

DI Sales Multiply with Multi-life



Your success in the DI Industry of the future may well be tied to how successfully you can compete in the multi-life arena.

There is a strong trend in the industry towards selling groups of policies in one setting, rather than selling single policies one by one. This trend makes good business sense for carriers, who benefit from the high quality business generally associated with multi-life sales. It also makes good sense for you, in terms of improved persistency, higher commissions, and add-on sales as new employees enroll in the program.

As with any profitable venture, learning to make the multi-life sale takes some effort. You may need to rethink your entire sales presentation, from start to finish. To get started, keep in mind that there are many variations on the multi-life sale, including association endorsements, employer sponsorships, and guaranteed issue plans.

One of the most effective approaches, appropriate in a wide variety of situations, is the combination sale, which blends group long term disability with individual non-can to create an insurance plan that is customized for the specific needs of your clients. The objective is to create a cost-effective package that maximizes the benefits and minimizes the limitations. The right combination provides portability and flexibility for key employees and simplicity and economy for other employees. The first and most important step to creating the right plan is to get your client involved.

Client involvement gives clients ownership in the program, which makes it difficult for competitors to come in and criticize the work that's been done. In addition, clients are often reluctant to take apart an insurance plan that they've purchased as a package. Best of all, when clients share in the responsibility for creating their plan, you can be sure you are delivering what they really want.

The key to getting the client involved in the plan design process is to identify the needs. It is crucial to ask questions and to listen to what your client is telling you. Listening lays the foundation for identifying the needs and designing the appropriate plan. You can add on benefits and underwriting concessions as the case develops, but you must first lay a strong foundation by understanding what your client really wants. Otherwise you risk losing your sale to a competitor who listens better.

Another important aspect of client involvement is to be certain that you know with whom you're dealing. Too many sales fall by the wayside because the agent couldn't get past the gatekeepers. Don't spend your time with people who don't make decisions. You have to get the owner or key decision-maker involved early on.

Another way to get clients involved in plan design is to educate them. Many clients can't identify what they want because they don't know what is available. Don't assume that your clients are clear about the benefits and limitations of their current coverage, or of the ways their coverage can be upgraded. Approach them with the attitude that you're going to educate them and help them develop a program that works in their best interest.

Once they understand the fundamental concept of a combination plan, many employers are anxious to upgrade coverage for key employees. As companies stress productivity and streamline their processes, they take a closer look at who is key, whom they need to keep. And they're more willing to do some extra things to tie valuable employees closer.

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Of course, in order to educate the client about what's available and how different combination plans work, you must have a thorough understanding of the products and programs. Take the time to educate yourself beforehand. Work with reps who know and understand both group and individual products and work with a good carrier — one who will work with you before you discuss plans with your clients to help you develop the best possible combination plan.

The right combination plan can be developed only after you understand the unique make-up and requirements of

your client and then match those with appropriate benefits and underwriting concessions. Then make sure you deliver the proposed plan in a format that is attractive and easy to understand.

By working closely with your client and your carrier, you can create an insurance plan that provides the best possible protection for your client at the best possible price — watch your DI multi-life sales multiply!

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