

# Backchat Insider's Market matrix

## ONE STEP FORWARD



### A dog's life

If you've invited Lancashire chief executive Richard Brindle to your office for some 'face time' as they call it these days, make sure that you arrange a water bowl and some Bonios for the meeting room as well as coffee and biscuits. Rumour has it that he has been known to bring his pet Labrador along ...

### An eventful app

Towergate founder Peter Cullum's fortune is flowing into the technology industry. In 2008, Cullum pledged £10m to Cass Business School to fund new projects for aspiring entrepreneurs. Some of that money is now being invested in a start-up firm that develops mobile phone apps, including one that tracks events in relation to your location. I'm sure they will be including the event of the year – the Insurance Times Awards 2011 – on the app.



### Yankee doodle

One thing I like about the UK insurance industry is our friendly approach to our pals on the other side of the pond. I was at the Clear Insurance 10th birthday bash at the Globe Theatre last week, and the tour guide was telling us how one visitor had innocently asked if William Shakespeare had dropped in recently. "Were they American?" one guest shot back. As it turns out, their stereotyping was spot on.



### Who says, wins

Jack Straw, during an interview with the *Today* programme to publicise his referral fee crusade back in July, mentioned that a senior industry figure had described the motor claims process as "dysfunctional". There has been speculation about who he had spoken to ever since. Step forward Nick Starling. When speaking at a fringe event at the Labour conference, the ABI general insurance director outed himself as the man behind the comment.



TAXI!

### A prize mistake

It was a thrilling finale to the MCE Insurance British Superbike Championship on Sunday. MCE chief executive Julian Edwards, dizzy with all the excitement, presented the wrong trophy to one of the winning drivers in front of half a million TV viewers. Realising his error, he later handed the correct cup over. "It was all on purpose", he tells me. "I just wanted a bit more TV exposure time for MCE." Yes, of course.



### Andy's American dream

It's still not clear where former RSA chief Andy Haste will resurface. But whether he likes it or not, he now has a reputation for turning companies around after his time at his old firm, so he's likely to show up somewhere that needs a bit of spit and polish – and not necessarily on these shores. As his wife is American, could we see him running Chartis in a couple of years' time?



CHEERS!

### In demand

If you have just moved into shiny new offices, you want a big hitter to cut the tape. But while Gordon Brown was always on hand to open an HQ when he was chancellor of the Exchequer, the current incumbent George Osborne clearly believes he has better ways to spend his time. According to his parliamentary private secretary Greg Hands, Osborne is besieged by such requests. Hands told a fringe meeting at last week's Tory conference that "he does not want to spend his life opening offices in the City of London".



### A taker for Baker?

I'm hearing that Martin Andrews is the hot favourite to take over from Tony Baker as director-general of the Credit Hire Organisation. Andrews is currently financial director of Accident Exchange, one of the largest players in the credit hire market. Although the CHO is keeping tight-lipped on the successor, I'm definitely backing this horse.



## TWO STEPS BACK



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