

**Eugene Cohen**  
Eugene Cohen Insurance  
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# Disability Insurance Forum

*Disability Insurance Knowledge =  
Disability Insurance Sales*

**Q**

*What led you to specialize in the DI market?*

After graduating from Ohio State University with a major in finance and searching for a career, I interviewed with a company that specialized in disability income protection. The appeal to me was that this concept made sense. Everyone who works depends on an income and the need

to protect their income was obvious—for most people—because their greatest asset is their future income. This was a concept that I believed in, and I knew that I would be able to relate to potential clients with sincerity and pride. I also knew that I would not be dependent on friends and family for sales.

**Q**

*What are the most challenging issues for disability insurance specialists today?*

In the past, companies taught disability income protection to their agents. Because there are fewer companies offering disability income insurance today, fewer companies are teaching it, leaving a smaller pool of agents with disability insurance knowledge. The major challenge we have ahead of us is that we have to teach brokers about this vital product. It is not only enough to have brokers aware of the great need that their clients have for disability protection—they must be able to present that need to their clients.

The problem, I believe, is that many brokers are uncomfortable with disability insurance because of their lack of knowledge. Therefore, our challenge is to make them comfortable with the uncomfortable. The priority must be to educate brokers and

encourage them to ask their clients about disability income protection. *Just as important, brokers must be educated on how to ask the right questions.*

Our firm, the Eugene Cohen Insurance Agency, Inc., is a brokerage agency and our clients are brokers and financial planners. They are independent agents as well as advisors referred by broker/dealers, general agencies and brokerage agencies that do not specialize in disability insurance.

Once a broker/advisor asks us for a proposal, we spend as much time as needed going over the illustration and preparing him for the appointment. We are not satisfied until we have done our job—making the broker comfortable with the previously uncomfortable.

**Q**

*What is the best way to get beyond a client's "it won't happen to me" objection?*

The "it won't happen to me" objection is not a real objection. There are only four basic objections in selling: (1) no need, (2) no hurry, (3) no money, or (4) no confidence. *All other objections are not the real reasons why the client is not buying.*

The "no need" objection is overcome by asking questions. For example, consider the following conversation:

Broker: What is the longest vacation you have ever taken?

Client: (most will likely answer) Two or three weeks.

Broker: Why only two or three weeks?

Client: I have to work...Who can afford to take a longer vacation?

Broker: If you were to have an accident or illness that disabled you for two or three years, would you have an income problem?

Client: (most will likely answer) Yes.

Now you have established the need for income disability insurance. Asking questions enables the client to see the need. One of my favorite client questions to teach a broker is: If you had a money machine—one that produced X amount of dollars every month—would you insure that machine against a breakdown? Of course you would—you are the money machine!

After the client has been educated on the policy—especially what it can do for him—only then should you address the “no money” objection. Ask the client if the company were to deduct X amount of dollars from his checking account each month for this policy, would that create a financial problem. The answer is either yes or no. If it is no, you are done—you have established that the client has the means for a policy, thereby countering the “no money” objection. If the answer is yes, you still have more work to do.

Over the years, I developed an approach that I found to be successful. When I sold directly to consumers, I would tell my clients that I didn’t come to create a financial problem—I came to solve one. This approach only worked because of its simplicity. I simply put the current proposal aside, rolled up my sleeves and sat down with my client to design a policy which was more affordable.

In regard to the other two objections “no hurry” and “no confidence”—I have found that these are easily overcome if I have done my job well to educate a client.

**Q** *What advice do you have for a producer who is just entering the disability insurance market?*

The following is my four-point advice to agents starting in the disability income protection business:

**1. Knowledge is power.** You should know your product. Read and understand the company’s disability policy and all the accompanying brochures.

**2. Believe in the need for disability income protection.** If you qualify for disability income protection, you should own it.

**3. Disability income protection is the**

**best kept secret.** You must discuss it with prospects. You will be surprised at the interest your clients will have when they realize that their future income is their greatest asset. Also, disability income protection is a great way to gain new clients.

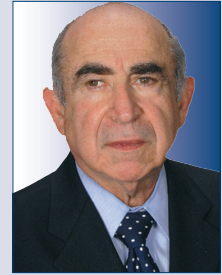
**4. Understand the real objections.** As I mentioned earlier—no need, no hurry, no money and no confidence—are the real reasons people don’t buy disability insurance.

**Q** *What advice would you give to a producer who has been in the disability insurance market for a while?*

My advice to producers who have been in the business for awhile is to visit your clients on a regular basis. This will enable you to review their coverage with them, be knowledgeable about any life changes which would necessitate any new coverage, and help you to obtain referrals.

But I am also curious about long-time producers who do not offer disability income protection to their clients. I wonder why—are they too busy? Do they lack knowledge? Is it the underwriting? In most cases, I believe, it is the lack of knowledge which makes brokers uncomfortable.

*But this doesn’t have to be the case.* Opportunities to become educated come from a variety of different sources. The companies that offer disability income protection have created a tremendous amount of material to help brokers understand the concept. I myself hold regular DI training sessions for brokers who are affiliated with our agency. I feel it is our job to help them become more comfortable putting disability income protection into their portfolios.



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*After receiving a BS degree from Ohio State University in 1962, Eugene Cohen began his insurance industry career in Cleveland, OH, with a company that specialized in disability income protection.*

*In 1981, when the company he had represented for nearly 20 years exited the disability market, Cohen founded the Eugene Cohen Insurance Agency, Inc., which specializes in disability, life and long term care insurance; fixed annuities; and impaired risk cases. The agency is a member of LifeMark Partners and NAILBA, as well as a founding member of The Plus Group.*

*Cohen was named the 2009 recipient of the W. Harold Petersen Lifetime Achievement Award from the International DI Society.*

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