

III Crosses the Atlantic

International Insurance Institute facilitated its first overseas class for Royal Sun Alliance's (RSA) Technical Academy in London, England last month. More than 100 managers from countries such as India, Sweden, Mexico, Dubai, Italy, Chile, Canada and Ireland attended the *Brilliant Claims Customer Service* session, which was taught by Dave Vanderpan, director of claims training.

Irene Bianchi, vice president of claims for RSA and a member of the global executive steering committee for the Technical Academy, said, "The *Brilliant Claims Customer Service* program was very well received by members of our claims teams from around the world. The emphasis on empathy and treating customers as you would want to be treated was something that resonated with our claims folks, whether they came from India, the UK, or Scandinavia. It was one of the key highlights of our 2008 Technical Academy."

Online Course Set for 1st Quarter

The International Insurance Institute will launch its new online program with its signature Awesome Claims Customer Service course. This course and all future ones will be viewable at IIP's web site, and most course will be approved for CE credit. Ken Sanders, creative director for the project, said, "Certainly any online version of our courses can't replace the impact that our in-person training has on a claims staff. However, for those who cannot attend the in-person training, it is a great alternative. It has all of the same concepts of our full-day courses, and they are taught by claims professionals, not actors, so the credibility remains intact.

For more information, see *The Future of Training*, located in this issue.

► NEW CUSTOMERS

We are delighted to welcome our newest members who have joined International Insurance Institute's member list, either through on-site training programs or training materials.

United States

► Publix Super Markets

Carman Davis, General Liability Supervisor

► Social Security Administration

Karen McGlothorn, HR Specialist

International Canada

Aviva Canada - *Andre Bourgie, HR Business Learning Partner*

Aviva Canada - *Angela Prashar, Sr. Manager*

Canadian Direct Insurance - *Monica Juhasz, Sr. Manager*

Allstate Insurance of Canada - *Paulette McGill, Director*

England

Royal SunAlliance - *Julie Hands, Manager*

Technical Academy - *Judith Pritchard, Manager*

Italy

Zurich Global Corporate - *Kathrin Koffel, L & D*

Newfoundland

Unifund Assurance - *Gord Pike, Corporate Manager*

Unifund Assurance - *Brian Summer, Manager*

Manager Spotlight

Grace Strahl is vice president of claims operations for Safe Auto Insurance. She began her career in the insurance industry in 1991, working part-time for an agency after school. As she puts it, "Since then, I have never left the business."



Grace has held a variety of positions in the industry, including claims adjuster, sales manager, and customer service AVP. Now as vice president of claims operations — which she assures us is her favorite position to date — she notes that the sheer diversity of the position is the best part of her job.

Just a few of her many projects include: launching a fast-track processing group; co-championing one of the company's strategic goals (service excellence); and the implementation of a new claims management system. "I have the opportunity to affect change on a daily basis across a wide spectrum of areas throughout the department," she said.

Grace attributes her success to "perseverance, ambition, and the ability to be resilient in the face of adversity." This is evident in her advice to others: "Challenge the status quo, question authority, consistently seek out ways to improve operational efficiency and ... keep your boss happy."

And happy he is. As her boss, Senior Claims Vice President Vic Johnson told us, "Grace is a major contributor to the overall success of the claims department. Her direct and honest approach to managing her team is refreshing. I can depend on her to accomplish her goals and complete major projects timely and thoroughly."

A seasoned veteran of III courses, Grace lists *Managing Change*, *Time Management for Adjusters*, *Teaching and Coaching for Claims Supervisors and Managers*, and *Time Management for Claims Supervisors and Managers* as her favorites.

Grace believes that the most important thing she has learned in her career is "There is never time to stop learning," which shows in all of the training and leadership classes she has attended. She certainly keeps herself busy learning, growing, and developing herself as a professional, which likely helped her become an officer at the young age of 30 (we weren't suppose to tell). She is quick to name her husband, Michael, as the person who has had the most influence in her career and life.

Not being a person who likes to beat around the bush, Grace is well known for her style of being clear and honest. Testimony to this is her favorite saying, "Say what you mean, and mean what you say." Well put!

After accomplishing so much in her career; Grace still finds time to enjoy gardening, reading, shopping, watching movies, and interior decorating. ■

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