NEWSLETTER

MARCH
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Today's agency faces a range of critical subjects around evolving customer needs, regulatory changes, technological advancements, and emerging risks. We aim to highlight a critical subject in each edition of our newsletter.

Safeguard Against Cyber Threats	Certificate Holder Workflow	Featured Employee: Frank Axtell

What's happening at Agency Software

IN-PERSON EVENTS

April 28th–May 2nd - Big USA Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada
Stop in and say hello to Tom and Lori at our exhibitor booth in Las Vegas.

June 12th–14th - FAIA Conference in Orlando, Florida
Mark A and Lori would be glad for a visit at our IAS (our corporate group) exhibitor booth in Orlando

June 19th–21st - Insurcon in San Antonio, Texas
Drop in on David and Tom at our exhibitor booth in sunny San Antonio!

EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS

Rating Integration *Our launch of rating integration is just around the corner and we are looking for beta program participants! If you are interested, or would like more information please email integration@agencysoftware.com.*

Users Group Launch *We are committed to partnering with our agencies, improving communication, and providing additional training opportunities. In May we will be holding our first virtual User's Group meeting, if you are interested in attending, or would like more information email communications@agencysoftware.com.*

Certificate Holder Workflow

One of our most commonly overlooked program features is the Certificate Holder Menu. Sure signs that a user is not aware of this great time-saving feature is when their forms list is full of certificates (one per holder) or when a user commonly uses the Duplicate Client's Form option (built as a Boiler Plate tool). So if you create a new form for each holder, or use the Duplicate feature it's possible that we can save you time on a complex account with numerous certificate holders. Here's how.

Consider your certificate form a master template. That is, you will fill the certificate information to a single form that you will use until there is a coverage change. As you add this new form (ACORD 25 - Certificate of Liability) it draws in information from the agency, client, and policy.

Complete the form to properly reflect the coverages and options, but leave the Certificate Holder box empty; this is your template. From the toolbar click the Cert Holder's Menu and begin to list the holders to which you will issue this certificate. Click Add New Holder and begin to list your holders. All our programs have an option to import a holder from a Master List, which is a listing of all holders in the database. Some of our programs have options to import the holder list from a CSV file to simplify the review and update process on renewal.

Once your holder list is complete you can examine your output options which include print, save to PDF (best with an electronic signature), email customer, and email cert holder directly (both email options require outgoing email configuration within the program settings). If a holder request comes in, simply open your template, add the holder, and use your desired output for the single added holder (and don't forget to sign with your E-Signature if you are using electronic options).

The largest impact the Cert Holder functionality has on agency efficiency is during the renewal process. Rather than opening up and modifying your template from last term, you will now simply prefill the information from the last term to a new form, which offers the option of copying over the certificate holders. This holder list can be shared with the client and updated on the new term template without sacrificing the holder data from the prior term.

Once you have invested the time in proper holder listings you will see how this feature will eliminate redundant data entry and help you to focus on the things that matter around your large account renewals!
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If you would like more information regarding the holder functionality or would like to view it in practice you can view the Certificate Holder Workflow tutorials (Agency2Go and Desktop) or contact your account rep or technical support for questions and training. Some other great resources we have are videos on how to set up email and how to Import/Export Cert Holder. If you are interested in ordering an electronic signature, please see the order form for more information.

Safeguard Against Cyber Threats

Cyber security is a subject that should be on every business leader's mind today. With cyber threats on the rise, insurance agencies and small businesses are prime targets for data breaches. In this article we will explore essential practices to help protect sensitive data and prevent financial loss.

Driven largely by huge technological leaps, the main one being generative AI, cyber threats are on the rise. According to Sophos in their 2023 State of Ransomware survey the rate of ransomware incidents and cyber-attacks was 62% across companies, with no real differentiation based on the business size or headcount. 76% of these who experienced an incident had their data encrypted, which is up 11% from the previous year. According to Sophos, "This likely reflects the ever-increasing skill level of adversaries who continue to innovate and refine their approaches."

Cyber threats come in many forms, but most commonly are caused by:

- System vulnerabilities – including unprotected and outdated infrastructure and out of date software
- Malicious emails – 36% of all data breaches involve phishing (a fraudulent communication that appears to come from a trusted sender) or infected attachments
- Compromised credentials – weak passwords, failure to regularly change passwords and poor credential practices.

A recent study by Symantec estimated that 1 of every 323 emails are malicious.

While recovery from a cyber incident can be expensive and damaging to your business and reputation, much of the risk can be hedged by some proactive best practices. A few small workplace changes can help you to reduce your risk. These practices include:

- **Perform regular risk assessments** – what data do you keep, and do you keep sensitive data (social security, credit card, license information). Know where physically this data is kept and take advantage of sensitive data encryption options.
- **Maintain a backup plan** – Now that you know where you keep the data, have (and test regularly) a backup plan. An appropriate backup plan will have multiple sources, at least one of which is offline. This plan can be as complex as an architected backup system, or as simple as getting a regular copy of the data you house on a storage device. One important element to consider is that ransomware attacks may affect attached storage devices or take time to detect, compromising your last backups. Avoid the "set it and forget it" mentality and test your backups regularly.
- **Stay up to date** – Out of date versions of software and operating systems can cause unnecessary vulnerabilities. Check for and apply updates on a regular basis and keep anti-virus software active and updated.
- **Educate the workplace and enforce a security policy** – Spend some time training employees on the common sources of cyber threats. Ask your employees to use strong passwords and change them quarterly, as well as enable multi-factor authentication (MFA) wherever possible. Eliminate poor practices of password sharing and using the same password repeatedly.

Finally, consider developing an incident response plan. Development of this plan would be best in correlation with the advice of your trusted local technician who knows your infrastructure well and may be involved

Featured Employee: Frank Axtell

If you are a long-time Agency Software customer, then you know that Frank and his awesome support team is what sets us apart! We have recently celebrated Frank's 20th anniversary with ASI and it's time to get to know what makes Frank tick.

Frank was born in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, second oldest of seven. He enjoys the beauty of the mountains, waters and forests of our region, but occasionally longs for times when it was less crowded.

Frank and his wife JoAnn (married 30 years) like to camp, ride ATVs and spend time with their network of friends, who tend to be seniors that they adopt and embrace like family. Frank enjoys the company of his elders and says that their shared wisdom has saved him much trouble.

When talking about his work, Frank shared that he is driven by the customer interaction. He enjoys talking to customers from across the country and being able to connect and assist is the most pleasurable part of his work.. If you have had the pleasure of Franks assistance, you know what a difference that enjoyment makes!

Knowledgeable and courteous, soft-spoken and patient, Frank is a great example of exemplary service and is appreciated by his peers and clients alike. Thank you for all you do Frank!!!

We love all of the technicians, they are always very prompt, kind, and helpful! Frank seems to get stuck with us, and we love him! Thank you to all of you!

- Kim

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...Cyber Threats cont.

in your backup regimen. This plan should document the data you hold, the backup protocol (and when it was last tested), how to react to threats (clicks on a malicious email for instance), who to contact with questions and to report issues, as well as information on your Cyber Liability coverage. Electing a security officer to stay aware of the response plan, regularly test and review the plan, and act as the first line when a question arises can be an important role in the agency.

The bottom line is that cyber threats are constantly changing and ever-increasing. Being educated and prepared for the worst will hopefully gain you some peace of mind. While ongoing vigilance may seem like a burden, building these practices into your office culture is the best way to safeguard your business and maintain the trust of your customers.

OUR COMMITMENT

We are committed to service excellence and strive for continual improvement in the way we serve you. Do you have comments of suggestions? Please email us at communications@agencysoftware.com, or contact your account representative.