

Insurance Times: Independents gain as major life insurance sales force
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HARTFORD — Captive insurance agents, long the key distribution channel for the vast majority of traditional life insurance policies, now account for less than half the premiums paid. But the big winner in the distribution sweepstakes has not been the Internet. It has been independent producers, and their control over life distribution looks like it will continue to grow enormously in the foreseeable future. This is the finding of a new Conning & Co. strategic study on the distribution of life insurance.

The Conning study, *Life Distribution Goes Independent: Succeeding in the Post-GLBA Environment*, reports that not only have the independents captured the lion's share of sales in the life insurance world, insurers now are scrambling to distribute their products through agreements with entities that only a few years ago were viewed as competitors: banks. "If you had told me a decade ago that traditional life insurers would be wooing the wire houses and banks as principal distribution channels, I would have said you're crazy," said George McKeon, assistant vice president at Conning and author of the study. "In spite of the millions of dollars spent on developing the internet as a distribution channel, actual sales have been elusive, largely because the age-old wisdom that life insurance is sold not bought continues to be proven true. The big change has been that consumers want an advisor who isn't tied to one carrier. They want an advisor who can understand their issues and can select from a variety of solutions. You might say that in life insurance, manufacturing is finally listening to sales, rather than the other way around." The study is available at www.conning.com.