



National News

## Survey: Agents Seek More Real Time Options from Carriers

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Independent agents and brokers want more carriers to offer real-time functionality, according to a new industry survey. Agents believe those carriers will deliver the greatest benefit in making real time the predominant workflow in their agencies.

Participants from every state, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, were asked in a recent Real Time/Download Campaign to prioritize nine possible enhancements to real-time programs and tools, using a scale of 1 to 9 and giving a particular number ranking to only one item.

"Additional carriers with real-time capabilities" was rated a high priority — ranked 7, 8 or 9 — by more than 60 percent of respondents," said Cal Durland, CPCY market development manager and AUGIE facilitator at ACORD, a Real Time/Download Campaign sponsor. Almost 30 percent assigned it a 9, the highest possible ranking, she noted.

"Day in and day out, agencies operate in multiple workflows because of the various ways insurance companies want to exchange information," Durland said. "Broader carrier implementation of real time based on ACORD Standards will provide a more consistent workflow, one that uses the agents' technology to access company systems. This will deliver faster response, fewer errors and, most important, more sales."

Agents also viewed better personal lines endorsement processing as an important enhancement, rating it the second highest. More than half (55 percent) called it a high priority, scoring it 7-9; nearly one in five rated it a 9.

"Carriers have done a good job working with vendors to build out inquiry and service capabilities, and real-time personal lines quoting is growing rapidly," said Jeff Yates, executive director of Independent Insurance Agents of America's Agents Council for Technology, also a campaign sponsor. "Agents want more carriers to focus on endorsements, providing 'deep link' functionality that takes them directly to the company endorsement completion screen to make changes."

Forty-eight percent of respondents assigned a high (7-9) priority to "faster response time," while 22 percent gave the potential enhancement a top vote.

Some 44 percent of respondents rated "commercial lines real-time comparative rating" as a high priority, while 18 percent gave it the highest ranking (9) as a possible enhancement.

Survey participants rated other suggested priorities as a high (7-9) priority as follows:

- Improved commercial lines endorsement processing, 37 percent;
- Easier password management, 27 percent;
- Improved vendor support, 25 percent;
- Improved usage reports, 24 percent; and
- Ability to process cancellations, 17 percent.

"Agents, brokers, carriers and vendors will work together to identify ways to improve interface and make changes that will help agents and brokers make real time the predominant workflow in their offices," Yates said.

An overview and discussion of survey results is part of the agenda for the Real Time/Download Campaign's report at the May 2010 ACT meeting in Las Vegas. To see actual demos of agents using real time and to learn about available tools to assist with implementation, attend the Campaign's free webinar, "Save Time & Increase Profits with Real Time," on June 9, from 2 - 3 p.m. EDT by registering at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/953284472>.

Source: Real Time/Download Campaign, [www.getrealtime.org](http://www.getrealtime.org)

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