**How Brokers Can Get and Keep New Clients:** A two-minute preview of what you'll hear at the Employee Benefit Adviser Summit in Dallas on September 18.

Market consolidation in the insurance industry has made the job of the employee benefit adviser much harder today than just five years ago. Many employers shop for the best price, not the best value, in benefit plans and brokerage services. Mel Schlesinger, an insurance sales veteran and president of Client Creation Academy, a broker coaching service based in Winston-Salem, N.C., offers advice on how to stand out in the market..

Q: What kind of services do benefit brokers need to provide beyond getting the best quotes for their clients?

They might create innovative plan designs to help employers get control of their costs as opposed to just trying to "maintain" costs by adjusting benefits each year. They might help to manage employee perception. It's not the design of the plan that impacts employee morale and productivity – it's their perception of the plan.

Q: How do you change employee perception?

You change the way you communicate the plan. A lot of brokers go in with the carrier representative and tell employees, "Here's what your plan looks like. Here's how you use it. " We have to start saying things like, "We've made some changes that are going to be in your best interest. Here's why."

Q: What makes a highly successful broker in today's market?

A really good agent starts out by saying to an employer, "Tell me why you even have benefits. What are you trying to accomplish?" If we don't begin from that premise, we have no value. Everyone thinks the number one goal is to keep costs down. But it's not. If it were all about price, employers would all go to a $10,000 deductible and be done with it. The broker should know how to ask clients the right questions.

To learn more, please join us at the 2nd Annual Employee Benefit Adviser Summit, September 17, 2007 in Dallas, Texas. REGISTER TODAY!