

Truly aligned with its clients

In a world dominated by short-term gains, Holborn bucks the trend. As Holborn edges closer to celebrating 100 years in business next year, Berto Sciolla, one of its newer recruits, explained to *APCIA Today* what attracted him to the firm and what sets it apart.

A desire to provide clients with long-term solutions while being free to innovate was at the heart of Berto Sciolla's decision to opt for a change. In February this year Sciolla joined Holborn, the US-based independent reinsurance broker, as executive vice president and chief production officer, after a long career in reinsurance with direct reinsurer General Reinsurance Corporation.

At Holborn, Sciolla is responsible for enhancing Holborn's existing client relationships through the coaching of client service teams, talent development, and performance management across the firm's three offices in New York City, Minneapolis and Kansas City.

Sciolla told *APCIA Today* that Holborn's independence and long-term approach to business and client relationships convinced him that the move was right for him.

"Holborn brokers enjoy access to the entire global reinsurance marketplace. Our clients are advantaged by having the best markets and brightest underwriters in the world analysing and supporting their business," he said.

"Holborn has a pure alignment of interests with its clients and that is why it maintains such a longevity of relationships with them. I have been so impressed by the breadth of knowledge of my colleagues since arriving here. The quality of our client conversations is detailed and transparent, and I like the fact that as their broker partner we can make such a difference for their businesses."

Sciolla understands that, outside of some very specific lines of business, the majority of mutual, regional and national players have come to rely on the broker model—as opposed to direct reinsurance—as the best solution for them.

"Our clients view their reinsurance capital as 'core' capital. Holborn's business model allows us to structure the best solution for each client's unique circumstances," he explained.

"There is no cookie-cutter approach to how we serve our clients. Each client has its



own business challenges and needs, and our partnership-based business model ensures that we tailor reinsurance solutions to meet their unique requirements.

"CEO Frank Harrison has always been crystal clear that our interests should be aligned with those of our clients."

Values

Sciolla said the cultural values at Holborn play a big role in its success. Humility is a key ethos of the firm as well as having strong leadership, a clear vision and a strong strategic focus.

"Frank and our board of directors are very committed to ensuring the business remains independent; there is a visceral commitment to independence, and that is something that clients and future clients appreciate.

"They are much more aware of the value of this, especially as they see consolidation happening elsewhere."

Holborn will celebrate 100 years in business in 2020, something that comes on the back of an almost unprecedented period of growth as it benefits from a shrinking pool of choice for reinsurance brokers and reaps the rewards of the investments it has made in analytics and value-added services.

Sciolla said another benefit of independence is that the company is not driven by having to post short-term profits or growth on a quarterly basis.

"That allows us the purest form of alignment with clients. Our vision is long-term, and we understand that trust is earned, not given.

"Holborn has a solid reputation for its dedication to clients and I am excited to take on this role. Holborn is a thriving firm with a distinct offering and rich history, and we are energised by the tremendous growth potential for us within our industry.

"I look forward to working alongside the senior leadership team and all of our colleagues to seize market opportunities based on our sophisticated analytics and highly personalised client service," he said.

Commenting when Sciolla's appointment was revealed, Harrison said: "At the core of Holborn's success for nearly 100 years has been our steadfast commitment to client service, and as we embark on our centennial, we are pleased to have Berto join our senior management team.

"His knowledge of the industry and proven track record in cultivating and maintaining client relationships makes him an ideal fit for our firm. Berto will play a critical role in developing the next generation of talent at Holborn as we continue to provide service excellence for our clients." ●

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