October 2026

Deepening Relationship Series, Volume 2:

Creating Value Between Business Insurance Carriers and Buyers

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What We Did

- 10 in-depth interviews, 30 minutes in length, September 2026
- Business insurance decision-makers: **7 small** (<50 employees), **3 mid-sized** (50-850 employees)
- Mix of industries, region, business tenure, business owner age/generation
- Mix of insurance products owned: (e.g., BOP or GL/property, workers compensation, professional liability, commercial auto, cyber liability)
- Primarily agent buyers; mix of carriers

Thank you to our partners at **Optima Research Group** for their support with sourcing and recruiting participants

Business insurance buyers are skeptical about value…

1

Am I truly covered?

Buyers hope they are covered for most risks but are not sure. They don't fully understand…

- Insurance terminology
- Coverage and exclusions
- New and emerging risks, especially cyber-related

2

Why is this so difficult?

These buyers are largely "set it and forget it" with business insurance.

However, their few touchpoints are often friction-heavy, especially during:

- Purchase and enrollment
- Audit
- Claims
- Renewal

3

Am I just a number?

Carriers are largely invisible to buyers, especially agent buyers.

- They do not feel cared about, seen, or proactively thought of.
- Buyers would welcome a stronger connection with carriers, especially with customized recommendations.

Carrier Opportunity

Educate me | **Make it easy** | **Get to know me**

Agents and brokers are filling the relationship gap

> *Our agents know us, we know them. They're really good at their job. They do a good job of communicating between us and the insurance, when we're working through an audit or a claim.*
> *(Construction/contractor, Small)*

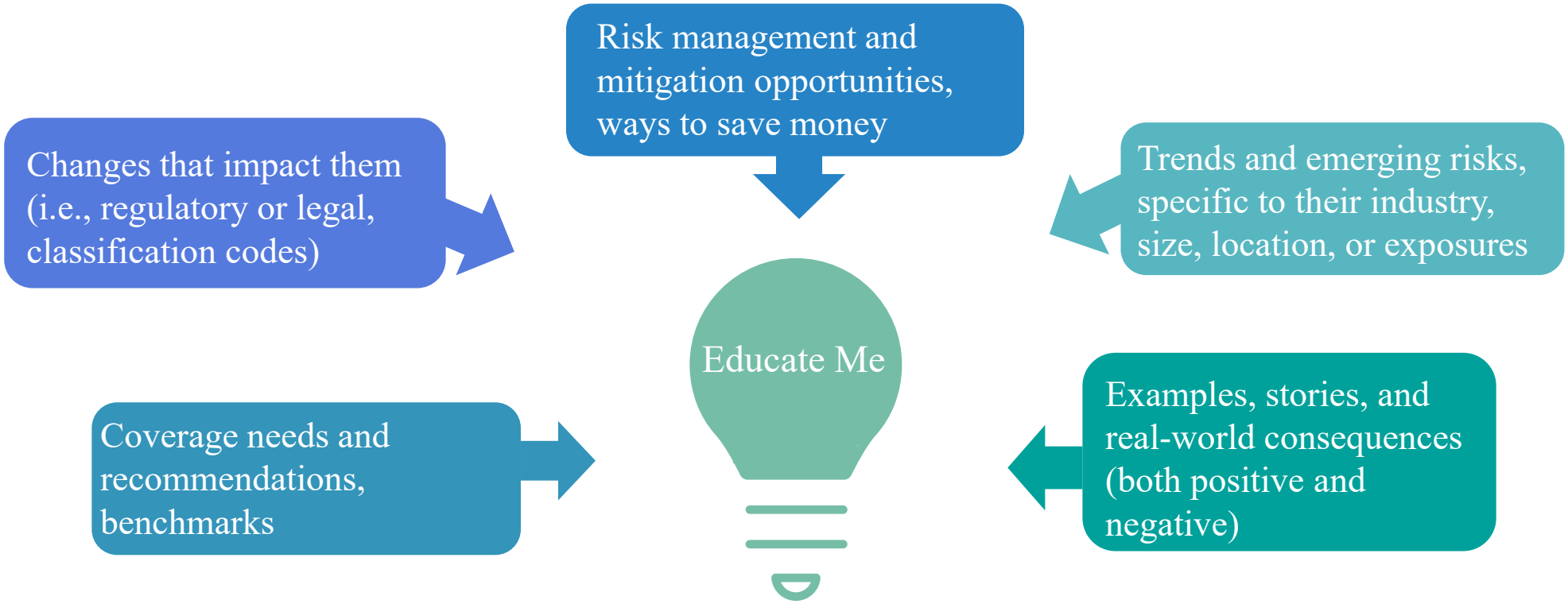
Buyers **do not want to spend much time** on insurance. Leveraging an agent means **one fewer task** on their lengthy to-do list.

Agents and brokers provide a **single point of contact**, **consultative sounding board**, and **sense of partnership**.

However, buyers want **carriers to play a bigger role**...

Educate me

Buyers welcome *relevant, specific education* that helps build their confidence



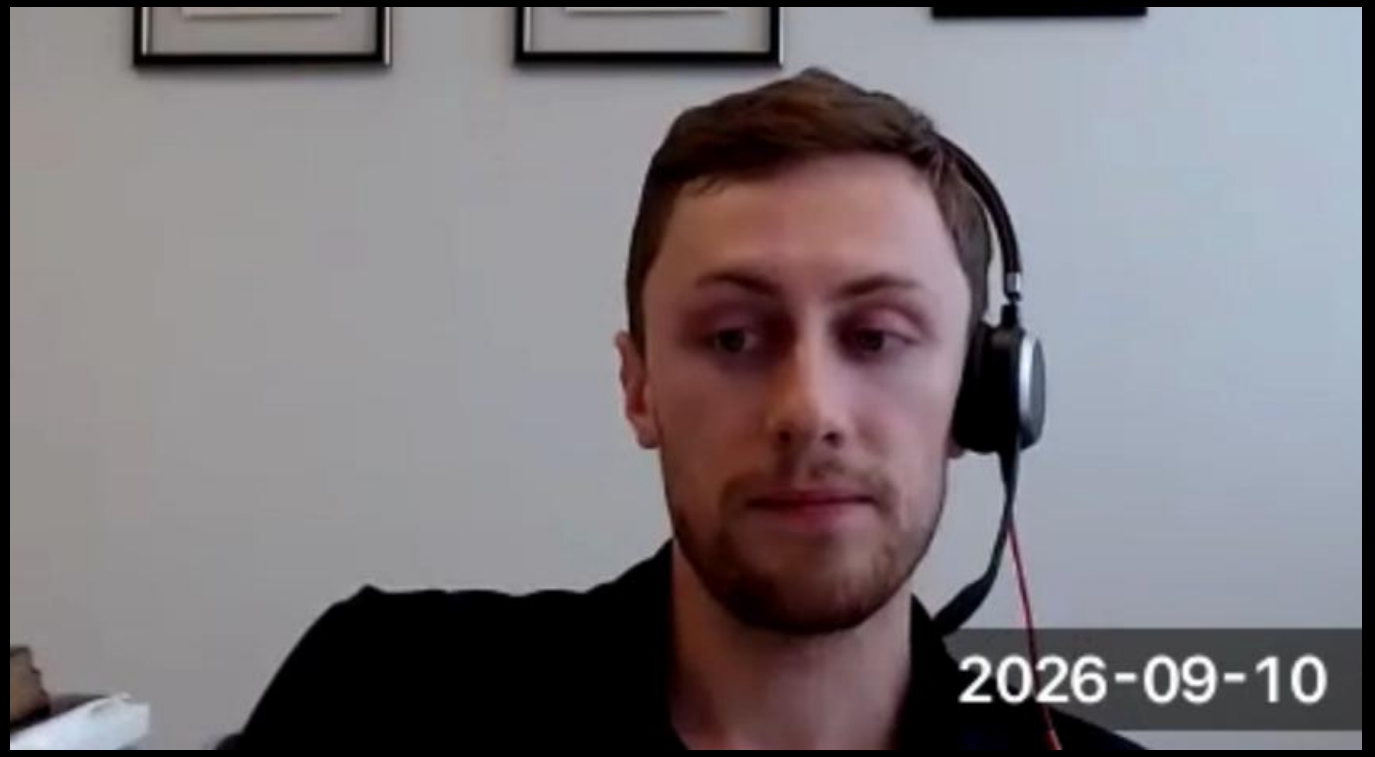
Opportunities: Cyber, property, workers compensation, specialty lines

Educate me

"The one that I always get a little confused on is the cargo. We're a retail company, and so it's always interesting trying to figure out, who our vendors are, where they're coming from, are they taking responsibility for the transit, or if we are." (Retail, Mid-size)

"Especially in cyber. Stuff is happening all the time. It changes daily. The scammers come up with new ideas faster than we can react to them." (Manufacturing, Mid-size)

Educate me



(Professional Office, Small)

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Strike a balance: empowering, not overwhelming

Educate me

Buyers Are Looking For:

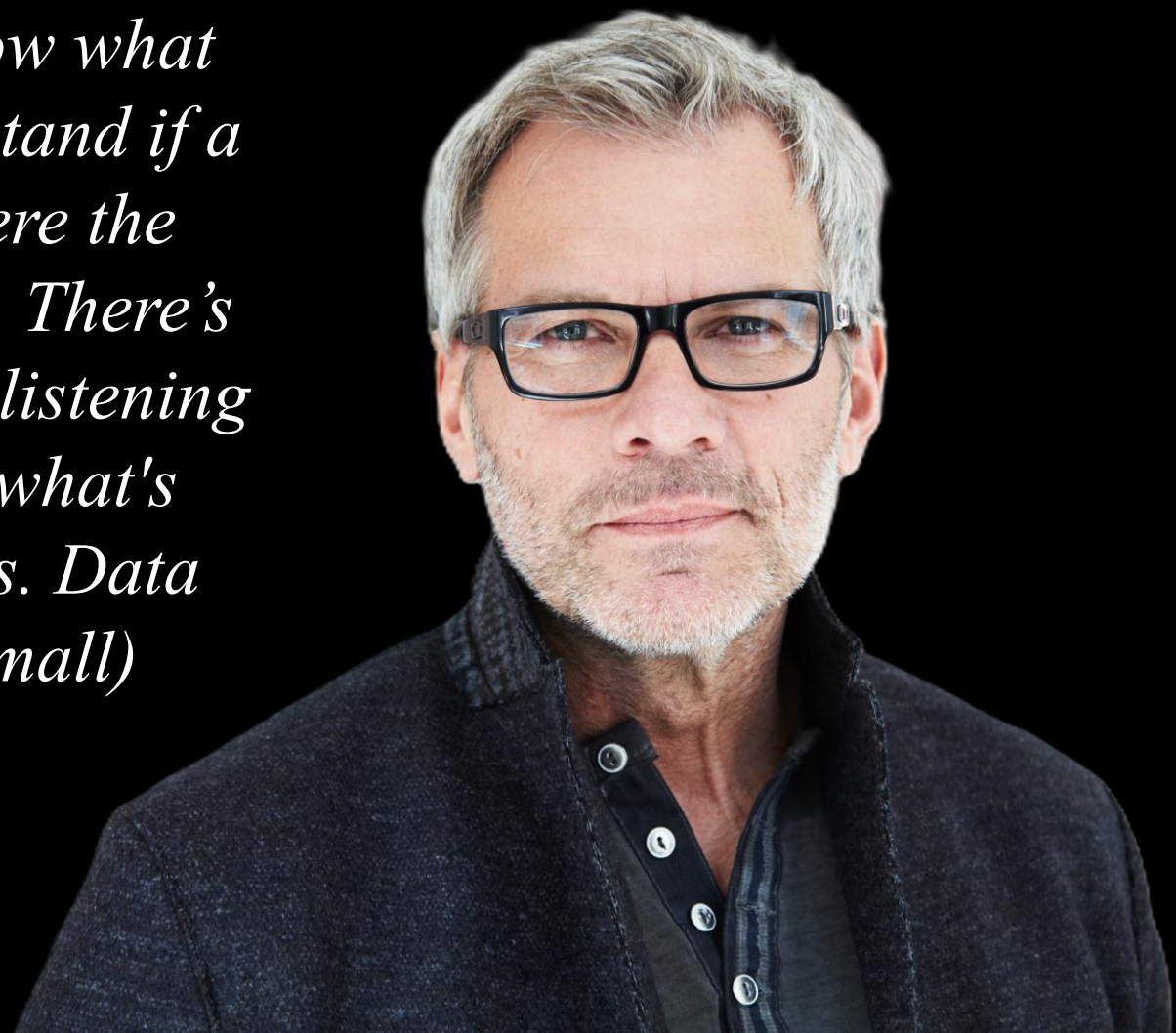
- Consistent communications
- Newsletters, webinars, videos
- Shareable, regardless of format
- Relevant, targeted topics (“businesses like mine”)
- Clear benefits (e.g., saving money, safety)
- Layperson’s terms
- Concise, not wordy

Other business partners do this well...

> *“A weekly or a monthly newsletter as to current issues in the industry. My CPA firm, I get weekly tax issues, which are really insightful. Something like that would be useful. Highlights of what's going on and things you can do to protect yourself.” (Hospitality, Small)*

Educate me

"A job site or an office visit would be a nice touch. That would reconnect people.. I have employees who don't know what GL stands for. They don't understand if a claim was to occur. That's where the biggest value could be provided. There's nothing better than sitting down listening to a seminar to better explain what's covered with concrete examples. Data would help." (Real Estate, Small)



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Stress-free experiences build trust; friction makes buyers feel disrespected

Purchase — Choosing coverages/products, limits, and add-ons is overwhelming, especially for direct buyers

Renewal — Lengthy renewal process and surprises at renewal cause frustration.

Claims — Speed, transparency, a clear point of contact, and perceived fairness reduce buyer stress.

Audits — A simple, stress-free process is differentiating. Mistakes and extra steps diminish carrier value.

> *Their claims process has been really easy. They've been very communicative. I've had that not be the case before.. it felt more personal because [of] your assigned agent. Here's the update. Here's the nurse. That is really nice and makes for less surprises. (Construction/contractor, Small)*

Make it easy

(Real Estate, Small)

Buyers are unaware of carrier technology, or think of it as outdated and cumbersome

Buyers want carrier tech to offer:

- ✓ Easy navigation with a modern, intuitive design (including mobile device optimization)
- ✓ Unique capabilities, especially if the buyer already has access to a broker portal
- ✓ Specific user benefits (not just "pushing work" back to the customer with self-service)
- ✓ Security, especially if AI is used
- ✓ Ability to customize based on buyer preferences and experiences

If implemented well, technology can reduce friction

Current carrier portal use is limited, but buyers would like a portal for:

- Billing (including renewal pricing)
- Certificates of insurance
- Reviewing coverage/renewal details
- Claims and audit reporting, status, and handling, if a person is also involved

> *I did hear that our insurance company has a portal. It's never been offered to us directly nor through our agent. It sounds interesting. Not just for bill payment, but for knowledge access, or anything we might be missing. (Life Sciences, Mid-size)*

> *I would want to add that, billing and tracking. I can't tie the policies to the renewal pricing. They could get a better system. (Hospitality, Small)*

AI can empower buyers to self-serve, if it is accurate, seamless, and secure

> *An AI agent or something. If we were able to quickly, say, 'This is the project, this client, standard coverage,' and 30 minutes later we have what we need. That would be okay as long as it was correct. It would be problematic if we requested that certificate of insurance, we sent it to the client, and the client responds, 'This is wrong.'" (Professional Office, Small)*

> *If there was some way to quickly log in, type an issue and it pops up, like AI is doing with your searches, that would be a nice benefit. (Hospitality, Small)*

Buyers are open to AI interactions if they save time and stress:

- Searching for policy information in layperson's terms
- Pre/auto-filling forms
- Generating certificates
- Classifying employees
- Automating routine requests
- Question assistance and problem resolution

Make it easy

(Retail, Mid-size)

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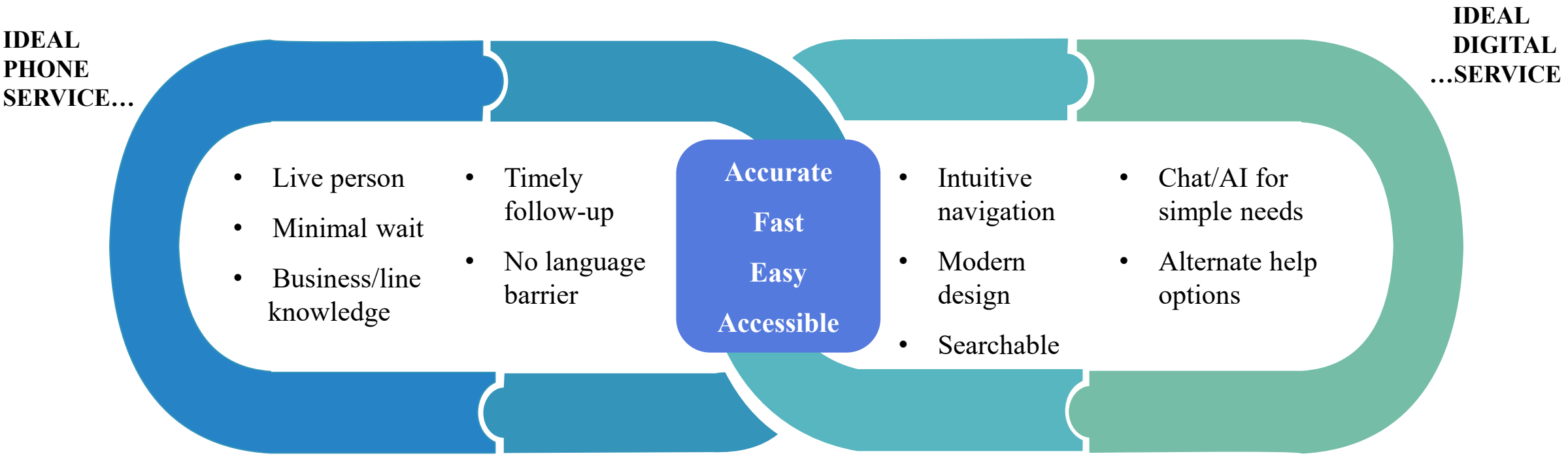
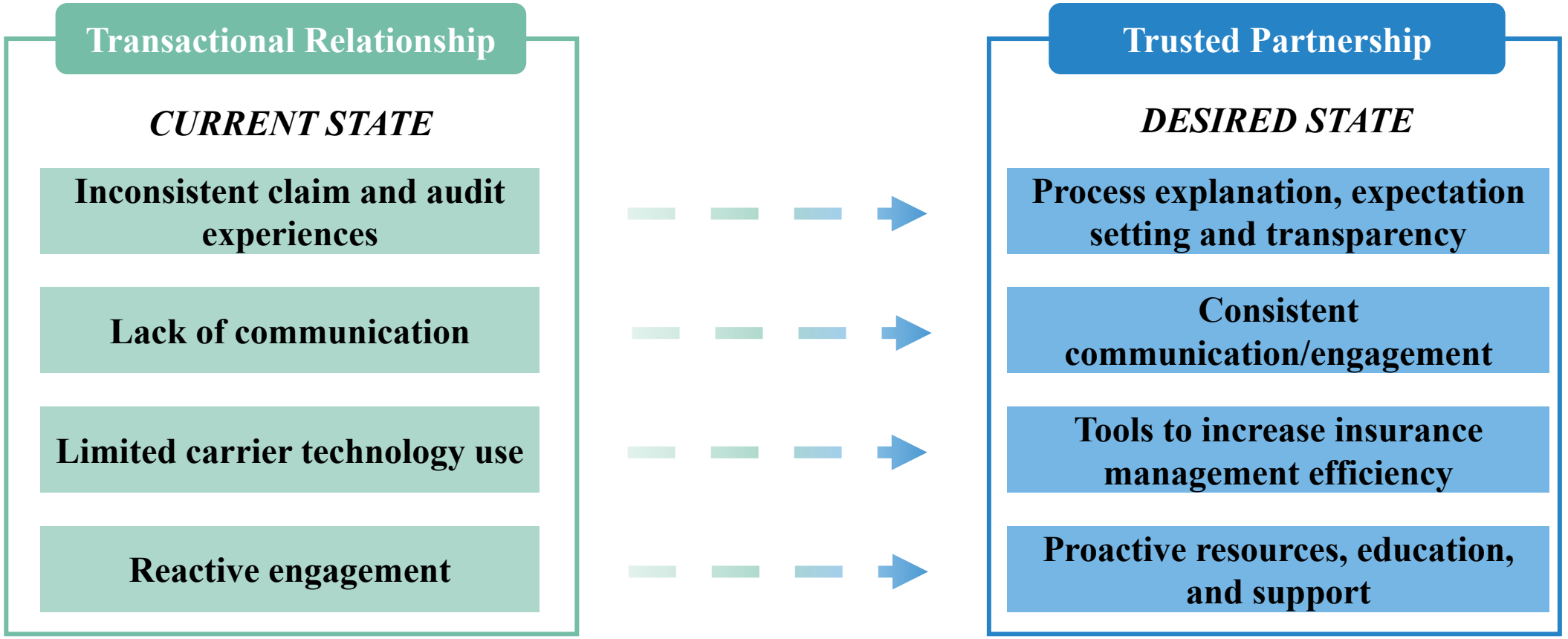
However, AI should supplement, not replace, the personal touch



The most important thing is customer service. I want somebody who answers the phone. I don't want to spend 10 minutes going through an automated system. I'm very accepting of AI. I don't want it to be the thing I have to talk to when I call." (Retail, Small)

Shifting from transactional to consultative can differentiate insurance carriers



Get to know me

(Hospitality, Small)

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Choose strategic touchpoints to add value

Consumers do not want constant contact with their insurance carrier, but more proactive, strategic outreach would add value

Additional relationship-building opportunities

- **Pre-renewal check-ins and coverage reviews**
- **Risk management consultations (virtual or in-person)**
- **Online training and tools:** HR policies, avoiding lawsuits, driver safety, cyber safety
- **Additional services, possibly for a fee:** cyber network monitoring, telematics

Get to know me

"It's great when they have safety resources. We've used those. 'Here's a draft safety manual. Here's some policies. Do you guys do this? Do you do this? Here's some training resources. Here's this online portal.'"
(Construction/contractor, Small)

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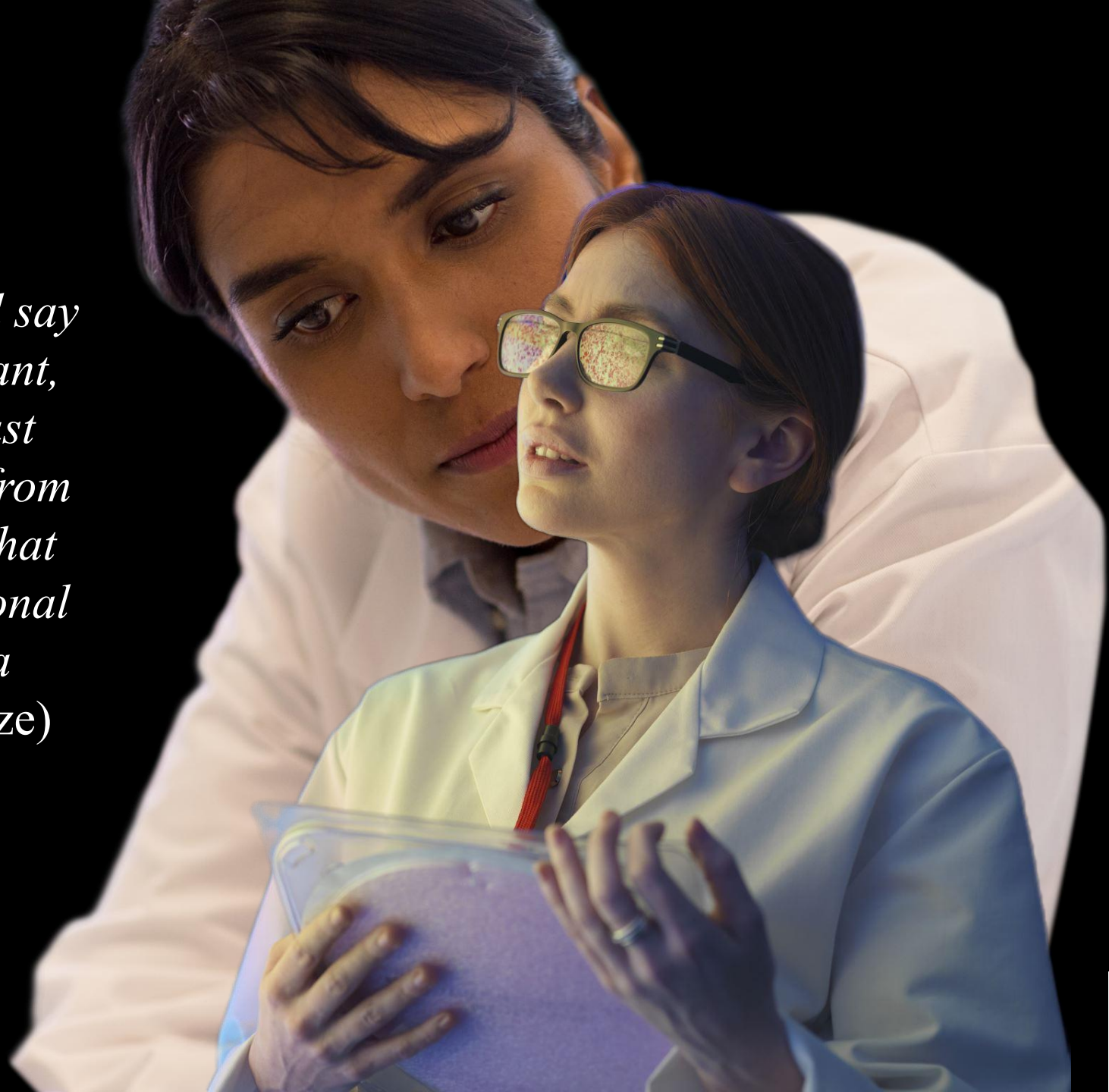
Next steps: From vendor to partner

- Become an advisor, not just a bill collector
- Proactively engage buyers and develop a relationship *before* a claim or audit, ideally with one point of contact
- Streamline processes and improve transparency
- Deliver personalized support and targeted education; leverage carrier knowledge/data to make recommendations
- Create seamless digital experiences (portals, websites, billing, etc.) and inform buyers of available tools
- Prioritize enhancing the ease of doing business, encouraging buyer participation even if they use an agent/broker

"Information is never a bad thing. I'd say bombard it because it either is relevant, sparks an idea, or we delete it or just pass it along. We don't get anything from carriers, only our broker. An email that would make us aware, 'Hey, educational seminars are available, or here's a newsletter.'" (Life Sciences, Mid-size)



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Thank you

Happy to talk more, so please feel free to reach out!

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