

# GENERAL CASUALTY

## LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION

## AIRMIC. The Insurance Industry's Opportunity To Get Close To The Concerns Of Risk Managers

**James Emerton, Vice President, General Casualty, at Allied World is heading to AIRMIC this week, where he expects one of the hot topics that risk managers will be discussing is how they are coping with the newly introduced General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).**

If you are like most people I know, your in-box will have been full of emails seeking consent to continue to keep you on mailing lists. Considering the size of the fines imposed by new data protection laws, it is no surprise that compliance has been one of the biggest concerns faced by companies of all sizes. Moreover, this topic is expected to be one of the main discussion points for risk managers at AIRMIC this week.

There has been a rush to ensure businesses are compliant with the European Union's GDPR legislation, which came into force on May 25, and risk managers have not been exempt from its effects. It is fair to say there has been quite a lot of debate in business circles about which steps companies need to take to ensure they have the proper consent of people and firms whose information they hold.

### Failure to comply will be costly

When it comes to preparedness for GDPR, some companies have engaged data specialists with plenty of time, while others have been thrown into a last-minute panic as the deadline loomed. Failure to comply with GDPR can result in eye-watering fines – with penalties for breaches as high as €20 million or 4% of global turnover, whichever is the highest. It is clear, therefore, that compliance with GDPR has become a major issue, which risk managers across the country will need to address on an ongoing basis.

### It's all about relationships

GDPR is just one of a wide range of issues that risk managers are dealing with. Preparations for GDPR has been no small undertaking; as companies have had to restructure the way they collect and store data to ensure they are compliant with the regulations.

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It has also underscored just how vital it is that insurers have a deep understanding of the way their clients do business so that they grasp the complexities of the risk they are underwriting and price it properly.

This nuanced understanding of business needs can only be achieved by insurers having close and trusted relationships with their clients – to do this they need to be face-to-face with them. That is one of the reasons why AIRMIC is such an important event for insurers. It gives the industry as a whole the opportunity to spend time with risk managers and to understand the issues they are facing on a daily basis.

Due to market conditions – the ongoing soft market and the low interest rate environment – there has never been as much necessity for insurers to maintain underwriting discipline and to be diligent when selecting risks to underwrite.

The AIRMIC conference in Liverpool this week will allow the insurance industry to deepen these close ties with our clients even more to ensure the coverage we provide for GDPR and other risks is appropriate and fair.

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