The secrets to effective Loss Control are simply the three C’s:

- Commitment
- Customize
- Create a Calendar

The devil, of course, is in the details, but as we shall discover loss control demands neither advanced degrees nor workaholics!

Demonstrate Commitment

It's easy to pay lip service to this principle and move on, but unless our personnel sees concrete evidence of commitment from the top, your efforts will likely fall short. Brightstone Insurance Services has developed the following criteria for judging management commitment, which we will call the Five P’s:

- Does top management participate?
- Are strategies published in writing?
- Do you provide adequate resources?
- Do you react promptly to feedback and needs?
- Is planning part of the process?

Delegating responsibility for loss control strategies is okay. It's inevitable in all but the smallest companies because top management and owners should remain visible, at least periodically, to all participants. Attend a safety meeting, give out safety awards, and put our signature on letters that address safety. Don't disappear. Participate and be present.

As for your lieutenants, make sure to meet with them periodically to discuss the status of project implementation and share ideas for further improvements. If you expect them to continue to give loss control their attention, show them that you still care and concern for safety was not a fad.

One of the best ways to institutionalize something is to write it down. Expressing your commitment through publications such as a mission statement, safety program or newsletters is almost a prerequisite for being taken seriously. Written commitment is a necessary condition, but not sufficient by itself.

Your loss control strategies will require resources, and you must provide them. Personnel, time and money are scarce commodities that must be wrenched free and reallocated. A starved loss control program will never take root and flourish; it will only stagnate and breed cynicism. "Just say no" to hollow slogans.

Prompt response to loss control issues reflects your commitment by demonstrating a willingness to get
involved. If you make yourself accessible to those with feedback or problems, you will send a positive message and avoid having your loss-control efforts march down a dead end path.

Finally, don’t neglect planning in favor of a quick launch. Like any other endeavor, if loss control strategies are worth pursuing at all, then they are worth doing well. Initial planning and annual reviews are recommended. To avoid the opposite mistake of endless planning and no action, try setting aside a discrete block of time to plan and do the best you can within that time.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR STRATEGY

Just as off-the-shelf canned insurance solutions don’t properly protect your courier company, so too, standardized loss control and safety programs fall well short of meeting your needs. Programs designed for truck drivers, school bus companies, or taxis fail to address important differences between their target audience and yours. Operators of light vehicles (or bicycles) driving locally, making many stops on tight schedules, simply have different needs. Also, what motivates one group may not do the same for another group who use different pay scales and are exposed to different work conditions.

Indeed, differences among courier companies themselves are staggering. Due to operational type, local geography, market conditions, and management style, one courier firm’s plan may fall flat if crudely copied by another company.

The lesson is not to scrap models entirely, but to review them critically, and make adjustments, mix and match, and experiment until you have a strategy that fits your company and its unique situation.

A wise mentor once told me, "Don't let the best be the enemy of the good." It's always possible to improve on anything. Those who insist on perfection, however, are doomed never to take the first step. Aim high, but do remember to pull the trigger!

Just as with commitment and planning, it is advisable to set up concrete criteria and a discrete time frame in which to customize your strategies as best you can. Then move on.

Create a Calendar

Loss control strategies encompass many different areas, some straightforward, some complex. Room must also be made for planning and customization. Although no single piece of the task is overly difficult or demanding, it's easy to become overwhelmed. One answer to this dilemma is

To set up a Loss Control Calendar.

Unlike a plain outline, a calendar allows you both to break up your project into manageable pieces and to arrange them by when each piece will be addressed. Below is an example of how

Your calendar might look:

- October - Planning
- November - Insurance Review
- December - Hiring/Screening
- January - Disaster Plan
February - Insurance Selection  
March - Communication  
April - Cargo Protection  
May - Safety Incentives  
June - Written Documents  
July - Vacation  
August - Premises Security  
September - Fleet/Owner-Ops.

Each month is devoted to a single distinct area, ensuring focus. Each is a bite-sized chunk that can be tackled realistically with good hope for success. Avoid the pitfalls of trying to do everything at once. This way, loss control can receive the sustained year-round attention it needs without overly taxing your resources.

Having a written schedule also enforces discipline, as does planning your first month’s project. With priorities, responsible parties and action plans set up in advance, it’s easier to maintain the pace of implementation throughout the year.

Note that three months were purposefully set aside for non-loss control activities. The interaction of loss control and insurance is obvious, and one should not proceed without referencing the other. So, it makes sense to review your insurance program after completing your year’s loss control plan, with your accomplishments and future goals at hand. Also, separate the review from the purchasing process, as few can focus objectively on both at the same time.

Finally, take a regular vacation from loss control. A good time would be while final versions of new documents are being prepared. However important the task, we all need a break to stay fresh and focused!

**Summing Up**

Loss control is but one method of managing risk but never underestimate its importance. Avoiding, accepting, and transferring risk have their place, but if you truly desire to protect your investment, you must look beyond. The benefits—monetary and otherwise—of doing so are substantial.

The keys to implementing successful loss control strategies are the Three C’s: Commitment, Customization and the Calendar. Sustained commitment to management can be measured by using another set of concepts, the Five P’s:

- Participation
- Publication
- Provision of resources
- Prompt response
- Planning

Customization is necessary to optimize outcomes and make sure that strategies developed for other industries or courier companies are not poorly grafted onto your organization.

Lastly, the Loss Control Calendar is a helpful tool for dividing and organizing your project. It allows loss control strategies to be developed at a realistic pace, with regard to priorities and the even distribution of resources throughout the year.
As we have seen, you can indeed go “beyond insurance” to better manage your business risks. While a certain degree of attention and thought is required, few readers should find the task bewildering.

Moreover, help is available. Depending on how well they know your industry and over risk picture, your insurance agent or broker, accountant or attorney may be of considerable assistance. Of course, there are also loss control consultants to consider.

Regardless of how you go about it, the important thing is to get started and track your progress along the way. Managing risk and loss control are critical elements to the overall health of your financial bottom line and business success strategy.

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