

## **Mutualism and cooperation**

### **SSQ regional meetings**

For close to 25 years, SSQ, Mutual Management Corporation has been inviting the clients of SSQ, Life Insurance Company Inc. to its meetings held in 11 different regions of Quebec every fall. However, I am under the impression (but may be completely wrong...) that the image we all hold of these regional meetings needs a little dusting off. That is why I have decided to present a few typical opinions you may have already heard and to counter them with a new and positive outlook.

Preconceived ideas... versus a fresh, new way of looking at things!

#### **Boring, boring, boring...**

Okay, okay, I admit it. Attending a regional meeting may not exactly be the highlight of your year. However, it is a meeting where you can express your opinion, and where you won't be lulled to sleep with a boring PowerPoint presentation.

SSQ regional meetings are participative. That means you won't be the only one raising pointed questions... everyone gets involved! A typical evening includes question periods, a special presentation, and, of course, the election of regional delegates. Actually, quite a lot happens at a meeting and the evening usually ends on an amicable note with cocktails.

#### **It won't change anything... just a waste of time!**

While being informed may not change your world... it can be very useful, especially if the information you receive is pertinent. At regional meetings, you learn what important events occurred over the past year and you can ask questions about the general direction SSQ is headed in. Also, each year a topic of special interest is presented. This year's topic "*What should a group insurance plan include and who should decide what it includes?*" will certainly be of interest to many. Insurance can be a complicated business, so we are trying to shed a little light on the subject.

#### **Completely out of touch!**

I would say that just the opposite is true. For 25 years, SSQ has been leading the way. Regional meetings provide SSQ with a unique opportunity to meet with its clients one-on-one, to listen to their concerns and to make adjustments whenever possible to meet the needs expressed during the meetings.

SSQ is the only insurance company I know of that holds meetings in 11 different regions of the province. Does taking a unique and original approach mean we are "out of touch"? Is being accessible to our clients and listening to their needs "out of date"?

#### **Not worth the money spent on it!**

Some say they think we don't reach enough people through our meetings. This is perhaps true, and we are making efforts to improve participation rates. However, I strongly believe that the opportunity these meetings offer to our clients to come out and meet us is... invaluable. Of course, the benefits of this cannot be easily quantified. But in the name of solid values like transparency, accessibility and solidarity, it is important that SSQ continue to make its presence felt in all regions of Quebec.