

The Future Is Bright

An Interview with Wilbur Jenkins, Senior Vice President, Business Transformation, Argo Group

EDITORS' NOTE *Wilbur Jenkins leads Argo's business transformation efforts. In his more than 25-year career in insurance, he has spent the most recent years ensuring the transformation efforts at Argo truly do improve outcomes for customers, broker partners and the organization. Prior to joining the specialty-insurance company, Jenkins oversaw countrywide operations and service delivery as vice president with the Hartford Financial Group.*



Wilbur Jenkins

Transformation seems to be a popular word in the insurance industry today. What does transformation mean to Argo?

Transformation means reinventing and continually improving the way we do business. The process of reinvention has a significant digital element, but it doesn't end there. Fundamentally, business transformation means changing our processes, systems and technologies to enable people to deliver better outcomes at every point along the value chain. Delivering better outcomes means improving efficiency, effectiveness, customer relations and overall value to the organization across a number of functions and disciplines.

To get there, we've made business transformation an integral part of our overall strategy. Whether we're looking at the financial drivers of our strategic plan or core strategic

concepts – such as operational efficiency, productivity, customer satisfaction or ease of doing business – transformation underpins them all. I see the alignment between strategy and transformation in action every day. The work my team does directly impacts the execution of Argo's overall strategy.

This is an exciting time for our business as a whole, for our broker partners and, most importantly, for our customers. The industry is in flux, and for Argo the future is bright.

Our business transformation, along with our spirit of innovation, will enable us to ride the digital wave and optimize the value of our products and processes.

How is innovation at Argo benefiting the work that you and your team are doing?

Business transformation can be difficult at times. At its core, it involves change that can have a profound impact on people and the organization. It's important to understand the effect of change and to help people through the change curve. Argo's business transformation has emphasized creating a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, then relying on that culture to reinvent how we do things. That approach has brought about positive change to our business. It is helping us forge ahead faster, as well as to adapt and self-correct, if needed.

For example, before the onset of innovation and technological advancements, one

would often have to go through an arduous process to understand whether a new process or product would provide the desired outcome while meeting business objectives. Now, advances in technology make it possible for us to evaluate critical decision-making data on a more real-time basis. With this, we're able to get quicker insights and answers to questions like, "Is this process meeting the necessary milestones?" Today, we can more effectively assess the chance of success and quickly course correct or make changes to get the right outcomes.

In what ways do you think Argo's underwriting process will be impacted by ongoing transformation?

The changes are happening already and will continue to do so in various ways. First, the underwriting process will continue to become more effective with our ability to improve risk and portfolio decision-making. This comes with the advent of more robust and granular data, along with advanced systems that enable underwriters and actuaries to consume, analyze and act on information more effectively.

Second, the underwriting process will become more efficient. Technology, including process automation, will help us eliminate or greatly reduce routine and low value-added tasks. Eliminating or automating this work will enable our underwriters to be more productive in their jobs and more responsive to our broker partners.

Third, the company's ongoing transformation efforts will result in greater levels of internal and external satisfaction. Frankly, our innovations will enable people – employees and brokers – to work more easily with our company, focus on the things that matter most, and have the greatest opportunity for success. This increases job enrichment for our employees and ease of doing business satisfaction for our broker partners.

What feedback are you getting from brokers who have been working alongside Argo throughout this digital disruption?

Our brokers are on this journey with us and their feedback is positive. They are telling us that our smart technology tools are making it easier for them to get their hands on the data they need to make better and quicker decisions. It's important to understand that their insights and feedback helps shape our transformative efforts. We have shared goals for success and we will get there together. ●

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