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eXpert Partner Team

IN THE NEWS: After the Hard Market

SMART MOVES FOR COMMERCIAL LINES AGENTS

XPT EXECUTIVE PARTNER **STEVE KASS** PUBLISHES ARTICLE IN **INDEPENDENT AGENT**

Read the Article on IAMagazine.com

Overview

Steve digs into the uneven market shift happening right now, property rates easing while casualty (especially excess liability) stays tight, and makes the case that E&S isn't a last resort but a first move for complex risks. He wraps with six practical tips for agents (resetting expectations early, remarketing property proactively, building wholesale relationships now, etc.).

About *Steve Kass*

Steve Kass is part of the leadership team at XPT, focusing on driving the nationwide expansion of its P&C operations. Known for his strategic vision and ability to foster growth, Steve plays a key role in strengthening XPT's presence and capabilities across the country.

Prior to joining XPT, Steve served as Regional Director and Executive Vice President at a leading wholesale insurance firm, where he was instrumental in overseeing regional operations, cultivating client relationships, and developing innovative solutions to meet the diverse needs of the market. His leadership contributed significantly to the firm's success and growth during his tenure.

Article Snapshot

From the Article: The commercial lines space has been a wild ride for agents over the past five years. Capacity disappeared overnight, "nonadmitted" was suddenly a well-known term to clients and relationships that took years to build were unexpectedly stress-tested. Now, as the market stabilizes, the advantage is shifting again—though not evenly.

Commercial property rates declined throughout 2025 and capacity has been returning in catastrophe risk markets that were essentially shut off two years ago, according to Business Insurance. That's good news for many clients. But casualty rates, particularly excess liability, are holding strong. Social inflation, rising verdicts and claims severity remain persistent.

A good example of these uneven market shifts is habitational business. Apartment and condominium accounts receive meaningful property premium reductions as competition and capacity return to CAT-exposed markets. At the same time, excess liability programs are often renewed with the same or significantly increased premiums due to ongoing concerns about litigation trends and loss severity.

> **Surplus premium**
> VOLUME REACHED
> **$90.3 BILLION**
> IN 2025, A 7.8% INCREASE

For many insureds, property savings created an expectation that the entire account would improve, even as liability costs remained under pressure. Those conversations are easier when agents address property and casualty separately at the beginning of the renewal.

E&S Is Not the Last Resort

The hard market taught us how the excess and surplus channel really works. Surplus lines premium volume reached $90.3 billion in 2025, a 7.8% increase from the prior year, according to WSIA's annual stamping office report. The biggest shift wasn't whether to use E&S; it was when. If you were waiting until admitted markets decline a risk, you were already behind...

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