

Insurance Brokers Association of Canada

CARRIER JOINT MARKETING

NORTHBRIDGE

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What is Broker Connectivity?

Broker Connectivity transforms how we do business through seamless integration with broker management systems (BMS) utilizing CSIO (Centre for Study of Insurance Operations) data standards. This connectivity ecosystem enables brokers to receive real-time responses and quotes for small business directly within their BMSs, enhancing efficiency and streamlining workflows.

What are the main benefits to brokers of a connectivity solution?

It's FAST[er]: We know that in small business, responsiveness and speed to quote wins the business. Connectivity delivers real-time responses for P&C submissions. If the submission doesn't qualify for a real-time quote and needs the attention of an underwriter, the broker will get faster responses because the connectivity integration has sped up our processes. And, we have strategically designed our solution to ensure that all small business submissions received through this workflow to Northbridge receive priority service. That means that these submissions will be quoted quicker than emailed submissions; some will be quoted in real-time!

It's ACCURATE: Each and every time customer information is re-keyed, it introduces the chance of inaccuracy. By eliminating re-keying of data into multiple systems – by both brokers and underwriters – a connectivity solution naturally improves accuracy and efficiency. Brokers also get certainty for their customer with a full, bindable quote – not just a price indication.

It's EFFICIENT: This is not a company portal and the main benefits to brokers include being able to work in their own BMS. Real-time connectivity eliminates re-keying into insurer portals, saving brokers time and making it easier for them. They will always receive submission responses in real-time so they will know if it's been quoted, declined, or needs further review by underwriting instantly. Brokers who have been using it over the past year have told us that it's gives them on average a 30% time savings.



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Are there any misconceptions about real-time connectivity that you'd like to clear up?

Sometimes we hear it referred to as a portal. It's not. It provides choice.

A portal makes you enter submission information into an insurer's system and only gives you access to one market. We know that's not a great user experience. That's why rather than building a portal, we listened to the broker community and invested in a connectivity solution that puts quoting in broker hands—directly from their BMS.

A real-time connectivity solution offers choice of multiple insurer markets. Our connectivity to Applied's PolicyWorks system using APIs provides brokers with access to multiple insurer markets, so that they can market business as a broker should and provide their customers with choice.

It's also not an aggregator.

Unlike an aggregator which allows a consumer to get a price indication online, real-time connectivity improves the way that brokers service their customers – providing the necessary advice and choice.

There are rumours that it's not secure.

Real-time API data integrations are not new and are not unique to Northbridge. EDI, or electronic data transfer, is an earlier format of API and has been in place for decades, used extensively in Personal Lines.

We are confident in the confidentiality and integrity of the connectivity API solution. We were independently verified by CSIO and achieved the CSIO API Security Certification in 2024. Achieving this certification was important for us to be able to demonstrate to the broker community the robust security of this way of doing business.

Is there anything else that you think brokers would find interesting?

It helps brokers to compete.

Real-time connectivity provides a unified set of information for all insurers who have invested in this technology, streamlining the application process for brokers. This eliminates guesswork and is particularly beneficial for newer commercial lines producers, ensuring accuracy and confidence in their work.

In today's competitive small commercial space, real-time connectivity is crucial for enhancing customer service. By enabling faster service, it significantly improves the customer experience and empowers brokers to remain competitive.