

**IN BRIEF:**

More than a decade of papers from the RGA Leaders of Tomorrow alumni reveal five enduring themes – digitalization, inclusion, talent, trust, and sustainability – consistently shaping the insurance industry's strategic priorities and future trajectory.

RGA Leaders of Tomorrow: A decade of insights; a future of possibilities

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The RGA Leaders of Tomorrow program demonstrates how sustained thought leadership can shape industry priorities and inspire innovation.
- A decade of alumni insights reveals the power of collective vision in guiding the insurance industry through disruption and transformation.
- Continuous dialogue and knowledge-sharing among emerging leaders are essential for building resilience and driving progress in a rapidly evolving market.

For the past two years, I have had the privilege of serving as a mentor in the RGA Leaders of Tomorrow program, and I have seen firsthand the importance and value of elevating the next generation of industry leaders. This perspective inspired me to reflect on the program more deeply. As part of that effort, we reviewed the last 11 years of mentee papers and set out to explore and highlight the most consistent themes and insights that continue to shape our industry's future.

– Stephanie Koch

For more than a decade, the RGA Leaders of Tomorrow (LoT) program, in partnership with the International Insurance Society (IIS), has served as a platform for emerging voices in the insurance industry to share ideas, challenge norms, and envision the future.

A short glance in the rearview mirror shows just how much has happened over this timeframe, including a global pandemic, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), various global wars and skirmishes, a surge in cryptocurrency, and a bevy of changes in insurance worldwide.

The papers submitted by the LoT alumni during the past 11 years provide compelling insights that reflect the industry's evolution and the priorities that shape its trajectory. While each article offers its own perspective, five common themes emerge that represent insurance's transformation and resilience. This article explores these themes, their impact on the industry, and why they remain relevant.

Theme 1: Digital transformation and innovation in insurance

The past decade-plus has seen insurance embark on a relentless march toward digitalization. LoT alumni papers chronicle the industry's journey from early automation efforts to today's AI-driven ecosystems. Topics ranged from drones in property risk consulting to generative AI's use in underwriting and distribution.

Technology adoption has become paramount for insurers to compete and expand. As a result, the industry has embraced the implementation of automation, AI, big data, and more. This has led to an enhanced ability to innovate and reinvigorate products and distribution.

Technology exploration and adoption has been driven by the need to streamline operations, a rise in competition, and evolving customer expectations. The digital transformation has unlocked new business models and shifted how insurance is sold, underwritten, and serviced. Digitalization enables new products, better customer experiences, and operational efficiencies, making it a key driver of future growth. Insurers who fail to innovate risk losing market share to agile insurtechs and tech-savvy competitors, or worse, facing marketplace extinction.

Theme 2: Protection gaps and financial inclusion

Protection gaps – the difference between the insurance people have and what they truly need – are a persistent challenge. This holds true for developed economies as well as underserved populations (e.g., emerging markets, low-income earners, and rural communities). LoT alumni papers explored options to bridge the insurance divide, including microinsurance, flexible payment models, and partnerships.

Closing protection gaps is often viewed as both a business growth opportunity and a societal responsibility. When large segments remain uninsured or underinsured, the consequences can ripple across economies and communities. Low penetration in select markets or among

vulnerable populations can motivate insurers to develop affordable, accessible, and relevant products. Addressing protection gaps supports financial resilience, expands the customer base, and aligns with regulatory and sustainable business practice expectations for inclusive growth.



The RGA Leaders of Tomorrow program was created in partnership with the International Insurance Society with a clear vision: to inspire and empower the next generation of leaders in the global insurance industry. Explore the [RGA Leaders of Tomorrow program](#).

Theme 3: Talent, leadership, and workforce transformation

While technology has become omnipresent, it is people who drive innovation and service, so the human element of insurance has been a consistent focus. Faced with a growing labor shortage in insurance, papers from LoT alumni highlighted the need for insurers to embrace agile leadership, diversity, and workforce upskilling to meet the demands of a digital-first world. From empathetic leadership to strategies to attract young talent, these discussions underscore the industry's reliance on people.

The labor shortage dilemma seems to have worsened over the past 11 years, precipitated by a workforce with redefined expectations, an abundance of technological advancements, and the need for an expanded skill set. The ability to attract, develop, and retain talent – especially those with digital and analytical skills – is now a strategic imperative to remain relevant and competitive.

Theme 4: Customer centricity, trust, and financial literacy

Insurance is often perceived as complex. This likely motivated several LoT alumni to produce papers that emphasized the importance of trust and transparency within the industry. Recurring recommendations urged improved financial literacy, simplified products, and personalized experiences.

In an era of oftentimes instantaneous digital interaction, customers demand clarity, fairness, and relevance. They additionally seek ongoing, consistent communication regarding products and services.

Customer trust and understanding are prerequisites for insurance adoption and retention. As products become more complex and digital channels proliferate, insurers will need to focus on transparency, simplicity, and education. Improving financial and insurance literacy, building trust, and delivering seamless, customer-centric experiences are essential for growth, loyalty, and regulatory compliance.

Theme 5: Sustainability and societal impact

The notion of sustainability continues to gain momentum. LoT alumni papers explored climate risk, sustainable business practices in investing, and insurers' role in societal resilience. These discussions reflect a growing recognition that insurance is more than a business; it can be a force for good.

Climate change and social inequality pose systemic risks. Insurers are uniquely positioned to mitigate these risks through innovative products, sustainable investments, and partnerships that enhance resilience.

Insurers are increasingly expected to play a leading role in addressing climate risk, supporting sustainability, and advancing responsible business practices. Sustainable operations are now a key factor in investor, regulator, and customer decision making. Insurers that position themselves at the forefront of this movement can enhance their reputation, manage risk, and unlock new business opportunities.

Conclusion

The RGA Leaders of Tomorrow program has chronicled the evolution of the insurance industry and envisioned its future. These five themes – digital transformation, protection gaps, talent cultivation, customer trust, and sustainability – are more than academic discussions; they are strategic imperatives shaping the next era of insurance.

The challenge for industry leaders is clear: translate these insights into action. The next decade will demand bold moves, collaborative innovation, and a renewed commitment to the core purpose of insurance – protecting people, businesses, and communities.

Learn more about the [RGA Leaders of Tomorrow](#) program and how you can get involved.



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