



Expert view

Q&A with *Diego Ascani, Chief Executive Officer, Australia*

The "Expert view" column presents a wide range of topics offering valuable insights and information for customers.

edge:

Tell us about your career in the claims industry.

Diego:

I began my career working for a law firm that specialized in personal injury losses and later became a loss adjuster. I have worked in the loss adjusting industry for nearly 30 years and I have experience with large property losses and liability, and crime-related losses. In addition, when the large bushfires damaged

Canberra, Australia in 2003 and the tsunami hit Indonesia in 2004, I was actively involved in providing loss adjusting services to assist with both of these catastrophic events. In 2009, I began working for a large claims administration firm overseeing the Australian operations with a focus on personal injury claims. Later, I joined a large property loss adjusting company and now serve as chief executive officer overseeing Sedgwick's operations in Australia.

edge:

How have you dealt with the challenging conditions in the Australian market this year?

Diego:

Whilst there are current challenges within the Australian market, I believe the next decade will see a large transformation. The collapse of HIH Insurance in the early 2000s was a significant event that highlighted the need for stronger regulatory for both the Australian Prudential

Regulation Authority and Australian Securities and Investments Commission. With the Royal Commission into Financial Services in 2018, there are once again significant recommendations that will have huge impacts on both banking and insurance sectors. Some recommendations will lead to greater oversight and corporate governance heavily focused on consumer needs. Moving forward, customer satisfaction is going to be at the forefront of the financial services businesses.

We are also experiencing one of the quietest weather-related periods in the past decade and we are not seeing surges in claim volumes driven by weather-related disasters. During this time, we have an opportunity to examine the sustainability and required diversification of the business to ensure that we remain relevant into the future by continuing to understand and meet our clients' ever-changing needs. We have a great platform for sustainable and profitable growth into the future, leveraging our global capabilities that are tailored for the local environment.

edge:
The insurance market is evolving quickly; what is Sedgwick doing in Australia to stay on top of the changes?

Diego:
Insurance is evolving quicker than ever, which can be largely attributed to the ongoing advancements in artificial intelligence, automation, management information systems and robotics. As the largest claims administrator on the planet, we are well-positioned to embrace the technological changes and continue to develop innovative solutions, leveraging both global expertise and local knowledge. As a company, we aspire to innovate how we serve our clients. Sedgwick's ability to meet client needs continues to strengthen the company and drive growth.

edge:
Can you explain how these changes will add more value for Sedgwick's clients in the future?

Diego:
Our ongoing investment in technology proves we are not only deploying the best colleagues in Australia, but that our clients will also be aided by the efficiencies the modern platforms bring. The introduction of new applications

and automation means that our colleagues can perform more efficiently and focus on adding value for our clients. We will see improvements in our efficiencies and performance for insurance carriers and clients, which Sedgwick has a history of servicing with great success. Additionally, we continue to expand our service offerings in Australia and we are now able to provide services in virtually every line of business, including motor, marine, workers' compensation and life insurance.

edge:
What is Sedgwick in Australia doing to stay at the forefront of industry developments?

Diego:
We are proud to be an agile and constantly evolving business. It's imperative that we keep abreast of the latest technologies to keep us at the forefront of the profession. The future is constantly in our minds. Consequently, we sponsored Insurtech Australia when they launched and we will ensure representation at all of their events. Insurtech Australia is a national, not-for-profit organization that collaborates with insurers, startups, regulators and investors to help support and grow the Australian insurtech community.

edge:

Have you had any significant engagements with Insurtech?

Diego:

We are currently piloting and utilising robotics and automation, particularly for registration and payments. Our new platform will allow new applications to be bolted on as we move forward. In addition, we are engaging with Insurtech for digital adjusting including a remote access capability and an ongoing pilot of a quoting and measuring tool. These are part of a suite of tools that complement our new claims management systems and offer greater portability

and improved analytics, allowing us to interrogate our data, identify trends and provide additional value to our clients. We continue to make enhancements in technology to allow data to move between our systems. We are working with the international technology team on several initiatives and look forward to announcing some exciting developments this year.

edge:

What are your key objectives for the business in 2019?

Diego:

I am pleased to say that we have locked down our strategic plans for 2019. As we continue to transform, we are looking to embed the new services and products that will be offered in the future by our loss adjusters, building consultants, restorers and TPA teams. We will have a greater focus on performance improvement in those areas. Our overall plan for Sedgwick over the next few years is to grow our existing client base and core services, and to offer new services that provide added value to our customers predominately in the corporate and government sectors.

DIEGO ASCANI

Diego has over 27 years of experience in the insurance industry and he has expertise in complex property and liability claims, including construction, business interruption, third party property damage, professional indemnity and personal injury work. Diego holds Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Law and MBA degrees from Bond University. He is also an associate of the Insurance Institute of South Africa and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.
