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In most states, agents and brokers are struggling to grow their commercial lines revenues in a very soft market. Whether quoting new or existing accounts, the price has to be the most competitive the agency can produce.

But price alone is not enough to close a new sale or convince a customer not to move his or her account. Increasingly with midsize to large accounts, the agency must offer specific services which differentiate it from the competition.

ing the value of these services. The most common approach is to charge no fee for loss control services, but the new business revenue can more than offset the cost. Some agencies outsource these services while others hire loss control specialists.

Risk management services include loss forecasting, benchmarking and captive and alternative market feasibility studies. Agencies also demonstrate their attention to service with stewardship reports, which review the insurance program and services and recommend improvements. The client selects the frequency of these reports. When

account managers are responsible for these reports, they take on more responsibility and develop stronger client relationships.

Coverage reviews give the producer an opportunity to review current coverage needs while also asking about other lines of insurance. An annual analysis prevents the loss of an account when a competitor finds gaps in coverage, but it also helps avoid errors and omissions claims. Since coverage reviews are a great way to demonstrate value, many agencies have built them into the sales process.

As they add or refine these services, agencies are rewriting and standardizing their proposals to incorporate them. They also are developing PowerPoint presentations to showcase the agency's capabilities. In some agencies, producers participate in training or coaching, which helps them sell the agency's value proposition, rather than price. Work flows also are revised to make sure services are introduced during the sales process and service employees are formally assigned to the client after the sale is made.

The end result is that the agency culture changes to focus on demonstrating value rather than simply quoting price. **BR**

The Write Price

Value-added agency services are the key to boosting client loyalty.

Offering some of these services may mean hiring new employees, but other services may require redesigning agency jobs so employees take on new responsibilities.

Claims management services are replacing claims reporting services. Carriers prefer that agencies provide toll-free numbers in their claims kits so the client can call the carrier to report not only workers' compensation claims, but all other lines as well. Because of this workflow change, agencies are replacing claims reps with claims analysts who regularly review and analyze claims experience, monitor claims reserves and help negotiate claims settlements.

Loss control services complement claims management services. Loss control specialists conduct surveys, review a client's operations to assess exposures and safety hazards, provide safety programs and training programs, assist with emergency preparedness programs and conduct OSHA consultations.

They also can be very effective on new-business calls in present-

In today's ultrasoft market, claims management is replacing claims reporting.

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