



Committed to Success

A Conversation with Wayne Insurance Group

A good way to gauge your success is to talk with your customers. A better way is to have a third party talk to your customers. We asked O'Brien Communications Group (OCG) to talk with Tim Suppes, CIO and head of underwriting at Wayne Insurance Group in Wooster, Ohio, and to record the conversation. This is a transcript of their discussion:

OCG: When did the Wayne Insurance relationship with Finys begin?

Tim: We'd been looking for several years to replace the two legacy systems we were running for all three of our companies. We decided no matter what replacement vendor we would choose, we wanted to make sure the system was of the quality we needed. We also wanted to be sure we were able to work with the vendor, and they were able to work with us. In 2013, we selected Finys to be our replacement vendor. Since we didn't offer a business owner product at the time, we decided to use the introduction of that line as an initial project. One of the final steps in our evaluation was to choose one of our underwriters, who was a former agent. Without telling her anything about the system, we asked her to log into Finys and to see if she could maneuver through the system successfully and then provide us with feedback.

OCG: It was a success?

Tim: Yes it was. The project gave us the opportunity test the Finys policy module, as well as billing, claims, and reporting.

With the successful rollout of the business owners line, we then signed on with Finys to replace our two systems. The Finys Suite had a lot more efficiencies and capabilities than the ones we'd been using.

OCG: We've heard it said that a bad process automated is still a bad process. Did you and Finys take a look at your processes to determine what might be improved, especially as you looked to increase your degree of automation?

Tim: Yes. I tend to be a person that embraces and endorses change anyway. If we do something well, I always think we can do it better. Once we'd decided to undertake the complete legacy replacement, I cautioned our people by telling them, "We're not doing this for ourselves. We're doing this for our agents." That helped take some of the pressure off of our people, and it helped them understand the spirit in which we were undertaking the project.

OCG: We've worked with a fair number of agents. As a group, as long as they can submit business and get it bound and issued, they seem pretty happy. Did any of your agents react to the implementation of Finys?

Tim: They did. In fact, we received a fair number of unsolicited emails from agents that reinforced what we thought we knew about the system: Finys is configurable enough to let people do business the way they do business. And it's intuitive enough to make things remarkably easy.

OCG: What were some of the benefits you saw, either from the approach, from the system, or both?

Tim: The first thing we realized is that by eliminating so much of the manual work we'd been doing, our people were free to contribute to the business in more important ways — checking flagged submissions, thinking more strategically, and being able to think beyond the task-oriented boxes in which they'd been accustomed to working. The second thing we realized is that, without increasing our staff numbers, we were increasing our productivity. Even outside of the formal benchmarking we're undertaking we've seen increases in productivity of 40 percent and more, thanks in large part to the fact that our agents can be more efficient, too.

OCG: Given what you experienced in your first encounters with Finys in 2013, what made you go all in with them for the legacy replacement?

Tim: We understood pretty quickly that they were committed to doing what it took to get done what needed to be done. And they understood that every relationship takes dedication, collaboration, communication, and a willingness to work things through.

OCG: That suggests there's more to Finys than technology. Is that a fair interpretation?

Tim: I think it is. The Finys Suite is very capable, of course. But so are the people of Finys. They've been in the industry a long time. They know insurance. They understand most of the system requirements that need to be identified and defined. And for the requirements that may not be obvious, they know the questions to ask. As much as anything else, their commitment is reflected in the time they take to get it right.

OCG: If we were in court right now, we might be fairly accused of testifying for the witness. But it seems to us that Finys seems to keep itself apart from the Shiny Object Syndrome. More specifically — while their technology is solid and always evolving — it seems as if they just do what they do, they do it well, and their customers are happy about it.

Tim: Yeah. I'd have to say that's so. We needed a strong base system before we could implement or even review some of the coming changes. Finys provides us the base we need now and positions us for future trends and products.

OCG: To keep us from seeming to put any more words in your mouth, is there anything else you'd like us to know about Wayne Insurance Group and your relationship with Finys?

Tim: A system replacement is never easy, but a key is finding a partner who you can work with. It's a long-term relationship, so you need to be able to work through issues and find the right solutions. That doesn't always mean the carrier is right, since too many times carriers' staff members have limited exposure to

other ideas. Change isn't always easy, but with the right relationship a lot can be accomplished. We feel that Finys is an integral part of our team and our success.

OCG: That sounds like the way we'd all like our working relationships to be.

Tim: That's pretty much right. We were happy with our decision to work with Finys in 2013. More than five years later, we're sure that decision was the right one. And we look forward to a long, productive future with Finys.



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