



Meeting the digital needs of your distribution network

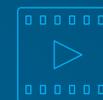


Insurance Solutions.
Simplified.



Agent satisfaction with carrier digital sales and servicing capabilities is steadily improving. However, as agencies improve their digital capabilities, the expectations are yet higher for those carriers committed to greater efficiency and transparency. At the same time, agencies lacking digital maturity place heavy reliance upon carrier support and tools to remain competitive.

In this executive summary, we share highlights from the panel discussion Enhancing the Digital Experience and Delighting Customers featuring Strategy Meets Action partners Mark Breeding and Karen Furtado, Utica First Insurance Company VP of Operations Melissa Mann, and OneShield Software VP Leah English. The following offers insights into the needs of agents and the ways carriers can meet those through transformative initiatives.



View full webinar:
[Enhancing the Digital Experience
and Delighting Customers](#)

Agents would like carriers to invest in these capabilities

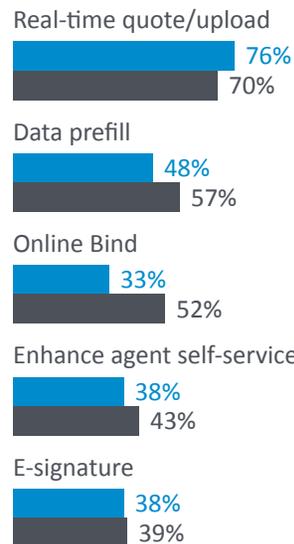


Real-time quoting and upload are the top expectations where agencies say insurers should be investing for sales support. For service support, agents want carriers to be investing in the next generation and new capabilities for self-service portals. Some of the capabilities that get instantiated in these portals such as the download of policy, billing, claims, are top priorities.

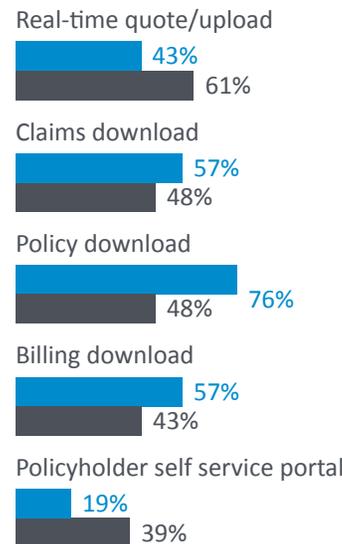
Mark Breeding, Partner,
Strategy Meets Action

Where agencies say insurers should invest:

SALES



SERVICE



■ Small commercial lines ■ Mid/large commercial lines

Source: [SMA Research and Enhancing the Digital Experience and Delighting Customers](#) webinar



SMA's insights into carrier priorities indicate a reasonable alignment with these agency expectations. Breeding lists real-time quoting, enhanced agent portals, and online bind as top carrier priorities with less emphasis on data prefill and esignature. The only major misalignment between the agent wishlist and the carrier priority is the implementation of claims downloads, which is low on the carrier list.

The pandemic's impact on agency-carrier engagement

Before the pandemic, agencies generally lagged carriers in digital capabilities and carriers set the rules of engagement. The pandemic forced agencies to rapidly adopt digital capabilities, and this has changed their expectations of the carrier portal experience. Agents are also looking for new means of communication, including text and collaborative tools like Slack.



Panelist advice

Carriers need to change their mindset from a traditional method of dictating the agent experience to truly understanding by mapping out the agent's journey just as they would the policyholder's journey. Carriers should identify the personas of their agents and how and where they need to be met to sell with the greatest ease and efficiency.



I think like all of us, agents are trying to figure out how to operate their business in this new world, and their main priorities are going to be how they can engage with their customers, virtually answer their questions, and care for their own business. When agents are engaging with carriers, they're seeking efficiency, they're going to want self-service in that engagement. And then when they do engage, they expect value from that interaction, that it is data-driven and completed promptly.

Leah English, SVP
OneShield Software

The role of core systems in enabling engagement with agencies

In many cases, the core systems are the foundation that enables the digital front-end engagement. From a business perspective, this includes the self-service capabilities, quote, issuance policy, endorsement, cancellations, bill payment, claims, and notifications.

Further, the core systems support access to data and reporting capabilities, offering carriers an opportunity to share that data with participants across the lifecycle of the policyholder. This includes sharing actionable insights with agents to create a highly productive front-end engagement.

In addition, seamless communication between the carrier staff and other participants in the lifecycle is supported by the core systems. While initiatives often focus on advancements in automated straight-through processing, the focus should also be placed on streamlining communications with inspectors and underwriters involved in more complex risks.



Panelist advice

Carrier core systems need to be extremely flexible to integrate within that ecosystem and easily pass and receive data to drive the level of engagement that agents are seeking.



Carriers challenged to enhance engagement

If a carrier's core system is not open to the enablement of APIs, there are limits to their capabilities, which ultimately limit access to the possibilities brought about by digital transformation. Today, many carriers are challenged to standardize how they will integrate their portals with the multitude of agency management systems in the marketplace. With the support of APIs, this level of connectivity and engagement can be achieved but requires an open environment.



Panelist advice

Carriers need to get started now, and offer the following:

- Identify immediate pain points
- Develop a resource plan
- Establish a timeline
- Articulate core principles that underly process
- Flip the lens and journey map the agent experience
- Design intentionally for greater internal staff satisfaction

For more insights and a spotlight interview with Utica First Insurance Company's VP of Operations, Melissa Mann, on the transformation of their 30-year-old legacy system, watch the full webinar [here](#).



Technology savvy agents are expecting APIs, they're expecting a real-time exchange of information and interaction. For carriers, the bar is high and getting higher as technology continues to advance.

Karen Furtado, Partner
Strategy Meets Action



About OneShield Software

OneShield provides core software solutions for P&C insurers and MGAs of all sizes. Deployed in the cloud, OneShield's portfolio of standalone, subscription, and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) products includes enterprise-class policy management, billing, claims, rating, product configuration, business intelligence, and smart analytics. OneShield automates and simplifies the complexities of core systems with targeted solutions, seamless upgrades, collaborative implementations, and lower total cost of ownership. With corporate headquarters in Marlborough, MA, and offices in India, OneShield has 80+ products in production across P&C and specialty insurance markets.

For more information, visit oneshield.com