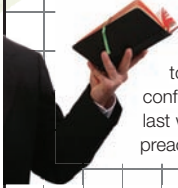


Backchat Insider's Market matrix

ONE STEP FORWARD

You gotta have faith

One might assume that insurance chief information officers would not make the best public speakers, spending, as they do, a lot of time in the back office with all those computers. However, Aviva's UK GI tech-head Malcolm Simpkin took to the stage brimming with confidence at a technology event last week. His secret? He's a preacher in his spare time.



Risk averse

Where next for the departing Aviva chairman, Lord Sharman of Redlynch? I hear that my old pal is set to become president of GamCare, a charity that helps people with gambling problems. He is expected to start in September. I wonder if he's expecting to bump into anyone from the insurance world ...



Pick your battles

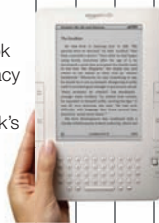
We all know Lloyd's Names like a bit of a moan. However, my spies tell me that recent reports of a Names revolt at the recent Equity Syndicate 218 AGM were overblown. There's also little evidence to suggest that Names will sue the company over its £499.5m 2010 loss. While it's no secret that the Lloyd's lot are rather upset, they're in no rush to recreate the litigious, backbiting mess that was Lloyd's in the mid-'90s. In any case, I understand they've had a rather good run in other lines of business in recent years.



TAXI!

Brought to book

An ex-life insurance salesman from the USA has found an interesting way to diversify. John Locke has become the first self-published author to sell one million books on the Kindle ebook reader. Locke specialises in writing racy thrillers. Come on chaps – let's beat him at his own game. Broker Network's Grant Ellis could write a book around his cycling exploits in Africa, and Hiscox's Alan Millard could reveal all about climbing Everest.



A good sport

QBE is known for its rugby sponsorship, but the rugby fans at QBE had another reason to celebrate recently. Harlequins star Will Skinner did a week's work experience with QBE's marine, energy and aviation division. I imagine Skinner gave the QBE team considerable clout when it came to broker negotiations ...

CHEERS!

Hip replacements

Ah, the Glastonbury festival. I remember when it was full of hip young things, but it seems the festival demographic has changed. Saga research found that one in nine of the festival goers are over 50 years old. That might be true, but we still know how to have a good time. Wave your walking sticks in the air like you just don't care!

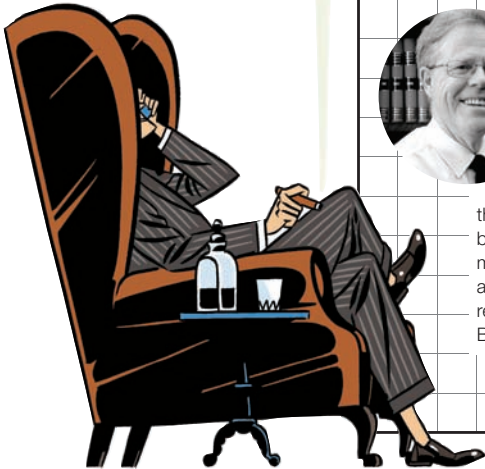


Make 'em laugh

SSP's charity ball in Leeds not only raised around £38,000, but also unearthed a new comedy duo. Roger Dakin, the ex-England Hockey goalkeeper and auctioneer for the evening, formed a sparkling double act with SSP co-founder David Rasche, with comparisons stretching as far as legends Morecambe and Wise. Expect to see these two duetting in a Blackpool theatre soon ...



TWO STEPS BACK



Small gripes

The ABI has been making waves in the legal expenses insurance world by supporting the Jackson Review. While the trade body can't be blamed for voicing the majority view of its members, one annoyed legal expenses insurer boss recently dubbed it "the Association of Big Insurers".

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