

# **The Importance of the Agent-Client Relationship in a Down Economy**

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# Importance of Agent-Client Relationship

## Cook

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Agents who partner with their clients to realize savings during the economic downturn will keep those clients as partners when the economy rebounds. Agents have struggled over the years to de-commoditize the insurance product, to sell their customers on service and quality over price. Yet today, now more than ever—when price pressures are forcing many consumers into making poor insurance decisions—is the time for agents to stand up as trusted advisors and counsel their customers on ways to save on premium.

Some of your clients may feel stressed and isolated in this current economic environment. But by being seen as a partner and navigating these rough waters together, the agent-client relationship will gain trust and stand on solid ground as the economy improves. Here are some ways agents can proactively reach out to their customers:

### **Cross-selling**

Have you done enough cross-selling and obtained all available discounts for your customer? Make sure you offer this opportunity to help your customer before someone else does. In difficult economic times, it is easier for an agent to cultivate existing relationships than to develop new ones. Cross-selling is effective when agents focus on identifying their clients' needs and develop the right mix of products to meet those needs.

### **Review scheduled items**

Clients may have given away or sold jewelry, electronics, or artwork as the economy nosedived. Are they still paying premium for those items?

### **Review coverage for “toys”**

Clients may no longer have or be using items such as jet-skis, motorboats, or RVs, which are costly to run.

### **Review coverage for dependents**

Are children covered under your clients' personal auto policy no longer household residents? As children graduate from college, move out, and establish their own households, your clients may forget to remove them from their own policies and still be paying unnecessary premium.

### **Review business exposures**

Clients that may have had a business could have curtailed operations. Or a client might have started a home-based business that requires the appropriate coverage.

The goal is to provide the best service possible to your clients so you establish and maintain a trusted relationship with them. Your clients will be grateful you took the time to assist them in managing their insurance costs and will be more inclined to use your services in the future.

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