



# Staying **Informed**

**SIIA FUTURE LEADERS SHARE THEIR FAVORITE PODCASTS, SOCIAL MEDIA, BOOKS, ONLINE TOOLS AND OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES**

**F**rom podcasts and social media to business books and blogs, the next generation of movers and shakers in self-insurance are pursuing multiple avenues for tracking industry developments.

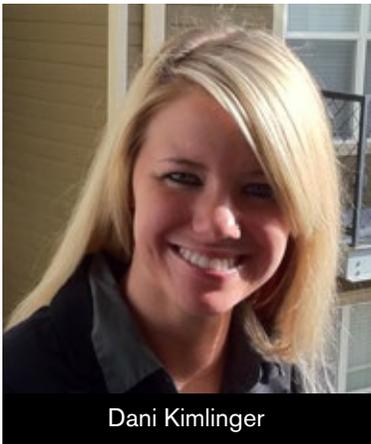
A discussion thread in SIIA's virtual national conference lounge featured some fruitful suggestions when Cassandra Van Dyke, director of sales for INTERLINK COE Networks & Programs, asked fellow members of the Future Leaders group how they best learn more about what's happening across the industry.

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Written By Bruce Shutan

Members of the group, who will be logging in for a virtual event this month, regularly tap scores of helpful resources that they're more than happy to share with their peers. Apart from SIIA gatherings, Canoe and this magazine, there's a seemingly endless stream of source material.

"I don't have any friends or colleagues that I'm aware of that watch the nightly news per se, but we're all pretty informed," observes Dani Kimlinger, Ph.D., CEO of MINES & Associates. The key to millennials tracking the latest news and trends is a multi-pronged approach that includes a targeted mix of news outlets, terrestrial radio, podcasts and social media.



Dani Kimlinger

Her own preferences include Up First, a podcast of 10 minutes or less that she likes to listen to in the morning, or any of the National Public Radio (NPR) stations – both of which deliver content quickly. Kimlinger also taps Twitter and various outlets for news about health care and other topics. “I can just tell by the title if it’s something I’m interested in, and then look into it further,” she explains.

Few people age 40 or younger are as resourceful as Elliot Meena, VP of Ansley Capital Group, for whom there’s a bevy of

material to stay plugged into industry developments and the business world in general. He stays in tune with the Health Care Administrators Association and subscribes to Ernie Clevenger’s weekly newsletter, MyHealthGuide, describing it as “a summary or snapshot of what’s been going on at a high level!”

In the past year, Meena started listening to more podcasts, as well as NPR, *The New York Times* and its podcast known as The Daily, which he said does a good job on health care legislation. Another favorite of his is FiveThirtyEight, a website that focuses on opinion poll analysis, politics, economics and sports blogging.

“Those all give you some sort of relative quick turnaround on a topic, depending on the subject you want,” he notes. “Those are the kind of voices I would like to go listen to if I thought maybe there was something to be said about what happened yesterday or this past week’s events.”



Elliot Meena

**AGGREGATING NEWS TO USE**

Tools that aggregate news that young industry practitioners can use also have proven to be extremely palatable. Google Alerts narrows relevant information for Raena Chatwin, operational systems manager and provider relations supervisor for MINES &

Associates, who says it helps give her “a little head start without having to do too much research and remember to check in on new ideas that are coming up.”

At first, she began searching for content that was related to her company or clients before expanding the fields of information to include key words such as EAP, telehealth, behavioral health, telepsychiatry and work comp that would potentially have an impact on her slice of the self-insurance industry. Then Chatwin was able to dig deeper into her firm’s area of expertise by discovering very helpful news she could actually use.

One such scenario involved new guidelines from the American Psychological Association allowing state lines to be crossed based on state licensure when providing services in certain instances. “That wasn’t even something I had really looked into or thought about how you might utilize that in this world of today where everything is telehealth,” she says. “It wasn’t until I saw a Google Alerts article that really kind of made me go, ‘let me look into this more.’”

It was through this handy tool that Chatwin discovered a new national tele-behavioral health company that she approached about helping her firm provide services. Google Alerts also familiarized her with new rules and

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guidelines around behavioral health treatment approved in the work comp arena that could be used to forge partnerships to improve tele-behavioral health network offerings or needs around treatment for claimants.



Jeremy Kemper

**POPULAR PODCASTS**

Another increasingly popular source of information and entertainment is the podcast, which fuses part of the word broadcast with one of Apple’s products, the iPod. Jeremy Kemper, former director of sales for Verikai, recommends three standout podcasts.

One is ShiftShapers, a weekly show with David Saltzman, which as the name suggests, showcases transformative shifts in the employee benefits industry that are then shaped into new business models, products and best practices.

“I like his approach. He just cuts right in,” he says, noting Saltzman’s years of experience in the field. Although the podcast hasn’t been focused on health insurance as of late, Kemper notes that “there are good guests on there, and he does a great job with the types of questions he asks.”

Craig R. Clemente, chief operating officer for Specialty Care Management, is also a big fan of the ShiftShapers podcast, which featured him as a guest. “I was excited to be asked to be on it because I was already a subscriber,” he reports. “David brings a unique perspective in that he’s a former TPA guy, and because of his interaction with the marketplace on a weekly basis, he gets to understand the trends and pulse of what is important to speak about in the moment”

The host’s strong suit is interviewing, as well as providing a great breadth of subject matter and different components of the self-insurance marketplace, according to Clemente. That includes a fairly technical and granular discussion, as well as keen insight, into some market segments that his peers don’t interact with on a daily basis. The result is authentic answers to off-the-cuff questions compacted into about 20 minutes, which he says fits nicely into the lives of busy professionals.

Another favorite podcast for Kemper is Trendbreakers by Steve Watson, whose guests impart in-the-trenches wisdom on benefits, human resources and finance topics. An underlining theme, he explains, is to help employers “understand the power of moving to self-insured” from thought leaders with “various perspectives on different angles of the market.”

A third show he likes is called A Healthy Dose of Dialogue by Don Antonucci. Although there are fewer episodes than other podcasts, Kemper says there are “some interesting guests on there with fresh perspectives” who “engage in healthy

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Raena Chatwin

dialogue about transformative marketplace trends and industry insights... It's more about the macro view of the market. That's what I listen to it for."

LinkedIn is another favorite spot for Kimlinger to track good content that people in her network don't necessarily produce but share. Her colleague, Chatwin, is part of a self-insured roundtable group on LinkedIn and recalls how it recently resolved a dilemma. "Someone was asking about a solution for providing telehealth services when telehealth wasn't covered by most

work comp," she says. The suggestion was to have the client go into their doctor's office and have a psychiatrist or psychologist call during the in-person appointment so that the service could be delivered virtually.

## THE BEST BOOKS

One popular book that resonates with Meena is "Never Split the Difference" by Chris Voss and Tahl Raz, which he consumed in an audiobook format. "That I think is how many people get their resources nowadays," he says. It was co-written by a former hostage negotiator who applies his tactics to business, teeming with examples that he notes "walk over the line, so to speak, of what it is like to transfer a negotiating

tactic from a hostage situation into a negotiating tactic to a business situation."

An equally compelling book that helps explain the nation's health care system, "An American Sickness" by Elisabeth Rosenthal, made a meaningful impression on Tyler Benware, an account executive at Verikai. The author's background in medicine, research and journalism offers a unique perspective.

"If we're ever going to fix healthcare, we have to know the history of why it's broken and the forces that are really perpetuating some of this brokenness," he opines. "I think Rosenthal does a really good job of that, and then points out some really practical areas of improvement."



Tyler Benware

## CONVERSATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AND MENTORS

Apart from tapping a steady flow of material, Benware believes one of the best industry-specific resources is talking to underwriters, actuaries and brokers. Many of these conversations moved online because of the pandemic, and he learned quite a bit from "understanding what everyone's doing, the challenges that they're facing day-to-day and some



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of the things they're looking forward to this year, 2022 and beyond."

Clemente thinks his peers have adjusted well to a good deal of the light interaction on some Zoom or other video calls over the past year in working from home, though he laments an inability to "feel like you have your finger on the pulse of what's happening on a daily basis." Even in spite of these challenges, he has met with more people during nearly a year of pandemic lockdowns than at any time in his 15-year career. Chief among them: many brokers and TPAs.

"You really do get a feel for what's going on out there in the world," he reports, "and then just in our normal, everyday interactions, we get a pretty good feel for what's making the market tick, where are those pain points and positives are, just from all the constant interaction that we are having."

Indeed, there's no substituting for the human touch in gaining a better understanding of the industry as a whole. "I'm not the TPA or MGU, but I can work with all of them, so learning the lingo for six different company types is a lot easier to pick up and make sense of it," Van Dyke notes. "For us kinesthetic learners out there, we like to be hands-on in the conversation vs. reading it."

She also encourages millennial colleagues to absorb the institutional memory of mentors, and in the process, lessen or shave steep learning curves. She noticed at a recent SIIA event how someone estimated the self-insurance industry's average age to be 58 or 59 years old.

"That's why we keep asking for different kind of educational resources, so that when we do go up to the Carol Berrys, the Steve Resnicks, the Julie Wohlsteins, we're not just asking from scratch," she says. "We are able to listen to podcasts and tap other sources, and feel like we can contribute to the conversation." ■

Bruce Shutan is a Portland, Oregon-based freelance writer who has closely covered the employee benefits industry for more than 30 years.

The focus on providing more resources for younger SIIA members will be showcased as part of the association's Future Leaders Summit, a Connect from Anywhere (CFA) event, scheduled for April 20-22, 2021. Details can be accessed at [www.siiia.org](http://www.siiia.org)