quite reasonable. But on the Friday, they visited five firms and had to travel over 500 km to do so: starting out from Quebec City, they visited Beauceville, St-Georges-de-Beauce,



Sainte-Justine de Bellechasse, Thetford Mines and Asbestos, before returning to Montreal.

May 30 was another action-packed day, with visits to firms in Laval, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Granby, Saint-Césaire and then back to Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu before heading home to Montreal that evening!

A number of you followed Guy and Catherine's travels across Quebec via the RCCAQ's Facebook page, where various photos were posted, some accompanied by anecdotes and adventures worthy of a travelogue. Be sure to ask them to discuss the details the next time they visit your firm; you're sure to be entertained! Meanwhile, here are a few photos as a memento.



Gingras Assurances in Chicoutimi - Dany Gingras, Catherine Rioux and Chantale Séguin



Assurancia Tardif Group in Thetford Mines - François Gagné and Guy Parent



PMA Assurances in Trois-Rivières - Jean-François Desmarais and Catherine Rioux

VERY WORTHWHILE

Even though some aspects were exhausting, Guy and Catherine are very pleased to have completed the tour. "Traveling around the province and meeting with business leaders in their communities was very worthwhile," says Guy. "We gained lots of insight into the many different situations that brokers are facing. And it is essential that we at the RCCAQ be aware of that."

Guy adds, "When I joined the RCCAQ, I was attracted by brokers' entrepreneurial spirit. After our tour, I feel even more excited by my mandate. Brokers are a devoted bunch. They feel passionately about their work and their clients. In some villages where there are no financial institutions, there may still be an insurance firm that knows each of its clients and provides exceptional service!"

The tour also provided an opportunity to confirm the major issues facing brokerage firms, including the next generation of leadership and fierce competition from deep-pocketed national players.

The remaining regions, such as Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Outaouais and Lanaudière, will be visited in spring 2017. Catherine is waiting for Guy to recharge his batteries after the tour and the convention before scheduling the next destinations!

"WE KNOW THAT THE RCCAQ IS THERE FOR US AND IS VERY USEFUL. THE FACT THAT TWO RCCAQ REPS WOULD COME AND MEET WITH US IN OUR OFFICE IN ORDER TO HEAR OUR CONCERNS AND DISCUSS HOW THEY CAN SUPPORT US EVEN BETTER DEMONSTRATES THE RCCAQ'S PROACTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY. WE REALLY APPRECIATE IT."

MARIE-PIER LECLERC, GENERAL MANAGER,
DUCLOS ASSURANCE (ASBESTOS, QUEBEC)



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HELP YOUR CUSTOMERS WHO MANAGE AN SME TO GO ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS CONFIDENTLY

To take their business forward, SME owners and managers must have peace of mind. But since they don't have all the resources internally to do so, they often face different challenges and situations that may be detrimental to their business.

SIMPLIFYING HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Simply think about some difficulties relating to human resources management (HRM). Many companies don't have a human resource advisor within their staff. According to Morneau Shepell, an HR consulting firm, an HR manager is generally hired when a company has at least 100 employees. In Quebec, more than 98% of companies have between 0 and 99 employees.¹ Therefore, they sometimes feel powerless in certain situations:

- when they have a particular problem with an employee, but ignore what action to take to address the situation;
- when they hire several new employees and have to make them sign employment contracts, but don't have any.

This is why being able to count on HRM skilled resources is essential.

TO BE WELL INFORMED WHEN FACING LEGAL ISSUES

Whatever their business line, companies are subject to various existing laws and regulations. Nearly 50% of Quebec businesses have faced a dispute, and 35% say they don't know enough about Quebec legal system². Incidentally, 87% of SMEs hire a lawyer to settle a dispute, therefore paying up to \$300 an hour for the assistance of an experienced professional. Here are some examples to that effect:

- A business receives a formal notice from a client and doesn't know how to react.



- A contractor sustains losses after one of his service providers decides to terminate the contractual agreement they have without complying with certain terms.

ADDRESSING CYBER RISKS

Stolen or lost laptops or cell phones, unauthorised access to personal information following the hacking of an SME computer system or network. Whether we like it or not, cybercrime is a real threat, as shown below:

- 71% of SMEs have experienced a privacy breach².
- 51% of businesses were hit by service downtime, and 42% suffered a loss of productivity³.

According to Statistics Canada, the remediation costs of a cyber attack amount to \$15,000⁴.

In case of a privacy breach, owners and managers must be well informed about the risks incurred by their business and well protected too.

SME managers will love Assistinc., which includes Intact Insurance's HR Assist, Legal Guard legal assistance and Cyber coverage. Available at a competitive price, this solution allows them to find answers to their questions about human resources, legal issues or protection of their data, without having to pay substantial professional fees.

Intact Insurance Team

1. Statistics Canada, Key Small Business Statistics - June 2016.
 2. DAS Canada and Assistenza, Legal Risks Faced by Quebec Business Owners.
 3. Statistics Canada, 2013.
 4. getcybersafe.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/nfgrphcs/nfgrphcs-2012-10-19-en.aspx