

BE PREPARED FOR THE HARDENING PI MARKET

Thursfields Solicitors is a Worcestershire practice of 16 partners, with offices in Kidderminster, Stourport and Worcester.

Stephen Wyer has been a partner at Thursfields since 1994 and heads their commercial department in the Worcester office. He is also responsible for the firm's professional indemnity insurance, which he manages with the help of brokers QPI in Northampton. In our interview, Stephen has agreed to share his insight into how to prepare for the hardening PI market.

Int: Please set the context for this year's PI renewals.

SW: Since the demutualisation of the PI market in September 2000 there has been a year on year expectation of savings as competition between insurers led to a soft market and falling premiums. This year things have changed. Uncertain financial markets, high claims inflation and reduced market capacity have created a hardening insurance market and firms face their toughest PI renewal challenge for 20 years. In such a climate I recognise that I need help to maximise the value for money of PI premiums.

Int: Why do you choose to use brokers QPI rather than approach insurers directly?

SW: Renewal in today's competitive market is complicated, it requires

specialist knowledge and the commitment of time and resources. QPI specialise in independent PI brokerage services for provincial firms. Richard Grayson is legally qualified and has practised as a lawyer. Philip Edwards is a chartered insurance practitioner and an Associate of the Institute of Risk Management. They are a team with experience in both the legal and underwriting sides of the market and together have a unique ability to provide the help Thursfields needs.

Int: How do you characterise a successful broker relationship?

SW: Proactive communication and a commitment to providing long term help. By way of example, QPI contacted me in February to discuss the changing PI market and advise me of Thursfields' likely position so that I could make early budget recommendations to my partners regarding this year's premiums. QPI offer us a one to one service - visits and time spent when required - to provide immediate response to issues such as policy interpretation, difficulties with claims, notification requirements.

Int: How are QPI helping you achieve the best value for money for your PI premiums?

SW: My partners assess the premiums I present them in three



Thursfields Solicitors, Worcester.

ways, the risk management service included, the insurer offered and the monetary detail.

We need to be able to demonstrate to underwriters that we are doing all we can to prevent claims. QPI help us analyse claims, understand any underlying causes and maintain our risk management strategies.

Ultimately partners are personally liable for claims, we must have confidence that our insurers will protect our livelihoods. QPI offer us 'blue chip' insurers with reputable claims handling departments.

We want the best level of cover with minimum deductibles for the most advantageous premium. QPI's excellent relationships with insurers and knowledge of Thursfields' business ensure they present us as an individual firm, not part of a risk pool with others whose records may not be as good as ours. They negotiate PI premiums that deliver the best value for money.

QPI predicted the open market for PI and has been sharing its research of the likely impact for over three years. It is a specialist division of one of the biggest independent brokers in the country and has excellent relations with the senior underwriters at each of the major insurers in the market. QPI is committed to providing quality information to support effective decision making.

For the comprehensive, professional guidance you need to achieve the best value for money when you renew your PI insurance.

Call QPI on: 0845 6021719 and quote reference: QPI/GA/01

It takes time to be properly prepared. If you wait until August it may be too late.

'QPI specialise in independent PI brokerage services for provincial firms.'

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DAMAGE YOUR WEALTH



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