

Agents do matter

Bill Smith discusses how your insurance agent can make your life easier.

Securing insurance for your crane, rigging, or transport company is probably not your favorite annual task. We get that. Buying insurance is expensive and takes up valuable time. It can also be confusing. Between coverage choices, terms and conditions, claims scenarios, contracts, loss control and risk-management efforts, there's a lot to think about.

The good news, though, is that you don't have to think about it alone. A good insurance agent is there to answer your questions and knows the nuances of insurance – and the nuances of your business.

Jeff Haynes, national heavy construction practice leader for USI, a leading insurance brokerage and P&C consulting company with 150 offices across the country, understands this precisely.

“Heavy construction companies should look for an agent who understands the industry as an industry, and not simply from an insurance standpoint,” he said. “They should be able to advise them on critical items like OSHA rules and regulations and ASME standards. They should also help incorporate those rules, regulations and standards into their contracts in order to develop meaningful risk-transfer tools.”

In the heavy construction universe, every company, every situation, every need is different. Businesses are located in different parts of the country and companies work on different types of jobs. A good agent knows this, and a good agent also knows exactly how each one of these factors affects your business – and ultimately, your insurance needs, which almost certainly involve contracts.

“A good agent will advise the insured on the proper contract terms and



The right agent can help you control the costs of risk now and in the future.

conditions needed to assume and transfer risk accordingly,” said Haynes. “The agent should also be actively engaged in claims strategy, litigation management, and any sort of contract-redrafting that needs to occur.”

Experience matters

Of course, good agents are also in the relationship business – and good relationships are born of time and experience. Experienced agents – meaning those who have been around for a while and have done business with other companies like yours – will have high levels of credibility with market partners so that when they submit your information for renewal the underwriter receives a meticulously prepared file that's ready to quote competitively.

“Experience matters,” said Haynes. “You can't teach experience. Companies should look for an agent who has extensive references within their particular niche – a crane broker who can dissect the actual scope of work that you are performing at a job site while using the standards and rules that apply to the parties on the job to transfer risk accordingly.”

It's important to know that the agent you choose is prepared to answer any questions that arise during the insurance-buying process, but equally important is your agent's ability to properly and strategically advise you through any claims scenarios that may occur. Haynes explains that a typical insurance agent will sometimes advise you on what insurance coverage you need to purchase to fulfill

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somebody else's contract demands, rather than the other way around.

“That said, when there's an accident and you have the right agent,” he explained, “they'll have the knowledge and expertise to work with your carrier, using a network of industry specialists, to navigate to your best result. A good agent will help make sure that all the engineers, adjusters and lawyers working on your claims are well versed in the crane and rigging industry and working together. Having the right agent helps give insurance buyers control of their total cost of risk now and in the future.”

When time comes to review your policy for renewal, ask questions and make sure your agent is working for your business' best interest. For an agent referral or more information on available coverage or available agents visit us online – www.NBIS.com or call 866.668.NBIS for more information. ■



THE AUTHOR

Bill Smith executive vice president, NBIS, is an expert on risk management and safe crane operations. He was a member of C-DAC, which assisted writing the OSHA Crane & Derricks Standard.

OSHA Crane & Derricks Standard.