

Managing Risk

An Interview with Bryan Salvatore,
President, Specialty Products, Zurich North America

EDITORS' NOTE Bryan Salvatore joined Zurich in 1997 to lead Zurich North America's Specialty Products Field Operations and Marketing group. In 2007, he turned his focus to Accident & Health, where he continued to expand Zurich's book of business. In 2012, he was named President of the Specialty Products business unit. Salvatore began his career in the insurance industry at Frank Crystal & Co. in New York, where he was Director in the programs area. He is a graduate of Fairfield University and earned an M.B.A. from Fordham University.



Bryan Salvatore

COMPANY BRIEF Zurich North America Commercial's Specialty Products business unit serves a diverse set of customers and distributors. The group delivers innovative solutions for unique and challenging risks with lines of business that include domestic and international surety, political risk, trade credit, accident & health, casualty (excess and lead), surplus lines property, environmental liability, health care professional liability, and management liability (directors and officers, employment practices liability, crime, security and privacy.)

In North America, Zurich (www.zurichna.com) is a leading commercial property-casualty insurance provider serving the global corporate, large corporate, middle market, specialties, and programs sectors. The year 2012 marked Zurich's 100-year anniversary of insuring America and the success of its customers, shareholders, and employees.

What is the mission for your business unit?

Zurich has been in the specialty product field for over 20 years, and we believe that our mission is to help customers understand their risks and protect against them. The Specialty Products business unit focuses on the emerging, the unique, the catastrophic, and the volatile types of risks that customers face but don't deal with on an every day basis. This includes areas such as directors and officers liability, political risk, environmental, surety, trade credit, and security and privacy.

We have 20 distinct areas for which we provide insurance to cover these unique, potentially volatile types of risk. Zurich has teams of people who focus on this every day, and their

mission is to bring that insight to the customers to help them protect and grow their businesses.

How do you differentiate yourself from competition?

One good example would be directors and officers liability insurance: we can confidently deliver global D&O solutions to large publicly held corporations. Zurich can do this not only because we're a globally positioned company, but also because we have invested in a multinational solution that assists with compliance with local country regulations.

It's that strength, in addition to competitive policy terms and conditions, that differentiates us.

Has there been innovation within your product offerings or the delivery of services?

There has been. We have developed a proposition called the Multinational Insurance Application. It's a powerful platform that's based upon the notion that business is global but the way insurance is delivered is quite local. So this puts companies in the difficult position where they, now more than ever, need to understand requirements country by country – this is a complex proposition.

Zurich invested significant resources, both monetarily and otherwise, to gain a deep understanding of what the requirements are across a range of products in more than 100 countries. They can vary greatly country by country and even product by product within a country.

We then created an innovative tool that our customers can utilize to assist them and their brokers to form their opinions about the best ways to address exposures in different parts of the world, depending upon their needs.

This is just one example of the innovative approach Zurich takes to help our customers understand and mitigate risk.

Has managing and evaluating risk become more complex today?

It is more complex. Even for large companies that have been operating in a global environment for some time, the regulatory landscape is constantly changing. As more and more companies of all sizes expand their global footprint, there is increasing pressure on them to understand the risks they face and how they're going to address them. And these risks are diverse, ranging from directors and officers liability to issues like protecting employees who are stationed overseas.

The regulatory environment has also gotten more challenging – the process of creating a compliant global solution has become much more complex.

Geographically, where will the growth for the business come from?

A good deal of our growth comes from our ability to offer a range of solutions from across the entire Zurich group to our customers, helping them solve needs across multiple lines of business. As a result, Zurich is seeing growth in North America.

How critical is it that the diversity of your clientele is mirrored within your workforce?

Zurich Insurance Group is a global provider with more than 60,000 employees, and we provide coverage in 180 countries and territories, which inherently gives us a diverse environment.

We have a strong focus on developing our employees and giving them career development opportunities in North America and in different parts of the world. We also work to create balance in our hiring practices so that we can best fulfill our commitment to the community and our employees.

Is there an appreciation of the critical role that insurance plays within the world?

Yes. As we write these unique, emerging type coverages for potentially catastrophic types of risks, Zurich helps address issues that clients are quite concerned about but that they don't deal with every day.

For example, if a customer is about to engage in business in an emerging market country but is not clear about what the company's risks are, being able to sit down with one of Zurich's specialists in our political risk area is often helpful.

When you're talking about the right way to insure the directors and officers of a company that has a global reach, being able to sit down with one of our specialists and use our Multinational Insurance Application to help talk through ways to cover those risks is a service that we get positive comments about.

That said, there is nothing more powerful than traveling around disaster areas that were created by the likes of Superstorm Sandy or Hurricane Katrina to understand the true purpose of insurance and to see the crucial role it plays in economic recovery. When we help customers get back on their feet, those actions resonate for a long time. ●