

## MANAGER SPOTLIGHT

## A Promise Is a Promise

**Jack Stewart**  
**Vice President, Claims**  
**Assurant Specialty Property**

Jack Stewart, vice president, claims for Assurant Specialty Property's Property Solutions business has a distinct characteristic that sets him a part from other claims managers: he believes in continuing education, not only for his subordinates, but for himself as well.



Jack began his insurance industry career in 1984 and joined a forerunner of Assurant – American Bankers Insurance Company of Florida -- in 1987, where he remains today. Just as everyone else in the industry, he had to climb the ladder, starting at an entry-level position as a field staff adjuster. From there he moved up to senior field staff adjuster, manager and ultimately director. Having

started at the bottom, working his way up has been a learning experience for him and has peaked his interest in learning what his field adjusters are being taught today in training courses.

Anyone can see how much Jack loves what he does. "In my claims organization, I'm known as the 'Claims Guy' rather than the vice president," says Jack. "I am viewed as being a part of the group. I am never above learning. If my team has an opportunity to attend a class, then I try to schedule and attend that class with them. Managing a staff of over 225 in 30 states that serves all 50 states and Puerto Rico, who handle automobile, renters, mobile home, lease and homeowner claims gives plenty of opportunities for education."

When asked what he likes best about his current position, Jack responds, "Assurant Specialty Property's board members all contribute toward fulfilling the promise we make to our clients and their custom-

ers when they purchase a policy. That promise is just that — a promise — until the customer files a claim. Property Solutions Claims is responsible for keeping that promise once the claim is filed, and we are committed to delivering on that promise. I am in a unique position where my daily charge is to positively impact people's lives while also having an impact on the Property Solutions business. Between the people of my organization and the policyholders, there is an opportunity every day to provide extraordinary customer service. At Assurant, PSC has the vision to become the industry leader in claims service by making our customer a partner to the claim and continuously exceeding their expectations."

What has influenced Jack to take this approach and have this attitude toward the claims industry? "I have been fortunate to have had many valuable mentors in my personal and professional lives," Jack explains. "I have yet to meet a person that I

## TRAINER OF THE SEASON

## Whose Responsibility Is it Anyway?

**Jane Ische**  
**Manager of Claims Training/Quality**  
**United Heartland**

An important characteristic for any claims professional is responsibility. As claims professionals, it is our responsibility to provide excellent claims customer service to those we've been entrusted to help, right? If Jane Ische were asked that question, the response would be a whopping YES!



Jane began her claims career in 1995 after obtaining a Bachelors of Science degree in Finance with a concentration in Risk and Insurance from the University of Wisconsin – LaCrosse. In 1996, she joined United Heartland and remains there today as the manager of claims training/quality. Jane has held many positions at United Heartland. To name a few, claim technician, claim representative I, II, & III, and sr. claim representative. As of January 1, 2008, Jane was promoted to the position of claims operation manager. This role is to oversee the training department and other key divisions in the

claims department.

When asked what she liked best about her current position, manager of claims training/quality, Jane stated that she enjoys educating new claim representatives as well as nurse case managers and that her biggest accomplishment is to see her trainees become successful claim professionals. "When a promotion has been received for someone I have trained, I certainly have a feeling of accomplishment," Jane stated.

Not only does she like to see her trainees

cannot learn something from. But if I were to single out one person who influenced me most in the business world, it would be a former CEO. He encouraged me to continuously learn and coached me in matters of communication and business organization as well as advertising my unit and their successes. He also guided me in matters of personnel issues and developing an effective team.”

Jack’s favorite quote, “There is a very natural and human inclination to seek evidence, which will support one’s first impress, rather than to look for evidence which will eventually lead to a rational conclusion,” (author unknown,) speaks to his philosophy of adjusting. “Let the evidence lead you to a proper conclusion and document the file so that it will speak for itself.”

His current ambition is to “continuously strive to provide those in my charge a safe, healthy, challenging and rewarding environment within which to work, which will recognize those who choose to grow with opportunities for growth.”

Jack’s great wisdom is truly invaluable to others in the insurance industry. “I believe a person should always give 100 percent. I do not believe that a person can give 110 percent, but if you will consistently give that 100 percent in whatever you do, you will find that you will rise above the majority of those around you. Remember your God, take good care of your body, and tax your nervous system as little as possible. Obey the laws of the land, and be strictly honest. Associate ONLY with the best people morally and intellectually, and think three times before you act once. And if you are in doubt, don’t act at all. Do not forget that ‘skill and integrity’ are the keys to success.”

*Assurant Specialty Property businesses are leading providers of creditor-placed homeowners’ insurance, collateral protection programs and related outsourcing services. They develop, underwrite, market and administer specialty property and personal lines of insurance through collaborative relationships with leading home mortgage companies, manufactured home builders and dealers, auto finance companies, property management companies and managing general agents. ■*

Consider attendance at the some or all of the following important claim conventions for outstanding informal opportunities to meet others in the industry while at the same time achieving educational objectives for state CE credits:

- Florida Windstorm conference: [www.windnetwork.com](http://www.windnetwork.com)
- ACE annual convention: [cms.nationalunderwriter.com/cms/ace/website/About+the+Event/](http://cms.nationalunderwriter.com/cms/ace/website/About+the+Event/)
- National Catastrophe Adjusters: [www.nacatadj.org/Convention08/Conv-08TopPage.aspx](http://www.nacatadj.org/Convention08/Conv-08TopPage.aspx)
- PLRB Conferences: [www.claimsconf.org/](http://www.claimsconf.org/)
- NAIIA National Assn. of Independent Adjusters: [www.naiia.com/evitem.cfm?ID=788](http://www.naiia.com/evitem.cfm?ID=788)
- III Institute Claims Education Conference: [claimseducationconference.com/2008/](http://claimseducationconference.com/2008/)

Most importantly, be sure to tie your accomplishments adequately into the information provided in your resume. During the course of interviews with many candidates, we are able to secure many valuable facts regarding their background we had no idea about based on their resume document. It is significant that you include *all* information outlining your accomplishments and the types of claims you have experience handling. Don’t assume anything. It is important that you spell out the assignments you have had, the carriers you have worked for, the carriers you have obtained claim certifications for, the estimating programs you are capable of using, the specifics on the types of claims you have handled, such as residential, commercial, inland marine, steep/two story, manufactured homes, small retail and business, condominium, and automobile losses. If you don’t tell them, you may be quickly overlooked for a “luckier” adjuster who was more thorough providing information regarding their background and what they could bring to the table.

So what will you do with 2008? Sit back and let luck and fate have it’s way with your claim-handling career, or will you too make a commitment to yourself to be more proactive in making your preparation make you the “lucky” one selected for the next opportunity you are interested in being considered for? ■

Deborah Moroy, AIC, IIA, is president of Dimechimes Corp., a nationwide claim staffing and recruiting company for independent adjusting firms and insurance carriers. She can be reached at 850-502-4261, [Dkmoroy@dimechimes.com](mailto:Dkmoroy@dimechimes.com).

succeed, but she has set some goals and ambitions of her own that she intends to accomplish. Jane is scheduled to take the 520 exam to complete her CPCU certification in January 2008. By the time this publication is released, she will have in all likelihood, achieved her goal because nothing can stop one who is as determined as Jane.

“The most important thing I have learned is that I am responsible for my success. Working hard, volunteering for extra projects and assignments, as well as continuing to educate myself has proven to be successful,” Jane exclaimed.

Jane spoke of a project which she has had the privilege of working on that is near and dear to her heart. “One of the largest projects I have ever been professionally

involved with is the development of an “Accelerated Training Program”. Together with the training specialist, Edie Schwabe, a 24 week curriculum of training for inexperienced claims representatives was designed. Our goal is to build in a quick and consistent manner competent claim professionals in order to handle the needs of the rapidly growing claims department. The program currently has eight students which balance training as well as claims handling.

Outside of work, Jane enjoys spending time with her family. She credits her husband, Dan, as the person who has had the most influence on her life. She also admits that with three small children she hardly has time for hobbies, but she enjoys playing softball in the summer. ■