

OUR VISION

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Thinking GLOBAL

RJF Agencies is helping Midwest companies stay healthy—even from halfway across the world.

As chairman of Assurex Global, Bill Jeatran is helping his clients navigate the increasingly global marketplace.

Photograph by Patrick Kelly

BILL JEATRAN has a lot on his plate. In addition to his role as CEO of RJF Agencies, a \$25 million, 160-person risk management and employee benefits agency in Minneapolis, he is also the current chairman of Assurex Global, a \$23 billion international network of 110 independent insurance brokers that helps its affiliates cope with strains of increased globalization.

Assurex is an Ohio-based company that is owned by its network of member companies. To qualify for ownership, a company must be independently owned and must have sufficient resources to be useful to other partner companies. “What we are looking for are typically the best, the ones with the most resources, and the ones that are committed to organic growth and independence and really align well with the overall partnership,” Jeatran says. “The objective is to take all of the independent entrepreneurial [insurance] firms out there and create the aggregate resources of the whole.” With 530 offices and 20,000 people employed under the Assurex umbrella, the network is the third largest brokerage in the world. “We have people on the ground in every major country in the world,” Jeatran says.

As chairman, Jeatran is getting to know his network personally. On a recent trip, he visited nine European countries in five days for meetings with Assurex Global companies, and then traveled to Miami for another partner meeting.

“My personal belief is that every business has some aspect of global coming at it, whether it’s incoming product, external sales or sales force, or manufacturing overseas,” Jeatran says. Personal privacy laws and safety requirements vary greatly from country to country, so ensuring a safe and healthy working environment is a challenge for companies with components in multiple corners of the world. RJF Agencies’ status as an Assurex Global partner enables it to network with some of the world’s most highly regarded insurance agencies to assist their clients worldwide.

Jeatran extols Assurex’s high standards. “They have high partner evaluation standards that ensure a continued quality network to deliver client needs,” he says. “So the promises we make to our clients, we know we’re going to deliver.” For example, if RJF Agencies has a client needing assistance with his or her company in China, an Assurex Global partner in China is required to make RJF Agencies’ client a top priority, and vice versa. “We had one manufacturer that had plants in Singapore, China and India but didn’t know what the risk was or what the compliance requirements were. We were able to come back and tell him exactly what the risk was and what the program [to manage that risk] was,” Jeatran says. “So as our clients go global, we have global resources that we think are quicker, better, faster and more resourceful to serve our clients’ global needs.” **EM**