

CILA Chief Targets Next Generation

Paul May
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Star Trek fan Paul May next month becomes president of the Chartered Institute of Loss Adjusters. In his first interview he tells Francis Higney how he plans to boldly go where no president has gone before.

The new president of the Chartered Institute of Loss Adjusters, Paul AJ May, is a man of letters.

Not that the executive chairman and managing director of consultants Resolve International is an enthusiastic user of her majesty's Royal Mail.

Rather, he is a man who takes continuing education seriously and he's got the qualifications to prove it - at least 11 of them at the last count.

It comes as somewhat of a surprise, then, that he's willing to sacrifice his strong beliefs in continuing development on the altar of class membership.

Bid To Boost Numbers

He is willing to facilitate a boost in the institute's numbers by allowing anyone with the minimal amount of qualifications and who works in the claims field to become a member.

Even the traditional enemy of the loss adjuster - the loss assessor - is being courted.

"Standing still is almost going backwards," explains Mr May. "If you examine the membership numbers over the past five years there is little fluctuation. It's important we listen to our members and discover what they want from us. This is especially true of younger entrants into our profession.

"At the same time, it's important to keep tradition where it's applicable while recognising that we are living in a modern world.

"It is important we attract people who work inside and outside the insurance industry to come and join the institute.

"That includes claims staff in brokers, Lloyd's insurance companies and loss assessors.

"We don't want them to feel they can't join in if they are not going to sit the examinations, although we will give them every encouragement to do so."

Youngest President

Full of drive and determination - highlighted by his approach to getting elected on council seven years ago by writing personally to around 700 members in the London and Home Counties area - Mr May will, at the age of 43, be CILA's youngest ever president.

Noses Out Of Joint

Some members with a more traditional outlook had their noses put slightly out of

joint at this month's AGM in Edinburgh when the new officers were handed their badge of office, rather than suffer the embarrassing awkwardness of an Olympic medal-winning ceremony.

The traditionalists might be even more miffed to learn that Mr May wants to target travel agencies, building societies and anywhere else employing staff dealing with claims to boost numbers even further.

These reforms have the intention of positioning CILA as "the" institute for everyone working with claims. "Star Trek" fan Mr May calls his programme "The Next Generation", but realises it is important to cling on to the institute's traditions that have made it respected within the sector.

It is clear that the forthcoming year will be another of marked consolidation and polarisation within the loss adjusting field, when members might want to look to the advice support and fellowship of the institute.

"The activity in the loss adjusting market is like a tennis game - you either attack the net or play from the baseline. If you stay in the middle you are dead," he says.

Tough decisions

"Firms will have to decide whether or not to stay close to the net and specialise, or play from the baseline and go for sale with high-volume, low-ticket claims."

Next month sees Mr May clock up a unique double when he becomes president of FUEDI (the Federation of European Loss Adjusting Experts) in the same year as holding the CILA presidency.

It comes at a time when the institute is broadening its borders by being instrumental in seeking to establish a world congress of loss adjusters.

The eventual aim is to set a recognised global standard of claims handling.

Seven nations have recently aligned themselves with the Institute's stance.

This week Mr May will, for example, be speaking at a CILA conference in South East Asia.

"The Malaysian conference is part of the new approach which is to go out and visit our members face-to-face and offer them our support, rather than have them come to us," he says.

But even this approach could soon be a thing of the past, as Mr May is keen for the institute to embrace the wonders of new technology. A CILA internet site is imminent.

"All in all, I think this is going to be a very exciting year," says Mr May. "It will be one packed with opportunities.

"Having broken out of the traditional approach, our members are now sure to work in all matters of claims-related business creating a bigger range of opportunities for the institute."

