

MEMBER BENEFITS

By Ryan Petersen

The Importance of NAIFA's YAT

Along with some of the NAIFA benefits are great responsibilities, including the industry's future.

For newcomers to the insurance business, which is built on relationships and networking and is regarded as not consisting of many youths, the task of fitting in may seem challenging. The wonderful organization, NAIFA, has aided in our industry's networking abilities since its inception, and has a special designation for members who are 40 years old or younger or have been in the business for fewer than five years. They are called YAT, and membership comes with terrific benefits, and perhaps great responsibilities.

My family's firm and employer, Petersen International Underwriters, recognizes the tremendous opportunity YAT presents and chooses to endorse the group however possible. The opportunity is in being able to reach out to our industry's newcomers and educate them. "We like to see these fresh faces become excited about insurance and we have the responsibility of teaching them the proper values that make the insurance business a noble and esteemed institution," states Petersen International's founder, W. Harold Petersen. "It is our best chance at ensuring that the industry continues to thrive, innovate and maintain the principles on which it was founded."

The perks of being a YAT

Being a YAT, I understand that to be truly successful, I need to develop relationships with my colleagues, and even my competitors, to further my knowledge of the business and raise my presence in the industry. YAT provides an excellent forum for just that.

Until recently, I was residing in Nashville, Tennessee, and was a member of the local NAIFA chapter. The Nashville YAT helped boost attendance at our monthly NAIFA meetings, and our YAT Chair organized many fun activities, giving us a chance to socialize. There, I created friendships that I believe will last many years and that I will call on throughout my career.

Attending the NAIFA Career Conference as a YAT member has its advantages. Last year's conference commenced with the first YAT Forum, which featured a terrific speaker and great sales ideas from fellow young advisors. And each year, the YAT Hospitality Suite seems to be more successful than ever.

For two nights of the conference, it is the place to be if you want to have some fun. Neckties loosen, libations flow, and music plays as we come together through a common goal of prosperity and fulfillment in this industry we have chosen. For this reason, it gets very crowded, very loud, and goes long into the night.

A vital component of NAIFA is political advocacy, driven by member contributions to IFAPAC. YATPAC was created to represent our division and has partnered with IFAPAC to add strength to both committees. These organizations have fought many battles as they advocate on our behalf and make sure we have a voice on Capitol Hill. I encourage all to donate as they can. About one fifth of last year's national conference donations consisted of YAT dollars, which I think is pretty impressive.



Any new or young advisor would do well to get involved in NAIFA and YAT. Along with some of the benefits there are great responsibilities, but we have them whether we belong to these associations or not. We are responsible for the future of the industry, including the shape it will take when new technologies, practices and social trends are introduced. We have the obligation to push the level of our services to higher echelons, and it is our duty to rise to the challenges of new business.

We can choose to support and be supported by the industry's predominant organization by binding together under our common interests, or we can go it alone and attempt to achieve the same degree of success. I know my choice. □

Ryan Petersen is the assistant marketing director of Petersen International Underwriters. The firm is a Lloyd's Coverholder, specializing in unique and high-limit life and health insurance products, and is based in Valencia, Calif. For more information, visit www.piu.org or contact Petersen at 800-545-8816 or at ryan@piu.org.