

# Wanted: Agency Owners in Larger Markets Throughout the U.S. Who Are Entrepreneurs and Strategic Thinkers Wanting to Accelerate Their Growth and Build a More Profitable Client Base

## SITUATION: SOMETHING HAD TO GIVE

Eric Haglund was looking for a change. Headquartered in the Atlanta area, his employee benefits agency, Georgia Benefits, was successful. He was thrilled with his ever-growing client list and pleased with his office and staff. But something had to give.

With customer accounts on the rise, Haglund was faced with hiring additional staff to service them, but the revenue just didn't justify more employees. Luckily, that's when Digital Insurance stepped in.

"My vice president and I had been discussing the time spent on our small group segment," Haglund remembers. "We knew it didn't make sense to continue selling and servicing small businesses. It was taking up the majority of our time. But we also knew we couldn't just drop a current client. Then, out of the blue, I got a call from Digital."

And the rest was quickly history. Well, actually only chapter one, which ended with Digital buying a large block of Haglund's small group business.

"It was a life-changer," Haglund says. "The sheer time I suddenly had on my hands was amazing."

Haglund's time, however, quickly vanished and was soon filled with bigger and bigger group clients. This was a good thing – actually great. And then, just months later, Digital Insurance went back to Haglund, wanting to take the relationship a step further.

## AT-A-GLANCE

<b>Company</b>	Georgia Benefits
<b>Business Lines</b>	Group and individual health, life, disability and qualified retirement services
<b>Location</b>	Lawrenceville, Ga.
<b>Established</b>	1988
<b>Size</b>	Serves over 300 local businesses and hundreds of individual clients

### Partnership:

Digital Insurance has aligned with Georgia Benefits, buying all of the business and hiring the agency owner as a Digital employee to continue to serve as a V.P. producer.

### Primed for Success:

- With an expanding client list, Georgia Benefits recognized it couldn't grow with all the time spent on its small group segment
- However, the agency also recognized that it couldn't just drop its current smaller customers
- By aligning with Digital, the agency owner is now able to do what he does best: get agents of record, write new business and design new benefits packages for 50 to 200 life groups

### Bottom Line:

Today, well-capitalized insurance agencies, like Digital, with scale, operational efficiencies and a strong value proposition, are aligning with community based agencies looking to accelerate their growth. Soon, successful agencies will need to be true health care reform experts. Digital already is a benefits-related health care reform authority – and is well equipped to deliver the best customer solutions available in the marketplace.

## SOLUTION: ENTER DIGITAL INSURANCE'S AGENCY ACQUISITION BUSINESS MODEL

This time, instead of buying just a block of business, Digital was interested in aligning with Haglund and buying all of his business. Digital was also interested in hiring Haglund as an employee to continue to serve as a producer. Enter chapter two: Digital's 'agency acquisition business model.'

Digital's strategic venture focuses on a convergence taking place in the insurance distribution space. Today, well-capitalized insurance agencies with scale and operational efficiencies are teaming with community based agencies looking to accelerate their growth. Digital's agency acquisition model does just that.

"Our acquisition model will propel us – and the local agencies we align with – into the next phase of business growth," predicts Adam Bruckman, president and CEO at Digital Insurance. "Looking forward, successful agencies will need to operate efficiently and be true health care reform experts. Digital is both and is well equipped to deliver the best customer solutions available in the marketplace. Our people, processes, technology and acquisition partners will accelerate our expansion and profitability."

"The merger with Digital was close to a done deal, but the new health care reform scenario cemented my decision," Haglund comments. "I was scared, but Digital is uniquely qualified to survive – and prosper – in what I call the perfect storm. They're on top of things."

And so, Haglund's chapter two was written.

"Our goal is to find and align with other top-performing agencies in communities throughout the country," Bruckman continues. "Agencies like Eric's – and now Summit Benefits, headed by Jeff Scheiderman in St. Louis, Mo., which we've more recently acquired – understand health care reform will bring changes to our business. And these changes provide fantastic growth opportunities."

Digital Insurance is targeting agency owners in larger markets throughout the U.S. who are entrepreneurs, strategic thinkers and want the time to build more profitable accounts.

"We're looking for true producers who want to stay in business together for at least the next 10 years and who are highly competent at sales in the 50 – 200 life group," says Mike Sullivan, Digital's executive vice president and

chief marketing officer. "Aligning with us is definitely worth considering. As a team that fosters collaboration and innovation, we provide agency owners with the needed resources to grow organically, make money and even protect from commission tiering – or commissions possibly disappearing altogether."

"This is truly a win-win for everyone involved," Bruckman adds. "Agents secure a cash infusion during a time of industry and economic uncertainty, their customers receive enhanced services and Digital obtains a leadership position in key communities."

"In the few months I've been with Digital, I already know I made the right decision," says Haglund. "I'm glad to be part of this winning team."

Beyond agency acquisitions, Digital will continue to concentrate on its other distinct revenue channels: broker partnerships, block acquisitions and organic sales.

"I'm extra impressed with the people at Digital," Haglund shares. "Each person I've encountered there has a great attitude, is a go-getter and really positive and motivated. Digital is open to ideas, proactive and always wants to make things better."



### IN THEIR WORDS

"It's a great fit. Digital has the size, resources and power to be attractive to any producer, especially in today's complex health care reform environment. Before doing this deal, I actually called two of the biggest national carriers to see what they thought. I was told 'you're nuts not to.' Both of the carriers said the same thing: "Every company has its pros and cons – but honestly, we can't identify a con when it comes to Digital Insurance."

Eric Haglund  
Owner of Georgia Benefits

