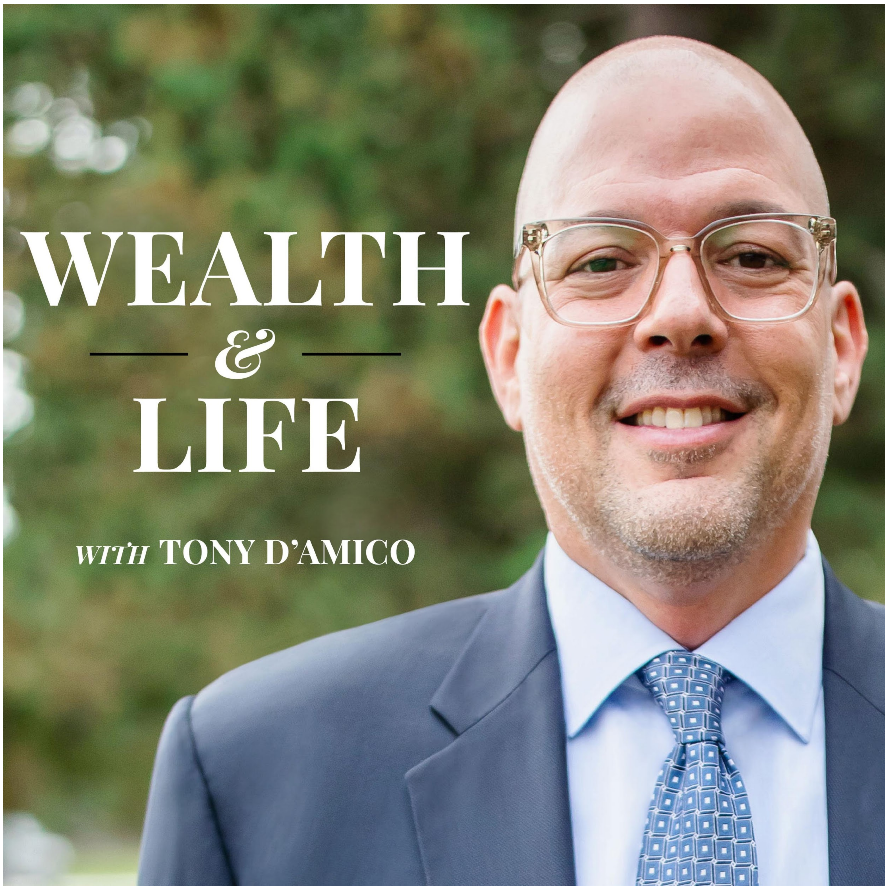
Ep #04: Personal & Business Insurance That Keeps You Protected with Michelle Hirsch



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Tony D'Amico

***Wealth and Life* with Tony D'Amico**

Ep #04: Personal & Business Insurance That Keeps You Protected with Michelle Hirsch

Michelle:

It's just really important to look at, as you grow, as the net worth grows, as the exposure grows, the awareness of who you are and what you do within the community, the risk opens up. Because if something were God forbid to happen and you or your family member were liable, we want to build a wall.

Welcome to *Wealth And Life*, where you'll learn with financial planner, consultant, speaker, and business owner, Tony D'Amico. You'll hear stories from successful business owners and individuals about how they navigated the inevitable challenges that arose as they achieved each new level of success, and you'll get insights and strategies from leading wealth planning professionals on how to achieve your next level of success. Now here's your host, Tony D'Amico.

Tony D'Amico:

Welcome to this episode of Wealth And Life. And Michelle, really glad to have you as a guest today. I think we're going to be talking about something that's really important. The families and business owners that we work with, they have done a great job saving or creating wealth and they want to protect it. So I think that's, again, a really important topic that we're going to talk about today. So Michelle, tell us a little bit about yourself and your family business and what you guys do.

Michelle:

Sure. And thank you Tony for having me here today and for being such a great partner with all of your clients. We love working with the firm. Brunswick is a third generation family owned business. I am third generation, so my grandfather started the business in the early seventies and we have grown over time to have clients in all 50 States and we have close to 70 employees here in Cleveland. And we are a property and casualty insurance broker only. So no life insurance, no health insurance. We're just really good property and casualty people. And we have several different divisions within Brunswick. We have the commercial division that works just solely on businesses and their property and casualty needs. We have a separate risk management division that is a fee based risk management. So large companies that have very large insurance portfolios or lots of claims or lots of issues, they outsource.

Michelle:

So we're their chief risk manager, if you will, but outsourced and that's on a fee base. And then we also have a surety bond division for all different types of bond needs out there as well as a professional liability division for malpractice, for lawyers, accountants, professionals such as yourself. And then we also have a separate company called trans global adjusting corporation that is a third party administrator. So for those clients that we take to self-insured program, we manage all of their claims throughout our office. And some clients, we don't manage their insurance, but we handle their claims. And then last but surely not least, which we work with so many of your clients is personal lines.

Michelle:

And that is the high end home, auto, jewelry, collectibles and personal umbrella. And we're an independent broker. So we work with over dozens and dozens of carriers across the country, all A-rated, and we get paid the same commission from everybody. So it truly is a neutral resource, neutral educational. We're all about the education and just explaining to individuals and to business owners, why do you need insurance and what is all of this and what are you maybe a little light on, where do you have too much of and how can you design this program to truly protect everything that you're working so hard to build.

Tony D'Amico:

Well that's awesome. So I know you mentioned you do personal insurance lines and business insurance lines with various different aspects of the business insurance and commercial. So let's maybe start with the personal insurance lines. And one of the things that we run into constantly is I guess we call them first generation wealth creators where they've achieved a level of net worth that should be protected. And we kind of often see through our discovery process and really taking a look at what they have now, some gaps. But talk to me about why somebody would want to do an audit of their home and auto and personal liability coverages and things like that.

Michelle:

For sure. You know, it's so interesting because you buy your first house and the mortgage company says, "Okay, show us your proof of homeowner's insurance." So you're dealing with a zillion other things while you're getting ready to buy this first house. And you say to yourself, "Insurance, okay, where do I get it? Do I use the guy that my parents used? Do I fall for the trap of one of these commercials and call Flo or one of the Green Lizard or whatever. Or do I use my neighbor or take my real estate agents recommendations?" So you kind of just fall into whatever is the path of least resistance. Who can get you this piece of paper quick enough to make the mortgage people go away, no offense to any mortgage people, but they're pretty persistent.

Michelle:

So you get this first policy and you protect your first home. And of course you have a couple of cars maybe along the way and you need to show proof of that to get off the lot. But then as the wealth grows and as the maybe assets change and you sell that house, move into a bigger home, get nicer cars, have more exposure-

Tony D'Amico:

You're still dealing with the same agent.

Michelle:

You got the same Green Lizard and that may not necessarily be the right fit. And so it's just really important to look at, as you grow, as the net worth grows, as the exposure grows, the awareness of who you are and what you do within the community, the risk opens up. Because if something were God forbid to and you or your family member were liable, we want to build a wall. We want to make sure that the insurance company is paying and you don't have to call Tony and say, "Tony, I got a problem."

Tony D'Amico:

I need a distribution from my assets or yeah.

Michelle:

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. We don't want to have to touch anything that you're working to use for many, many years from now on something fun, not on something awful.

Tony D'Amico:

Sure. So let's talk about like what are some of those maybe specific things that you see when you're reviewing policies, and there's a couple that come to my mind immediately. But tell me from your perspective, what are some of the things that you see where aren't in place? There's a couple that come to my mind immediately, but tell me from your perspective, what are some of the things that you can see where aren't in place and should be and maybe some stories to kind of talk about that.

Michelle:

Well, the carrier itself there's very different tiers of carriers. And so you have the captive carriers that the State Farms and Nationwides and Liberty mutual, where if you go to an Allstate agent, they only have access to Allstate. So it's a very limited amount of wiggle room you have when it comes to pricing and when it comes to claims management. If you're not happy with how the claim was handled, you really have nowhere else to go. These agents, they're really nice people, but they are married to the carrier that they are captive. An independent broker like us, we have options and lots of carriers to go to. And what people don't understand is that not all policies are created equal. So the State Farm policy is not the same as a traveler's policy. That's not the same as a Chubb policy. And until you really look at the 100 pages in the back, which no one wants to read because it's all technical language and very small print, you don't really understand what the differences are.

Michelle:

And so what we do is we try to peel back those 100 pages and give some real life examples of what all of this means. So for example, your home coverage. The way that insurance companies value your home is based off of replacement cost. So not how much you could sell it for if you put the sign in the yard today. But if the tornado came or the fire happened and you are staring at your lot with no structure, how much is it going to cost to rebuild that structure? And so the insurance companies, they take your square footage of your house and they multiply that by the construction costs in your zip code. And that's the number that should be listed on your policy as the replacement cost. So some people see that number and they freak out.

Michelle:

They say, "That's way too high. I could never sell my house for this much." Or some people see that number and they think it's really low because their neighbor just sold their house for three times as much. So what we try to educate and make people understand it's not market value. It's how much is it going to cost to get that contractor-

Tony D'Amico:

To actually it yeah.

Michelle:

To actually rebuild. And the definition of replacement cost is also a factor in comparing these policies because the insurance companies know that a construction project is never going to be on budget. And so they give you a little wiggle room. And in the 100 pages in the back, some insurance companies will give you the buffer of let's say 20% of your replacement costs. Some it's 50. The really good carriers offer something called guaranteed replacement costs. So we could cost five times what it says on your policy, but you have that guaranteed replacement cost. So you know that they're going to make you whole from what happened beforehand, before whatever the natural disaster or the fire happened, you're going to get back to where you were.

Michelle:

And there's a lot of other little things in that homeowner's policy that aren't so little when the claim actually happens. For example, the number, especially in Northeastern Ohio, the number one claim is the water sewer backup. So the sump pump fails or the septic backs up, or just your city's sewer system is in a horrible state of overflowing and it ends up overflowing in your basement. And to walk downstairs and not only see it, but smell it, it's a very bad situation. And so to suck all that out, to dry it out and to replace whatever's down there, not just the flooring and the dry wall, but you have a theater system, you have your furnace down there that's not turning on anymore. It can be a very expensive claim.

Michelle:

And some of the more mid tier carriers will put a sub limit just on that specific claim. I would say out of the gate, most of those carriers say $10,000 for that specific type of claim. Well $10,000 probably won't even pay for it to be sucked out and dried out, let alone replace what's ever down there. So what we find is that most clients have never gone through their policy to even see-

Tony D'Amico:

And done an audit, yeah.

Michelle:

That that $10,000 sub limit even exists. Another thing on the home policy is the cashout option. So let's say tornado comes through and you say, "I have zero interest in rebuilding. We were going to downsize anyways, or I've got the house in Arizona, or you know what, apartment living seems really nice. Or I'm just done with my neighborhood, I'm ready to move on." Some carriers will allow you to take a check for that dwelling amount. You still own the land, you can do whatever you want with it, but you have that option and that flexibility to say, "Thanks for the memories, we're moving on.

Tony D'Amico:

Just take the money and go.

Michelle:

Take the money and go. But some carriers don't allow that and they say, "If you want a dollar from us, you have to rebuild on this exact same plot of land." So it's just understanding and knowing what your policy actually is can make a huge difference.

Tony D'Amico:

Without question. And I think a key part of that is just that discovery process that we do with our clients to really know what's important to them. And sometimes they'll say things where it might point to, well yes they might want that cash out option because they already want to buy another home with a single floor master or they want to transition to South Carolina or Florida. And so that's I think really important too, is just making sure that the policy matches what they want.

Michelle:

Especially and evolving over time is the house maybe you've put more of an investment in your current house. So adding on additions, insurance company doesn't just know that you added on another 500 square feet. So keeping up to date and asking questions because a lot of agents get very complacent. They put the business on the books and then they just let it renew year after year without checking in. I think it was actually one of your clients that came to us when we were doing the review and as we were going through it, they had, there's a line item as we go through each coverage for other structures. And other structures or anything that's not attached to the home and needs to be covered with a separate limit. The insurance companies don't lump that in with your dwelling amount.

Michelle:

And they had just done either was a pool or an outdoor kitchen or something where they had put in a significant investment. And the number that was on their policy needed to be tripled to make sure that they have that right coverage. And just you take a step back and you say, "How would

I have known this if not for going through and asking these questions on a routine basis."

Tony D'Amico:

I think doing an audit is something that will, I think an important thing for us to talk about. But I think one of the other biggest things that we run into with kind of our personal wealth planning clients is that they don't have something that's very important and they just don't know about it as well. But they don't have that umbrella policy, which protects them in the case of liability. And as you know just as much as I do, if they don't have that coverage and something happens, their assets are subject to claim. So can you talk to us a little bit about what is an umbrella policy and what it covers and maybe a couple of stories that kind of illustrate why it's important to have one?

Michelle:

Sure. Absolutely. And like I said before, right, like the mortgage broker requires the homeowner's insurance. The car dealer requires the auto insurance, but there's nobody out there or requiring or talking about umbrella insurance unless they have a good financial advisor. Right? So the umbrella is additional liability that goes on top of both the home and the auto on the personal liability line. So if anyone is injured, whether it's on your property from a homeowner's perspective, in the car where it was your fault or even just if follows the person, it follows the household. So the first story I tell you which is just heartbreaking, is we have a client who the claim is still open where the son in middle school was in at school and in between classes went to his locker, and you know how lockers have those slits at the top. Someone shoved a pen into the slits. It wasn't his pen, he pulls it out. And like any normal stupid 14 year old boy, he throws it over his shoulder into the hallway and it lands in another boy's eye. Yeah.

Tony D'Amico:

Oh man.

Michelle:

And so there were cameras in the hallways and the family reviews the cameras and they see that it wasn't malicious, but it was still this kid who did it.

Tony D'Amico:

It still caused some damage.

Michelle:

And so major damage. He's now on his third surgery and the claim is still open because that would fall under his homeowner's policy because it follows the personal liability of the whole household worldwide. And so that claim itself, it's been open for three years. The reserve on the claim by the insurance company is set at $1.5 million and there's no real end in sight till we figure out what the true damages are for this boy. So it's not just in the car accident, God forbid killing the family in the minivan that is these big claims, that will result in these big claims. It's literally just being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Michelle:

And I think kids add a whole new level of risk, whether it's little babies in play dates or kids playing sports and accidents happen. And then you get into teenage drivers, which is a whole nother host of exposures. And so being able to really look at your life and how it evolves and adjusting the umbrella limit as your life evolves and your risk exposure. It's not just about protecting your net worth as your net worth grows, but it's also looking at your life and saying-

Tony D'Amico:

Potential liabilities.

Michelle:

Exactly.

Tony D'Amico:

Yeah, what areas do you have some liability?

Michelle:

Right. As soon as you get that teenage driver, I would say after you get their license, the first call is to your insurance agent to bump up that umbrella.

Tony D'Amico:

Sure. So in this case you mentioned that they had, the reserve was 1.5 million. Does that mean that they had up to 1.5 million in liability protection?

Michelle:

So it's interesting you say that. When they first came to us, they did not have an umbrella. So I think they had maybe 500,000 on their underlying policy on their homeowners. So if, I mean, after we worked with them, they added the umbrella. So right now they're out of pocket, nothing. And I think they have a $2 million umbrella. So plus the 500,000 on the underlying, right now they're protected for the first 2.5 million. Right now at 1.5 they're coming out of nothing out of pocket. If they would have not added that umbrella, and let's say that the claim settled for 1.5, the insurance company pays the 500,000 but then they have to come up with $1 million.

Tony D'Amico:

Yeah. They're going to be held liable.

Michelle:

100%. So if they can't come up with a cash, they will garnish future wages or they file for bankruptcy and this is just nothing that anyone wants to deal with. With for the, I think it was $322 we added a $2 million umbrella.

Tony D'Amico:

Yeah. And that's the thing too. It's-

Michelle:

So cheap.

Tony D'Amico:

Pretty cost effective. Pretty cost effective coverage. And I know we've talked off camera about a client that we started working with many, many years ago, but it was the same thing. They had a really decent size net worth. They didn't have that umbrella coverage. So doing that audit and then having that coverage added, I mean in this case, what ended up happening, so they were having some friends over to celebrate their retirement and it was in October, which in our area of the country can be a little bit chilly. So they had those heating towers to keep everyone warm. They were on their back patio, which wasn't fully enclosed. And one of the heating towers actually blew over and the fuel from within it unfortunately like lit one of their guests on fire.

Michelle:

It's so scary.

Tony D'Amico:

It was very tragic, very emotionally challenging situation. I guess the silver lining of it was they had the coverage in place. And without that they would have had to spend down their assets. And like you said, it's coverage that protects your household members worldwide. And that's something I think very important for our listeners to kind of absorb and think about.

Michelle:

Absolutely. Another quick story, I have a client whose college age son is in a fraternity. And the fraternity has this-

Tony D'Amico:

Is he even insurable then?

Michelle:

Yes.

Tony D'Amico:

I just want to make sure. I want to make sure.

Michelle:

I don't know about the fraternity's insurance. But so he's at this fraternity formal at a hotel and it gets rowdy and there's damage done to the hotel, like significant damage. And because his son is an officer of the fraternity, he's named in this lawsuit per the contract personally.

Tony D'Amico:

Personally. Wow.

Michelle:

And so there were a few families that whose children, whose sons were named in this policy and his insurance policy through us came to the rescue. So it just, it shows, the kid, I don't even think attended the actual event. But because he was associated and because his name is on there as the vice president of this fraternity, he was on the hook.

Tony D'Amico:

And I guess just to think about that for a minute. People work really hard at their careers and they save and they do a great job to be prepared for retirement or perhaps a business owner that does a great job building their business. They put their blood, sweat and tears and sacrificing and allow an event like this to take that all away. It doesn't really make sense, right. For when you can get coverage for hundreds of dollars that provides millions of coverage is kind of a no brainer.

Michelle:

It's a no brainer.

Tony D'Amico:

And it really just comes down to education. Wouldn't you agree? Like you said, when they come to us, they're kind of still with their first agent. And it's a very common theme with our clients as they've outgrown their previous advisors. And in this case too, they've outgrown specifically like their agent. But one of the other things too, when an independent audit is done, talk a little bit about the deductible amounts too, because that's something too very frequently we see. Okay, that makes no sense.

Michelle:

Right. Well, when you're first starting out, you think to yourself, well I want a really low deductible because if I have a claim, I don't have a whole lot of cash. So let's make my auto deductible $250 or my homeowner's deductible $500. Well now over time, clients they're liquid, they have cash. And the way that insurance companies work is anytime you turn in a claim, that information gets stored into one giant database. It's very big brother. And when we go to rate these clients, the first thing that the insurance companies do is they go to this database, it's called Clue, and they look into Clue to see what is the claim activity, because they want to understand what's the risk aversion. How often are they turning in claims? How unlucky are they? How bad of a driver are they? Right? They also run your MVR.

Michelle:

And so those claims stick with you and are in Clue and reportable for five years. And so what we try to educate our clients is that the insurance companies, they'll ding you for the big bad claim. I mean not too bad. They expect for you to have claims, but you get penalized for the big bad claim.

But you also get penalized for lots of little claims. So if you're not going to turn in small claims, which we always recommend not turning in small claims. Do not use your insurance policy is a maintenance policy. It's just you'll end up spending more over time. And then the last thing we want is to have to take you to a specialty market because you're not insurable. So if you know you're not going to turn in anything under let's say 2,500 or even 5,000. Or if even you're very liquid, maybe you don't turn in anything under 10,000. Then why have a deductible that's $250? Because the higher your deductible, the lower your premium.

Michelle:

But most insurance brokers out there are not going to try to convince you to have a higher deductible because the higher the deductible, the lower the premium, the lower the commission. Now we are true risk managers and we're looking at this holistically. So we're not caring about the extra 10, $15 in commission that we're getting here. We want this to be right.

Tony D'Amico:

The right thing.

Michelle:

And to make the most sense. And the kicker on this is the high end carriers, the carriers that are like the gold stars, which by the way aren't always necessarily gold star pricing. Another misnomer, it's not a get what you pay for kind of world. You can get far better coverage and pay less if you are the right fit. But those carriers, they have something called a waiver of deductible, which means if you have a claim that's 50,000 or more, five o, they waive your deductible so you pay nothing.

Michelle:

So our savvy clients who have the cash, who realize that we're going to use insurance for the catastrophic, they'll go in and they'll change their deductible to 10,000. They know that anything over 50 is costing them nothing. Our high end carriers, when you have a home claim, they let you pick your own contractor. Usually the house is of significant size, so you get to 50,000 really quick. And from going from a $250 deductible to a $10,000 deductible, you could save a couple thousand dollars a year. You go 10 years claims free, you can do the math. So it's just, it's kind of a no brainer. And same thing with cars. We recommend $1,000 deductibles on all vehicles because number one, what can you actually fix on your car these days for less than a thousand? Number two, you don't want to turn in anything under a thousand.

Tony D'Amico:

Right. Why?

Michelle:

Why? And number three, the savings that you can pick up, you go a few years claims free it pays for itself.

Tony D'Amico:

Sure. And one of the things that we love about your process and we, I think we should talk a little bit about process and that's important, but like you just talked about with the home deductible, even going to a $2,500 deductible for the home, saves money and-

Michelle:

And then you can use that for the umbrella. Exactly.

Tony D'Amico:

The umbrella typically is lower. So we're bumping that up to handle potential liability and protect net worth. So it's that shift of premium dollars, right? So you're shifting premium dollars to really protect you in the areas that-

Michelle:

The stuff that's important. Exactly.

Tony D'Amico:

Yeah, that means the most. But yeah, we run into that a lot where again, they had the agent maybe since they were 16 or in their twenties and the deductibles are still low and just by shifting the deductibles up to a comfortable amount because they have the cash on hand. They don't want to turn in a claim-

Michelle:

Of course. No one does.

Tony D'Amico:

For a $1,500 for their home, but yet they want that insurance there for significant events. Yeah.

Michelle:

When it's there. Exactly. And that's why I think partnering and having a wealth advisor like you in the process is so crucial. Because when we're sitting at the table and you say to your client, "Client XYZ, you can afford a $2,500 deductible. Like I know what you have and this is, you should feel comfortable knowing ..." Sometimes they just need to hear it from you, anything with the umbrella. Sometimes they just need to hear it from their trusted wealth advisor to say, "Where do you think I should be from an umbrella standpoint?" And that's why I love sitting down all of us together to really come up with the right plan for the client.

Tony D'Amico:

Absolutely. And it comes down to that education piece. Our clients want to do the right thing. They just don't even know about this area. And just through that discovery, understanding what's important to them. And we obviously gather information on all of their different insurance policies and then you do that audit. And then meeting with them to provide them that education, it's great because they can then just naturally see what the best option.

Michelle:

Exactly. Right. And some of the things we get from the discussion and not even from the policies. I can't tell you how many times I've been sitting at this table with clients of yours where we're talking and we find out that their children who are now adult children, who are no longer in school, are now living in big cities but still driving mom and dad's car and still on the insurance policy. And people don't know that if your child is no longer living in the household and no longer in school, they truly need to be on their own policies. And so walking them through that is very eyeopening. And then getting adult "son or daughter" on their own policy, getting them a renter's policy and kind of setting the path for the next generation is also really important. But no one's telling anyone this. And those are real exposures because the last thing you want is for son who has car in Chicago getting in an accident, something happens and then they find out that there actually isn't any coverage because they no longer live at home or are in school

Tony D'Amico:

Without question. And one of the things that we've talked about off-camera is just to the impact of collaborating together. Us as a wealth manager and you as the personal and business insurance line specialists where we have this insight into what is their net worth, what is important to them. Do they have a second home? Do they travel a lot? Do they have adult children? And not just that sinking together where folks that maybe don't work with a wealth manager and they just kind of go to their agent directly, they don't know. And I don't blame people, but they don't know what to tell their agent. So there's that gap.

Michelle:

No, it's the perfect trifecta. I think it's just everybody comes to the table with the client's needs at hand and it's just, it takes it to the next level. We're also seeing a lot of, in my world, that community of the old brokers are actually truly old and retiring.

Tony D'Amico:

Oh, without question, yes.

Michelle:

So people are becoming these orphan policies and they don't know who to call or they don't know what they look like or they don't feel that level of service. And especially clients who have a lot of assets, this is an area that they should have a relationship with.

Tony D'Amico:

They should. Absolutely.

Michelle:

That they should have someone that is not just letting it renew year to year and not shopping it and not looking at coverages. It's so important to stay on top.

Tony D'Amico:

And whether the net worth is like a couple million or hundreds of million, all these things come into play. They've worked hard for it. They want to protect it, utilize it, utilize what they have for their financial security and perhaps make an impact or have their family inherit it. So again, whether regardless of the level of wealth, all these concepts and steps really should be taken.

Michelle:

Absolutely. And I think the more complex, the more room for error, right. So we've seen-

Tony D'Amico:

The detail.

Michelle:

The detail.

Tony D'Amico:

The precision that you guys do looking at the fine details of the policy. Does the policy cover a nanny at the home? All these different little things that can sneak in. It does. You're right though. The more complexity, the more on point you need to be.

Michelle:

Exactly. We've had so many policy audits where we see vacation homes where they're written by a local carrier in Florida or in the Carolinas because their local agent doesn't have the ability to write coastal properties. And so sometimes those policies aren't worth the paper they're printed on. That's like number one. But other times maybe they are decent policies, but then that policy is not then circled back and listed on the umbrella. But doesn't, I mean it's just so simple. All you have to do is connect the dots. But if you have multiple carriers and multiple agents working on multiple exposures, it's very easy to get lost in the details.

Tony D'Amico:

And if those dots aren't connected, they're not going to have the coverage.

Michelle:

They're exposed. There's absolutely [inaudible 00:31:29].

Tony D'Amico:

Yeah. Another error that we run into where again, people are, they're not doing it intentionally, but there was one case where somebody bought a condo and paid cash for it.

Michelle:

So there was no one asking for-

Tony D'Amico:

And when you're looking at their schedule of assets and then looking at their coverages, we said, "Oh my, like they have this asset that isn't protected, isn't insured. Their umbrella doesn't extend over it." So yeah, there's a lot to making sure all the dots connect and the pieces all come together. Also let's talk. I think another common error that we see frequently is when somebody has a trust. So talk about that, because I think this will really help.

Michelle:

Yeah. For sure. So you guys are working hard to make sure I'm working with estate planners to get all these assets in different trusts to make sure that everything is appropriately put in the right spot. If a property is owned in the name of a trust, that named trust needs to be physically listed on the homeowner's policies. And if it's not listed and the trust is sued, there is no coverage. So let me give you an example. There's a delivery guy coming to the house and something happens where the curb is messed up or there's a crack or whatever the case may be. They're carrying the flowers, they trip and they fall. They don't know who lives there per se, but they go home and they look on the auditor's website and who does it say owns this house? But Jane Doe trust whatever at this address.

Michelle:

So they find some ambulance chaser attorney and they name the trust because that's who owns the house. And so you go through litigation and the insurance company comes to fight. If the name of the trust is not listed on the policy, they have no idea that that's a named entity. A trust is a real life entity. So it has to be listed on the policy, and it's free to do. So if it's not on there, it's shame on the client. Shame on the broker to just make sure that it's on there.

Tony D'Amico:

So what would happen in that case? Let's say a house is owned by a trust. And you know what? In today's world, there's the Amazons, there's grocery delivery. I mean-

Michelle:

Food delivery.

Tony D'Amico:

We have everything delivered to our house right now. What if somebody fell and we were maybe deemed liable because the concrete was different. And what if somebody did fall and there was just legitimate liability? The house was owned in a trust but wasn't reflected on their insurance coverage. What would happen?

Michelle:

If the lawsuit was naming the trust, the trust has no coverage.

Tony D'Amico:

Wow. Just from that simple dot not being connected.

Michelle:

Correct.

Tony D'Amico:

So, well, I'm really glad that we talked about that because that's obviously really important. So Michelle, again, another aspect of somebody's like home and auto and umbrella coverage is also travel. So we talked about how an umbrella extends globally. Is there any other considerations for people that travel frequently? Any other insurance considerations that they should make?

Michelle:

Absolutely. A lot of the carriers now are coming out with this travel accident type of policy. And what how it works is if you are a hundred miles or more from home. So you could be in Cleveland, you could be in Columbus or you could be in China, and something happens and you need to get back to wherever home is, whether it's medically related or the hurricane's coming or there's political unrest and you need to evacuate. These carriers are helping to coordinate the travel and then also reimburse. So whether it's the medevac, because you have to fly via helicopter or you have to fly in a private airline or a private car service to get you to the closest next airport to get wherever you need to go or the last minute airfare changes.

Michelle:

And so it's just kind of this almost sense of, it's not going to reimburse you for health insurance or for, but horrible things like return of remains or return of a car. All of these things that can get very expensive in relation to the actual travel. So it's not going to replace the Travel Guard or the the Amex actual reimbursement of the travel per se, but it's the, I need to get out of here for whatever reason. And they will not only reimburse it, but they will help coordinate it, which could be the most crucial part when you're stuck somewhere in a crisis situation and need to know how to get out.

Tony D'Amico:

And probably even more so important for international travelers. Right. Because there's just an additional layer of risk with political uncertainty or at the time of us filming this right now, there was a recent virus outbreak in China. So just out of curiosity, do you know if that type of insurance would cover in that kind of scenario where there's a virus outbreak? There's probably a lot of, who knows, right. There probably has to be certain classification of the emergency.

Michelle:

Well, I've read the policy and I can tell you that if you know about it ahead of time and you choose to still go, even though I know some of the airlines are stopping the travel, then it would not be covered. There's a whole, there's a list of exclusions. I also know that bungee jumping is not covered. If you're injured due to a bungee jumping accident, which actually came into play with one of our clients in their honeymoon plans. Yeah, that was a bummer. Not that they had an issue, but I made sure that they knew that if there was an issue with their future bungee jumping plans, that that would not be covered. So I will, I think it's more so the sudden things that you would not expect and are not planned. How do we get you and help you with the translators if you need last minute prescriptions. Just the coordinating of being not close to home and needing help.

Tony D'Amico:

Well great. Well let's talk about business insurance. So this is another big area of importance and we work together a lot on. So ensuring a business is, it's much different than insuring a family with their personal assets, right? There's a lot more variability with businesses. You know, what type of business, what is the product or service, what are the inherent risks in consideration of the product or service that they're providing? What sort of physical locations do they have? What's the nature of those locations? So it's kind of like, it's very different, right?

Michelle:

There's a lot of factors.

Tony D'Amico:

There's a lot of variability. But nonetheless, it's all about helping them identify where are their biggest risks, where should they focus on spending money to protect those risks and kind of optimizing what they have, or perhaps kind of a reshifting thing. So talk to me about that. How do you approach doing an audit for a business owner? What are some of the factors that you're looking at and-

Michelle:

Right. Well, the thing to realize and understand is that business insurance is very different from personal in a sense that personal you have home in a bucket. You have auto and a bucket umbrella, and then the jewelry in the collectibles. But when it comes to businesses, the number of different coverage types and coverage lines are endless and they are constantly coming out with more. So you can't just say, "Here's my one policy that's a business policy," and think that you're set. Because you may have just your actual physical property, right? So if you lease, it's very different than if you own the building and how you cover that building. If the liability, so if you have lots of foot traffic and you have clients coming in, it's very different than an office where the only people that you see are your employees. Or maybe you have a home office, which is a whole separate area of concern.

Michelle:

And then it's what do you actually do? So are you providing a professional service where you need that malpractice that if there's an error or if you do something incorrectly, if you only have the basic general liability in the property, but they're suing you for the actual work that you do, there's no coverage. So that brings in the professional liability. Then you look at your employees. And if you have actual employees versus independent contractors, the exposures are different. And if you have employees, if someone gets injured, then workers' comp comes into play. And also employment practices liability. So if somebody claims discrimination, wrongful termination, hostile work environment, all of the previous policies that I just mentioned don't cover that. You got to have employment practice liability. If you offer benefits to your clients and there's an error or some sort of misstep where let's say you forgot to add somebody to the health insurance plan and then they have a claim, employer's benefits liability. So it's all, there's so many different now. We have cyber liability for all.

Tony D'Amico:

Cyber security. That's correct.

Michelle:

It's crazy. So it's really about understanding all of the things that truly you have the exposure for to then say, "Let's marry that with the right coverages." And then you dig into the actual coverages to make sure that you have the right amounts. And we can look at the deductibles again. And with businesses, the carriers are very specific as to the types of businesses that they want to insure. So certain newer businesses, insurance companies, it takes a while for them to feel comfortable in their box. So if it's a startup, if it's an industry that's newer to the world, I mean I know the whole like virtual reality is becoming big and it takes the insurance companies a couple of years to get there, right?

Tony D'Amico:

Kind of get caught up. Yeah.

Michelle:

Right. So the first couple of years of a startup or an industry that's not your typical manufacturer or professional service, the premium's going to be a lot higher. And then hopefully more carriers get on the bandwagon and then the premiums go down year after year. So that's why it's so important to really understand the landscape. These carriers are changing their appetites constantly. They're changing their rates constantly. So you have to have-

Tony D'Amico:

And you have to stay up on all that, right?

Michelle:

You have to stay up on it. And it's just, if you've a zillion things to be doing as a business owner, this is not something that you want to even worry about. You should just pay your premiums and be done. And that's why it's so important to have an advocate and your broker and your agent to really make sure that they're out there in your best interests.

Tony D'Amico:

So one thing that you said that stuck out that I want to chat a little bit about further. So there's going to be carriers, right? That if it's a manufacturing business, there's certain carriers that have that appetite. If it's a dental practice or maybe some other professional service, they're going to be certain carriers that have an appetite for that. And so I guess maybe another question that comes to mind. What are some, I guess maybe the common gaps that you see with business owners?

Michelle:

What we see a lot is they don't keep up with their growth. So a couple of examples. When you first underwrite a policy, you have to tell them what you do. What do you produce? What services are you providing? And the underwriter then calculates and protects and lists often on the policy what they're covering. So for example, you have a manufacturer of beverages like fruit juices and sparkling water. We have a client that does all these different types of beverages. And so the underwriter says, "This is what we are insuring you for, beverages." Well throughout the year things change and they see that people like to have snacks with their beverages. And so they decide to get into the trail mix business. Well, if you don't tell the insurance company that-

Tony D'Amico:

You don't have coverage.

Michelle:

You don't. Let's hope no one gets sick off of the trail mix. So it's people don't realize what they're not telling their insurance carriers. They're not mind readers and they're not keeping up on that. Same with the growth. So you could just be that dental office and go from a hundred patients to a thousand patients and now you have so much more revenue. You have more foot traffic. You had to expand your space in the building. If you don't tell the insurance company that, they are not going to know. And so what we see is that people outgrow their coverages by their own fault because they're not sharing or their broker's not asking questions at renewal and they're just sat in the pit.

Tony D'Amico:

Yeah. And owning a business is all consuming, right?

Michelle:

100%.

Tony D'Amico:

So they're just, they're running their business. But I would echo that completely is those two factors. One is the types of products or services have shifted and there isn't, the insurance company doesn't know. And then the growth. The growth factor in many different areas, there's revenue, foot traffic, whatever it might be. And a lot of things that we often see too, I can think of one scenario where this business has grown substantially. There's a lot of capital assets that are expensive. And the bank has told him, "Hey, you need to have this sort of coverage in place to cover your ongoing expenses if something were to happen to you."

Michelle:

Business interruption.

Tony D'Amico:

Right. So, and he's done a good job and he wants to do the right thing, but he had some insurance in place that protected the bank but not him, his business and his family.

Michelle:

And I would say a business interruption coverage is the most overlooked line item for business owners because what they don't ... they're not factoring in when they think business interruption. If I had to close down the plant, right, I can't produce whatever we're producing and I'm out the revenue from my inventory or from, because I just can't get the product to the end result. That's the number that they're using. But they forget about payroll. You're going to lose all your employees? No. They forget about all their utilities. They forget about rent. They forget about the supplier keeping the suppliers ongoing. And they also underestimate the factors around them. Right? So if you're making oranges and your largest supplier, their orange farm goes up in flames and now you have to pay a premium.

Michelle:

I mean, there's all these factors we saw with the Boston marathon when that horrible tragedy happened. They closed down that whole street for weeks because it was under investigation. All of those stores that couldn't open up their doors, there's real income loss there. And so how do you make sure that the insurance company not only is going to pay for it, but pay the right number? So that the day you can reopen or start up making the orange juice again, that you're not in the red. And the insurance company is coming to the rescue. And so we work a lot with the business owner, with their financial advisors, with accountants, with their accountants to really make sure that we've dug deep and done almost like a forensic accounting of-

Tony D'Amico:

That's what it takes, right?

Michelle:

Yeah. To understand all that it costs to make sure the business works.

Tony D'Amico:

And then moving into their bank or lending institution. Right.

Michelle:

Everybody needs to know what's up.

Tony D'Amico:

But one of the other things that come to my mind there that we see a lot of is that they're putting what their bank or lending institution needs to have in place, but it doesn't cover, you know it might cover maybe their ongoing operating expenses or kind of cover what the bank needs to get their money-

Michelle:

Right. Their mortgage on the building if they own the building or their line of credit. But there's so much more than that.

Tony D'Amico:

Yeah. And but it doesn't cover ... Typically sometimes we'll see is they don't have a disability insurance policy, which I know is kind of not what you guys do. But we always see that the bank is covered, but are they covered? Because they're family covered. And really just talking, most people are surprised to learn that you have a greater chance of becoming disabled than you do dying until age 65. And that's really where that comprehensive evaluation of risk is so important. I guess anything else about business owners that come to mind as far as maybe other gaps that you typically run into?

Michelle:

I think that oftentimes there's just a lot of complacency on the business owner front. And you know, I've been with the same carrier for so many years and I had a claim and they took care of it. So I have to think that I'm getting loyalty credits or there's some benefit by me staying with this carrier. And it's, look, I'm the first one to say relationships are the most important thing in life. But when it comes to insurance companies, it's so important to take a look around. Because like I said before, carriers are going in and out of different industries every day, offering more bells and whistles where maybe you're paying for this endorsement over here, but this carrier will include it for free. Or this carrier's minimum limit on this is this, here you can get it three times that and still pay less. So it's just, it's really understanding to look at your options and often.

Tony D'Amico:

That's really just an important point because getting an independent audit. So Michelle, if we look at how the super rich protect their assets and we're talking about families that have more than a billion dollar net worth, where they have so much money, they basically have their own wealth management firm. They have their own internal-

Michelle:

Family office.

Tony D'Amico:

Family office, their own internal tax, risk, legal, investment management all in house. So if we look at the best practices that they employ, one of them is to do what we call a strategic stress test or an independent audit. And I think the reason why that they're so advantaged in that area is because they probably had pain at some point in time. And I would agree with you. Relationships are the most important thing. However, you still have to look out for the best interests for your family and your business. Because if there's a gap there, they're not going to pay it for you out of their pocket. So I always tell people, I always a trust but verify approach. And what statistics show is that over 95% of family offices, every five years do an audit just to make sure there isn't that complacency and things are up to speed. But-

Michelle:

Absolutely. We had a client of yours actually who recently sold his business and he was with one of the captive carriers. And once we went through the audit and we went and did everything we showed him, and I think you guys had recommended a minimum of five or even 10 million on the umbrella. And his agent, who I mean best friends, has been to every single one of his kid's birthday parties. And I mean the loyalty, he almost didn't want to do the audit because he just felt dirty doing the audit. But once we showed him, especially with all of what's going on in his life now that he has sold this business, we said, "Here-"

Tony D'Amico:

There like significant gaps-

Michelle:

Significant stuff, but take this back to your guy and show him what's being recommended and see what he can do. And I knew that this carrier-

Tony D'Amico:

The couldn't.

Michelle:

There was no way they could get him a $10 million umbrella. And so sure enough, because of that relationship that they had, he said to him, "It pains me." I mean, the guy called. You're the client. Our client now called me and said, it was a really tough conversation, but he said, "I love you like a brother. You have outgrown me and I can't help you. You need to go."

Tony D'Amico:

And that just takes the utmost character. And that was just a great-

Michelle:

So when you click it from facts, right? When you educate, it's not like here I can save you $500 for the same price. But when you actually explain and bring value and educate-

Tony D'Amico:

Go in depth. Go deep.

Michelle:

In depth, go deep. And really as if you and I are a member of their family, like really getting into the guts of their policies and saying, "This is what you need and here's why." Then if the relationship can prevail, great. Now I would want one of my clients to do the exact same thing. But most of the time they've just outgrown and they can't get that level of sophistication.

Tony D'Amico:

And you know, that's accurate. A lot of times there are significant gaps that can't be bridged. But a few times there's minor things where we really love your approach where you said, "You know what, their policies are pretty good. Just change a couple of these things."

Michelle:

Tweak a few things. We feel good.

Tony D'Amico:

And we do that with their existing agency and then we move forward and then, and that's great. But one of the things too I always caution, especially businesses that are growing, it's like, okay, well is there going to be another problem in the future? Like what's that next thing that's going to happen where your policies aren't protecting you the way that they should. And that's why I always tell people, "Hey, if there's some significant, you really need to think about what's best for you moving forward."

Michelle:

Yeah. No, absolutely.

Tony D'Amico:

So one other concept I'd like to talk to you about is you mentioned that you guys do some self insurance. So we're very aware of that concept. And a lot of times as businesses grow, when they add more employees, there's a couple of strategies that we bring into play where it has to do with what we call captive health insurance, which I know is not what you guys do. But the whole concept of they can start to self-insure in that area. And there's a lot of ... or the right situation too, it's not right for every employer, but there can be tremendous tax savings and other savings and really improve the benefits plan. Most people I don't think are thinking about self-insuring-

Michelle:

On the property and casualty.

Tony D'Amico:

Yeah. So let's talk about that. For what reasons do you guys do that and when does it make sense and how does that work?

Michelle:

Sure. So typically it's a very large insurance portfolio, whether it's a real estate company that has several locations or nursing homes. We're seeing a lot of this also where there's a lot of property, a lot of locations, and there's a lot of claim activity. But it's small claims, so little trips and falls. And so what we do is first we'll go in and we'll do a feasibility study. We'll say, "Does it make sense for you to go to a self-insured retention program?" And once we get in there and we look at what the cost savings would be, because as soon as you go to a self-insured retention program, SIR, it's basically going to a massively high deductible, if you will. Right? So the savings on it can be enormous. I mean, we're literally talking about going from paying six figures in premium or above and shaving off a zero. And so if you're able to do that, and the savings is there, the critical point is being able to fund this claims fund, right? Because claims are going to happen.

Tony D'Amico:

You need to have your own pool of money.

Michelle:

You need to have a little bank, if you will, to be able to self-fund. And so we do this feasibility study. We look at the past claims history, we see what types of claims, what's their risk management practices. So if they're all beautiful buildings and their risk management protocol is top notch with all their employees. And if the only thing that's really happening is being in the wrong place at the wrong time or pure dumb accidents, then this is a really good option for you. Now, if you have older buildings, if the training is not so hot, if there's just older buildings and it's just it's not a good situation, then it probably doesn't make sense.

Michelle:

So the feasibility study is the first part. But then second is by bringing in and taking control of your own claims, you are really the creator of own destiny when it comes to how much you're paying out. Example, now let's say you own a bunch of shopping centers. Someone walks into the shopping center and they trip and fall on the curb. Let's say it's covered in ice, while you as the real estate owner should probably have iced that area. In a normal like first dollar situation where you're paying the insurance company from the get go, the insurance adjuster from the carrier calls Tony and says, "Tony, we're so sorry that you fell on this curb. It was covered in ice. We feel horrible. Please send me your medical bills and we'll pay this claim." Okay, well let's say that there was no ice.

Michelle:

It's painted yellow, it's perfectly intact. Tony slips and falls. Well that adjuster still feels the need to just close the claim and give you something.

If you go, or when you go to a self-insured retention program and you have that ability to manage your own claims yourself, now you don't do it yourself. You hire a third party administrator.

Tony D'Amico:

A claims administrator, yeah.

Michelle:

Exactly. What we do is we act as if it's our own money. So we go in and we say, "Yes Tony, you fell. But if there's no ice there, you are not getting anything. But we feel really bad that this happened and we hope that you keep shopping at our shopping center. But we're moving on here." And then with the ice example, if there is actual liability, if there is actual negligence, then we would look at the actual medical bills and then be fair as opposed to the insurance companies who do whatever it takes to make the file go away.

Tony D'Amico:

To protect them. Right?

Michelle:

And protect them.

Tony D'Amico:

They're not thinking about the reputation of the shopping center or business or-

Michelle:

Or just paying an excess of egregious amounts because they just want it to go away. Well then that claim that could have cost a third of the price if it was managed internally, is now on your record for the next five years. And then your premiums go up and everything just kind of snowballs from there. Whereas if you have control and you're paying your claims based off of what you truly think are being paid at the right amount, then you're just, you have so much control over what you're going to actually pay. Now, in most of those self-insured retention programs, you still have insurance. You're not wholly self-insuring. So it's just what is that number that at that certain point, that's when the insurance company comes in. So if it's a hundred thousand, half a million, million dollars. So still for the catastrophic, you always want to have an insurance company to be kind of like your in quotes re-insurance to be able to be there because you don't want to have something that's catastrophic that then sinks the whole company.

Tony D'Amico:

That's awesome. That's great that you guys have that focus because it's, whether it's that type of insurance or doing kind of self insurance for health insurance, you're not talking saving a little bit of money.

Michelle:

No. It's a lot.

Tony D'Amico:

It's a huge amount of savings. So all right Michelle, let's talk a little bit about process too because I think that's also very important and really allows us to work together really well. So I guess tell me like what do you like about the process and what do you think maybe are the key steps that we're kind of helping our client with? And I know I've already talked about that discovery. And that's discovering both, I guess qualitative factors like what's important to them and just details about their life. And then also quantitative things like what does their balance sheet look like and all those more dryer things but also very important. And then building from there. But I guess maybe from your perspective, let's talk about our process of working together.

Michelle:

Sure. Absolutely. So as part of the audit, we have a questionnaire, it's one page that your team gathers from the client. So what do they do for a living? Do they have any kids? Are they driving? Do they have good grades? Because you can get a good grades discount if your kids have a 3.0 or higher on your auto insurance. Do they have pets? Because certain dogs are uninsurable. Do they have vacation homes? How many other properties are we not maybe seeing or assets are we not seeing? Because when we, the first step is to collect copies of all of their declaration pages for all of their policies. And what they may not realize is, oh well I have all this here. Oh, but wait, there's that one jewelry writer I forgot to include here. So we want to make sure that we're asking all the right questions so that we get the full picture of every insurance policy from a property casualty perspective that they have.

Michelle:

We gather those policies, we get the necessary information, it's not painful and that all comes to us. We then review, we'll go out to all of our carriers and decide who are the best fit. We usually come back with three to four different options of this is who we think is best. We have a full comprehensive audit that we come back with. That's an executive summary that says here are the main points. Here's what we're seeing as gaps. Here's where your policy is strong and where it's not, and then we put together a chart that's an apples to apples as close as we can get comparison. So if you changed nothing today, this is what you're paying now and the coverages you have now and here's what you could have if you went out to market.

Michelle:

And then we always have a separate sheet that's the options sheet to show them if you wanted to increase the deductibles or if you wanted to have higher sewer water backup or if you wanted to increase your umbrella, or all kinds of whatever gaps we see, we fill those holes in the options page. And oftentimes after it's all over, we then calculate it all up and say, "Okay, here's the difference. Here's what the coverages you can get. Here's the difference in premium. Here's the savings or maybe here's a little bit more." But now you understand and we go line by line by line on those coverages.

Tony D'Amico:

You sure do.

Michelle:

And give examples and stories and so they can really understand what this is all about. And then we say, "There is no pressure to switch. If you want to take this and go to your current relationship and fix it, great. And then we work together to then decide what makes the most sense. If they're going to fix it somewhere else or move on to us. If they do choose to move, think about, the nice thing about property casualty insurance is that you can switch at any time. So you don't have to wait for your renewal. Anytime you cancel midterm, you get a prorated refund to the day and we pick a magical date. We cancel and we bind the same day, so there's no gaps in coverage.

Michelle:

We email out new auto ID cards until the real ones come in the mail. We figure out what's the most convenient payment plan and then we go from there. After the policy has been placed, we then touch base 90 days out from their renewal to say what's going on. I mean, of course if there's a claim or a situation in between, we're all hands on deck. But prior to the renewal, is there anything that has changed? Did you buy a new piece of jewelry that you forgot to tell us about? Are you thinking about building a house that you haven't told us about because you'd be shocked how much people just forget to tell their insurance agent.

Tony D'Amico:

Sure. It's not the first thing people think about, right?

Michelle:

No, it's just not. Especially when they're paying gash. So we just want to make sure that we're on target. And then we have these carriers coming into our office every single month. So we know if there's going to be a rate increase, we know if there's going to be coverage changes and then we're proactive. So if we know that your carrier is going to be taking a 40% increase in the state of Ohio, we're obviously, we know about it before you do, and say to you, "Tony, do not freak out. We know that you're going to get this letter in the mail and you're going to have sticker shock. We're on it. And we are already out shopping to make sure that we find a new home." And all of our carriers know that we have one boss and it's the client. And while there's loyalty and we love our carriers, the loyalty is to the client. And if we have to move, because that's what makes the most sense for the client, that's what's going to happen.

Tony D'Amico:

So if you see kind of an increase that's beyond what maybe is-

Michelle:

Normal.

Tony D'Amico:

Expected normal.

Michelle:

Yes. Inflation, standard. Yeah. That's when we're [crosstalk 01:04:45].

Tony D'Amico:

So I guess maybe for example, if all carriers are going up by about 4% and it goes up 4%, it's not really triggering much. But if it's something that's maybe a 10% increase, well that sticks out because you know what the other carriers are doing.

Michelle:

Correct. It automatically gets flagged.

Tony D'Amico:

Then you'll go and shop that in the open market.

Michelle:

Yup.

Tony D'Amico:

That's awesome. That's great.

Michelle:

And then throughout the year, we are your insurance concierge if you will. So if you have a question on billing or adding a car or looking at buying more property or on the business sense, looking at buying another business or changing your industry or increasing a major increase in sales, that's our job is throughout the years to be able to be that independent third party where you're not going directly to the carrier. You're going to us first. And then when you have a claim, that's where the rubber hits, what's it, what's the metal-

Tony D'Amico:

The rubber hits the road. Yeah. And the value of what you do really kind of comes there, right?

Michelle:

100%. Yeah. Because when you have a claim, you want an advocate and you want someone to say, "Hey carrier, why is this taking so long? Or what's going on here?" If you're not happy, we're not happy. And so we have on many occasions had to escalate and elevate and use the muscle of our large books of business to say, "Hey, carrier A, if you aren't going to do this ..." I mean we've fired carriers in the past because we are the middle person. And we're selling the reputations of the carriers that we have and we're not going to put forward somebody that, a carrier that's not giving A++ service.

Tony D'Amico:

The part that we love working about with you guys, is you guys kind of take that, what we call in our side of this, that fiduciary approach.

Michelle:

Absolutely.

Tony D'Amico:

Like you really ... And I think that the great part about all this all, it's knowing what's important to the client, really understanding their complete situation, whether it's a family or a business, doing an objective audit and then going in deep, which you guys do and really tailoring what they need to make their situation as best as possible. And then that ongoing service. So even with our clients, we have extremely high client retention. It's an ongoing relationship. And so we're going to be there throughout the relationship with a client. We're typically the last firm that they hire and we have that kind of that same approach. It's about making sure that if something does happen, everything that's happened is to be expected or anticipated. Michelle, this has been great. So I really appreciate all the wisdom and experience that you're sharing with our guests and how can our listeners connect with you online?

Michelle:

Sure. So they can visit our website at www.brunswickcompanies, spelled out C-O-M-P-A-N-I-E-S.com, or you can send me an email at mhirsch, H-I-R-S-C-H @brunswickcompanies.com, or you can call our office at (330) 864-8800 and ask to talk to me and we can get started.

Tony D'Amico:

That's awesome. Well, as we wrap up, this podcast is about achieving success where wealth and life intersect. And success means different things to different people at different stages of business, at different stages of life. And Michelle, you and your family have accomplished what a lot of people would consider very successful, right? The survival rate of a business going from generation one to let alone generation two to now generation three is a huge accomplishment.

Michelle:

Yes, pressure's on.

Tony D'Amico:

So congratulations.

Michelle:

Thank you.

Tony D'Amico:

That's really, really incredible. But when you think about the intersection of wealth and life at this stage for you, what does success look like moving forward?

Michelle:

I think that success for me, and maybe I'm just wearing my risk management hat, but success for me is that my level of integrity and my level of trust is there from clients and from my community and for my family. We've built our name on that, on integrity and trust and being able to have that continue on to the next generation. You have nothing, there's nothing more important than reputation and integrity. And my grandfather stood by that and my dad absolutely stands for that. And it's just been ingrained in me that you only have one first impression, and you have to keep that first impression through the end because your name is all you have. And I would just say keeping integrity and trust is the ultimate level of success.

Tony D'Amico:

Well, that's awesome Michelle. Well, hey, thanks so much for being a guest. I really enjoyed it.

Michelle:

Thank you for having me.

Do you want even more ideas, tools, and resources of how to achieve the next level of success in your wealth planning? Check out wealthandlife.com, where Tony will cover the latest trends and wealth planning best practices for successful business owners, families approaching retirement, and comprehensive wealth management. By subscribing to the *Wealth and Life* podcast, keep up to date with future episodes. Get it all now at wealthandlife.com.

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