

# Ghost In The Machine?

Time to get back to the 'other side' of broking



## BROKING'S 'GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE'

- Do you ever sit in your directly authorised brokerage and think you've been 'ghosted' by the industry?
- Do you despair at the amount of premium income an insurer now expects you to provide, in exchange for an agency?
- Have your insurer contacts more or less abandoned you, to a lesser or greater degree, because their 'powers that be' regard you as too small to spend time on?

Don't worry, you are not the only 'ghost' in the machine; it's just that some are now coming back to the 'other side'.

## THE REALITIES OF LIFE AS A SMALL, DIRECTLY AUTHORISED BROKER

Smaller, directly authorised brokers – perhaps with a premium income of around £1m – are increasingly realising that consolidators are swiping left, not right, when it comes to decisions on whether to buy them or not. That leaves them with a problem – no real exit route and a continued existence in the broking shadows.

That doldrum status can be hard to handle. It's difficult – or even impossible – to give clients access to the best policies and premiums. It's increasingly challenging to find affordable Professional Indemnity cover. Outlay on rent, energy and wages can leave little in the kitty, when there is already potentially less in the pension pot following the pandemic and economic crisis.

Add to this the lack of access to effective IT that many smaller brokers suffer, plus the cost implications of trying to upgrade IT systems, not to mention the paucity of actual broking time available because so many hours are eaten up by compliance, accounting and red tape, and life as a directly authorised broker is not all it was cracked up to be.



## LIFE ON THE 'OTHER SIDE'

Gauntlet Group has no doubt whatsoever about the value of dedicated local brokers and could see what was happening in the market. For that reason, it set about finding a way to bring them back from the 'other side', by enabling them to de-authorise and become an Appointed Representative instead.

The result was the creation of Gauntlet De-authorisation Fast-track (GDF), developed here and fine-tuned through ongoing liaison with the FCA, which was not used to having brokers move from directly authorised status, into an AR role.

We can now complete this process in just 8 weeks, breathing life into smaller brokerages and giving their owners the freedom to actually do some broking. The new lease of life they gain, when throwing off the shrouds of overheads, compliance and administration, is tangible. They quickly receive training in our cutting-edge Acturis IT system, within which we have intelligently tailored individual programs and devised bespoke features, so as to serve the specific needs of our Gauntlet local broker.

Alongside this, deauthorising brokers find our team heading out to their brokerage, to help them transition to our system. All is smooth and seamless and done with the aim of generating little or no client disruption.

Once the local broker is back on the AR side, they can start to boost their sales, tapping into Gauntlet's impressive buying power and access to market. By streamlining their operations, they can also lower overheads. They are literally full of life again and excited about their futures.





## FAR FROM BEING 'GHOSTED'

Our Gauntlet Appointed Representatives never experience ghosting. They are in constant touch with our broking and administrative teams and will often also be offered sales leads by our direct sales team.

Should they wish to go on holiday, they can hand over the reins of the business to our head office brokers and also use the 24/7 access to IT that they enjoy, to work from anywhere in the world. If they need to take time off for medical reasons, their brokerage can still operate and be FCA-compliant.

They can also attend three network events during the year, getting together with other Appointed Representatives and the Gauntlet team. Combining insurer presentations or sales inspiration with lots of fun, these vibrant events are the highlight of many an AR's year.

Dialogue with our ARs is constant, because we are true partners for them. We don't turn off our phones or turn our backs on their needs, as what's good for their business is good for ours. We pour massive amounts of investment into helping them succeed and will also listen to their queries or requests for help. Nobody is ghosted on our watch.



## WHAT THE 'GHOSTED' NEED TO DO

We know that being ghosted is hurtful. The sense of rejection by the industry, as well as lack of closure, can leave an independent broker low in self-esteem and full of hurt. But anyone in this position should recognise it's not them but the industry that is at fault. They should look for someone too accountable to ghost them ... someone like Gauntlet Group.

It's about being choosier about who you interact with and finding someone with whom you can build a better relationship. It's really about asking yourself where you want to be positioned on someone's priority list. If the answer is 'at the top', then you need to talk to us here at Gauntlet Group and consider becoming 'un-ghosted', with our assistance. Suddenly, insurers will want to talk to you again.

Gauntlet does not want to see communities becoming ghost towns in which the committed independent broker is no longer present. For this reason, we launched our local broker renaissance in mid-2022 and have really started to put local brokers back on the map. Even some insurers are now seeing that we've got it right, and they got it wrong, and so are supporting our drive to rescue the ghosted brokers.



## LIFE AFTER BEING GHOSTED

There is a vibrant broking life ahead of you, if you un-ghost yourself. However, there is also a first-class exit route option available, for when the time comes to relinquish your brokerage. That exit route is via selling your book of business to Gauntlet.

This is a hugely attractive option for Appointed Representatives who care about their clients. Those clients will already have been 'looked after', in part, by the Gauntlet team, so can have continuity in their arrangements and not be suddenly forced into the hands of an unknown third-party buyer.

However, ARs also love this route because they can slip away from the business in stages, if they wish to do so. They can sell just part of their book and continue to look after the rest. It's a hugely attractive proposition, especially when many local brokers find their working and personal life entwined, making it hard to step away completely.

To find out about this new dawn for your brokerage, all you need do is call Roger Gaunt on 07770 921049, or Nigel Law on 07774 690436, or email [RogerGaunt@GauntletGroup.com](mailto:RogerGaunt@GauntletGroup.com) or [NigelLaw@GauntletGroup.com](mailto:NigelLaw@GauntletGroup.com), respectively.

You could also listen to our podcasts recorded with formerly directly authorised brokers or ARs, to get a feel for the process and life in the network. Just head to our [resources](#) section of our Gauntlet Enterprise website. You can also see how our local broker renaissance vision is presented to the customer, by visiting [www.gauntletgroup.com](http://www.gauntletgroup.com)

Before you know it, you could be un-ghosted and back on the local broker map, which you will find at that website. If you don't at least explore the possibilities, the decision not to act could come back to haunt you.

