

IMAGINE INSURANCE

A new player in the field

Despite the takeover of Ingle Life and Health's travel insurance portfolio by Trent Health Insurance, the Ingle name will not vanish so quickly. With Imagine Insurance, Mr. Ingle's latest enterprise, the tradition of Ingle insurance will carry on.

With the recent acquisition of Ingle Life and Health's travel insurance portfolio by Trent Health, is there still room for another player in the travel insurance market? According to Mr. Ingle, the answer is yes.

"There is room because we don't just provide travel insurance but we provide a wide range of products, including long term care... I'm not a manufacturer anymore but we're like a super MGA," explains Mr. Ingle. "We'll have specialty products, which we'll customize and sell under our name, but we'll also sell under brand names of others such as **Blue Cross** and **Liberty Health**," he adds.

In 1998, Mr. Ingle sold his interests in Ingle Insurance to a group of investors, which included **BMO Nesbitt Burns** and **Equity Partners**, who then launched Ingle Life and Health. After selling his interests, he became a consultant in Canada, but maintained operations outside of Canada. "I've done travel insurance and insurance products in the United States, Latin America, France and the UK as a consultant," says Mr. Ingle.

He further adds that his operations were based on a non-compete agreement, which according to Mr. Ingle ended early in July of 2000. Mr. Ingle claims it ended prematurely due to a breach of agreement with the individuals that purchased his family trust interest. Details of the breach of agreement were not disclosed.

Unfortunately, **BMO Nesbitt Burns** ran into a number of management issues when it became the controlling party approximately one year ago, says Mr. Ingle. "Ever since then, the company has not performed well."

As for his new enterprise, Mr. Ingle says that Imagine Insurance is not too different from what he was doing in the past. Before, he dealt with niche insurance prod-



Robin Ingle

ucts, including, travel insurance, expatriate health, student insurance and individual health and dental insurance.

"What we're doing now is that, we've made arrangements with all of the leading suppliers who are the best at each of those product lines. We're an MGA for them, we provide their products to the agents and brokers across Canada, through all our call centre groups," says Mr. Ingle.

Now with nine

A key difference is that Mr. Ingle no longer represents solely one company, instead, he now represents nine. The U.S. company **Travel Guard** as well as **RBC Insurance** and **Blue Cross** are three of the nine he now works with.

Mr. Ingle also explains that any agent wanting to sell Imagine's products can simply sign up. "We will also work with them to get more clients and loyalty programs — one of our specialties," he says.

Imagine Insurance also has an exclusive distribution agreement with the *Royal Canadian Legion*,

one of the organizations they represent. This agreement involves servicing the 500,000 members of the legion, with 1,400 legion halls across Canada.

The large organizations that Imagine represents, forces them to develop an individual system with their clients. "We need to make sure they have agents to talk to them. If they need life insurance, they need to be talked to one-on-one, it can't be done over the phone or Internet," says Mr. Ingle.

Thus, Imagine's target is to have one very good representative in each province. They are now hustling to go after 2,000 good agents across Canada and believe they will soon hit their target. "We are ready now! Our marketing people are putting the final touches on the distribution material, so we can get it across Canada," states Mr. Ingle.

Will Imagine compete with Trent?

The Trent portfolio is based on travel insurance, which is a field Mr. Ingle is very familiar with. However, according to Mr. Ingle, he is not going after Trent Health's clients specifically.

"Our approach is different. We have a system using the Internet and a wide network across Canada, so we can provide better service and a wider range of products," explains Mr. Ingle. He adds, "we have a very developed website that allows agents to do online booking... competitors don't do this, we're pretty far advanced." Mr. Ingle stresses the fact that the site should not be seen as their sole mode of operation, but rather as an added service for agents and customers.

The question now remains whether Imagine views Trent as a competitor? "We're not worried about them," states Mr. Ingle. "We will sell Trent products, if they allow us to. Right now we're selling Ingle products, which are managed by Trent. But we're coming out with our own Ingle products that are under the Ingle name," he adds optimistically. The range of products will be

under the name of Robin Ingle and can be expected to be out before January 1.

Friendly producer

Doug McIntyre, Trent Health's Chairman and CEO, confirms that Mr. Ingle will be allowed to sell Trent's products. "He has been selling Ingle, and so he is a producer with a contract and we intend to continue that," he states. Mr. McIntyre also mentions that he does not view Imagine as a competitor. "Robin mentioned he wants to sell Trent products so I see him as a business partner in producing business, and that we would provide him the products he needs to sell to clients," explains Mr. McIntyre.

Mr. Ingle revealed that he would prefer that Trent does not use the Ingle name, since he never sold the rights to it. He explains that his family allowed Ingle Life and Health to use the name but it was never a registered trademark.

However, Mr. McIntyre believes this to be a little misleading. He explains that Mr. Ingle is entitled to use his given name in business but the name of the insurance company is Ingle Life and Health. "We'll have to use the name because that's what the company is called... but over time we'll probably phase it out," says Mr. McIntyre. He adds, "as policies come up for renewal in 2002 they will not be renewed in Ingle Life and Health but in the **Sovereign General Insurance Company**."

According to Mr. McIntyre the Ingle name will remain for at least another two years to avoid public confusion. "To make it clear to the public of what is happening you need a transition period. So right now, we're Ingle-Trent, eventually we'll be Trent-Ingle and finally we'll just be Trent," he explains.

He adds that he does not want people mixing up the two Ingles, specifying that his organization is the Ingle that has been around for many years and Mr. Ingle's organization is relatively new.

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