

## Summary of the Fireside Chat session

### Speakers:

**Sheel Sawhney**, *Group COO, Brit Insurance*

### Chair:

**Jeremy Burgess**, *The Insurance Network*

The session explored operational innovations in policyholder service, focusing on customer-centric improvements, reducing friction and leveraging technology to enhance the insurance experience. The discussion highlighted past successes and failures in implementing innovations, underlining the importance of focusing on outcomes rather than simply deploying technology for technology's sake. The conversation also examined the evolving insurance landscape, particularly the differences between the US and UK markets, the role of data, regulatory challenges and the need for cultural and operational shifts to support digital transformation.

A recurring theme was the **critical role of data quality** in reducing operational friction, improving underwriting and ensuring claims are handled efficiently. The conversation stressed the need for greater alignment between brokers, insurers and market participants to enhance the ease of doing business and ensure that the London market remains competitive. The importance of simplifying processes, improving data consistency and breaking down silos was repeatedly emphasised as key to achieving operational excellence.

The session also examined **how AI and automation can drive efficiencies**, particularly in areas such as ingestion of underwriting and claims data. However, it was noted that AI should be used primarily for operational efficiency rather than decision-making in sensitive areas such as claims approval or policy renewal, where human oversight remains critical. The discussion underscored the need to balance rapid innovation with careful risk management, particularly in AI adoption, cybersecurity and regulatory compliance.

Cultural and organisational challenges were another focal point, particularly around change management and gaining buy-in for transformation initiatives. The importance of **identifying and leveraging internal champions** was highlighted, as well as the need to take an iterative approach, focusing on quick wins to build momentum. The session concluded by addressing future trends, particularly the increasing role of algorithmic underwriting and its potential to reshape the balance between lead and follow markets.

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## Key Takeaways

### 1. **Innovation must be outcome-driven, not just technology-driven**

Successful operational improvements focus on delivering clear customer and business benefits. Innovations that remove friction, reduce claim processing time or improve underwriting efficiency will have the most impact. Many past failures stem from implementing technology without fully understanding customer needs or operational workflows.

### 2. **AI should enhance efficiency but not replace human decision-making**

AI has significant potential in streamlining processes such as document ingestion, data extraction and operational efficiencies. However, its use in underwriting and claims decisions must be carefully managed to avoid ethical and regulatory pitfalls.

Organisations should start with small AI initiatives, prove their value, then scale accordingly.

3. **Breaking down silos and improving data flow is essential for market competitiveness**

The London market's complex, syndicated structure creates operational inefficiencies that must be addressed. Improving data consistency, streamlining processes and ensuring seamless collaboration between underwriting, claims, operations and technology teams is critical to maintaining a competitive edge. The shift towards algorithmic underwriting will further reshape market dynamics, requiring businesses to rethink their strategies.