

# Connectivity

ACT

*Letters to the Industry*

## **Better Connectivity for Greater Efficiency**

The Agents Council for Technology (ACT) recently held a highly interactive and collaborative session at Ivan's Connect. This session, called "A Letter to the Industry", was designed to engage agents, carriers, and technology providers in meaningful, actionable conversation in four strategic areas:

- Data
- Connectivity
- Artificial intelligence
- People/Culture

The goal was simple. Let's lay it all on the table by facilitating discussions about each group's perspective on a topic, thoughts on current state, ideas on how we can better collaborate, and a call to action for the industry. And lay it all on the table we did.

In this follow-up to our introductory letter to the industry, here's a deeper look at where the three major stakeholder groups think we are with regard to connectivity. Suffice to say, there is a comparable amount of frustration and optimism as well as an apparent desire to work together to solve some very real current-state challenges.

The most notable issues cited among the group:

- Agents wish there was greater collaboration to better ensure their technology and carriers systems worked together to reduce duplication of entry and facilitate greater accuracy and efficiency.
- There is a gap across agencies in their awareness of available technologies and which technology integrates best with each other.
- There are also agencies that have taken to building their own technology solutions, calling for more open integrations with carriers, AMS platforms, and other technologies.
- Agencies and some newer technology solutions have cited connectivity as a barrier to entry and progress.

What does all this mean? In an industry based on choice and competitive differentiation, there are very fair questions about whether there is a utopian set of scenarios that solve for this lengthy list of pains and opportunities. But that is certainly no reason not to try. After all, though our industry may not be the fastest, it is resilient. If we place a concerted effort with the right people in the room, we can and will make improvements. We have to.

That's where ACT intends to advocate for and with each stakeholder group. As we evolve our strategy and take a broader perspective on newer and more relevant issues such as these four topics, we'll continue to leverage our foundational goal of bringing all stakeholders together in a neutral environment to facilitate thought provoking, actionable insights for member agencies and

the industry at large. Moving into 2025, ACT will launch a new working group model, reengage leaders from partner companies and agencies, and begin to tackle these issues and opportunities head on.

What will it look like? Some of those answers are still in flight. But rest assured that we have the industry's best interest mind as we partner with and challenge all to consider a more common vocabulary for all stakeholders when making and reacting to strategic decisions, and to look for common ground wherever possible.

We do not believe it is naïve to think that together we can:

- Collaborate to greater insights into the current state of integration, why we are where we are, and have open dialogue about how to better move forward.
- Elevate the challenges facing agencies today as they need to navigate multiple systems to execute daily business operations.
- Educate stakeholders with high level insights into how technology providers and carriers prioritize their integration partners.
- Explore mechanisms to educate agencies and other stakeholders about emerging tools and technologies with methods to assess integrations in alignment with their needs.
- Educate stakeholders on any challenges associated with system integrations, such as privacy, authentication, data standards, scalability, etc.

As technology enables new capabilities and all three major stakeholders evaluate how to better enable their individual needs and strategies, we'll likely always have integration conversations. It may be a function of our own independence with 39,000+ agencies, a couple thousand carriers, and an untold number of technology solutions. But we can and must facilitate meaningful conversations about how to better align these tools for the greater good of the industry.

The independent agency channel sustains from a position of overall strength. There are many carriers and technology providers who are collaborating for the greater good. And there are some amazing people across all groups who deeply care about getting this right and taking the best possible advantage of new capabilities to enable every independent agency and company to succeed long into the future. But, we clearly have work to do!

If you'd like to join this conversation, to help write the next chapters in our letters to the industry, and would like to effect positive change in the IA channel, please let us know!

With a vision for the future,

*The Agents Council for Technology*

