

OPTIMUM WEST INSURANCE COMPANY

Broker relations key to success

In October 2011 the Insurance Brokers Association of B.C. published the results of its biennial p&c Insurer Performance Survey, in which Optimum West earned the top spot.



Carrier

"These results reflect the goal of our corporate mission, which is to offer consistently high standards of service to our brokers and their customers," said Martin Carrier, president and COO of Optimum West Insurance Company, Optimum

Insurance Company and Optimum Farm Insurance. "The results are also an accurate reflection of the skills, knowledge and involvement of each and every one of our employees."

Over the past few years the Vancouver-based insurer has increasingly and successfully built excellent relationships with its broker network. IBABC's 2007 and 2009 surveys had Optimum West placing third and fourth respectively.

"Our broker-centric approach really makes a difference in developing partnerships with our brokers," said Jeremy Green, the insurer's regional VP for B.C. "We recognize that each broker provides unique value to their customer base. It's our job to respect this fact and to do what we can to support brokers through their various strategies."

IBABC's most recent survey results suggest that philosophy has resonated with brokers, who gave Optimum West top marks in commercial lines, claims handling and general management. In the areas of building relationships and communication with brokers, the insurer was ranked first, as much as 12 points ahead of its closest competitor.



Green

The corporate mission is to offer consistently high standards of service to brokers and their customers

Adding icing to the cake in 2011 was *BCBusiness* magazine naming Optimum West as one of the top five companies to work for in the financial sector. Another highlight was B.C.'s insurance industry Salute committee naming the insurer's Green as the recipient of its Rising Star award, an annual and coveted accolade recognizing a young leader whose professional contributions and dedication to excellence have already made him a role model in the insurance industry.

"It's been quite a year," Green said. "We truly owe this success to the support of our brokers and employees."

The company also had a successful year in Alberta.

"Securing a strong, viable broker force in the province has been a priority for Optimum West for the last few years," said Derri

Thomas, Alberta region VP. "We've appointed 18 brokers in two years. The key to our success is matching brokers' needs with what Optimum West can provide. We're doing a much better job working with independent brokers to ensure we meet their needs."

"Service remains a priority for our brokers. We have worked hard to ensure our service remains at a high level. We will also continue to work with them to enhance our product lines. Last year we launched our new residential product, a stand-alone watercraft offering, and we continued promoting our OptiPak retail commercial package."

Added Thomas: "In 2012 we will strive to continue meeting the needs of our brokers. Excellent service will remain paramount. Our brokers can also expect new auto rates that will allow us to be more competitive. Look for our new hobby farm product and the launch of a special risk program in commercial lines."



Thomas

"Optimum West remains committed to the independent broker distribution network. We rely upon and appreciate the support we receive from our brokers. It's the key to our success." **IW**

THE OPTIMUM GROUP

Optimum West Insurance Company, one of three p&c insurance subsidiaries of Optimum General, is part of the larger Optimum Group, a Canadian-owned, private international financial group founded in 1969.

The Group is active in many different areas besides p&c insurance in Canada. It has life reinsurance operations in the U.S and Canada, life insurance in France and actuarial consulting interests in Canada. The Group also includes an asset management division with more than \$3.7 billion worth of assets under management in Canada.

The Optimum Group's real estate division owns and manages properties in North America, France and the Caribbean. Special rental rates on its Caribbean villas are available for Optimum West brokers.

"The Optimum Group is guided by its mission and is sustained by a vision that is clear and in line with the corporate values which have been steering its objectives of growth for more than 40 years," says J.-Sebastien Lagarde, VP corporate strategy and business development. "Rigorousness and risk management – two of our fundamental principles – have been at the core of our operations and our business culture from the beginning."

"In the pursuit of the operations and development of all the member companies, financial security remains one of the top priorities in order to contribute to the success of our clients and partners, and to continue our organization's development." **IW**



Lagarde