

For More Information Contact:
Bill Messett
1-866-495-4111
bill@GetOnlineQuotes.com
www.GetOnlineQuotes.com

Top Ten Things to Look For When Buying Insurance Online



Editor's Note: This guide is designed to help you understand what to look for when buying insurance online. It is not intended to sell you any specific policy or endorse any specific company.

©July 2001—QQLink

Top Ten Things to Look For When Buying Insurance Online

The power of the Internet and e-commerce have brought us unlimited access to products and services, including another method of purchasing insurance. While we are faced with amazing amounts of information from various sources, sometimes all these options can be a little overwhelming.

This guide was created to help you through the maze of companies, products, and services. Top Ten Things to Look for When Buying Insurance Online will assist you in evaluating insurance websites and understanding how they function.



1

A Complete Sales Process

When purchasing online, it is important to understand how the entire sales process works. Many websites are not fully transactional—in other words, you cannot actually complete the entire sales process. Sites may include some, but not all of these functions:

- 1) Ability to view product information
- 2) Immediate online quotes
- 3) Ability to complete product application online
- 4) Direct online application submission without mailing a paper application

A website that can offer all four of these functions will bring you the fastest service with the least amount of paperwork and manual operations.



2

Choice of Products and Plan Designs

Since insurance is not a small investment, you do not want to be limited when choosing a plan. Be sure to look for companies that carry a broad product portfolio and plans with a selection of benefit design choices, such as various deductibles and optional benefits that may be used to customize your plan.

By finding a company that carries a wide range of plans, you are guaranteed to find something that will fit your budget and your specific needs.



A Reputable, Financially Strong Company

Before finalizing your decision to purchase, you will want to research the insurance company that is issuing the policy and verify that it is financially sound. Find out the company ratings through a well-known system, such as A.M. Best. A good rating assures you that the company is solid and financially secure.



Quality Service Provided Both During and After the Sale

It is important that a website can provide you with the necessary support services to answer any questions you may have, or simply assist you in selecting a plan that is right for you. Look for a site that has a toll-free phone number and local agents that can help you while you are searching for an insurance plan.

Also, contacts should be readily available via the telephone and e-mail after the sale to answer any follow-up questions you may have. This service eliminates any concerns that you may have about buying an insurance policy online. It is always good to know that you can reach a "live person" to discuss your purchase.



Security

Buying on the Internet can be intimidating, but you can avoid this fear by purchasing through a secure Internet site. Security assures you that any information you enter, such as your e-mail address, home address or credit card number, is protected and will not be intercepted by Internet hackers.

There are three things to look for to verify that a site is secure. First, the URL (or web page address) will begin with "https://" rather than "http://". The "s" at the end denotes that you are on a secure site. Second, a secure site will be recognized with a padlock in the lower right hand corner of your browser. Last, look for an icon that assures you are visiting a secure site. Commonly used, VeriSign is a company that specializes in evaluating and verifying the security of websites.

NOTE: Many times the website pages are only secure when they require personal information. Website home pages are often not secure.



6

Privacy

Privacy refers to the type of information that is collected from the consumer, how the information is protected and used, and the circumstances under which it will be shared with third parties. To guarantee that your personal information is protected, only complete transactions on websites that display their privacy policy on the website and explain their practices.



7

Underlying Brick and Mortar Company

Too many websites exist today without any underlying “brick and mortar” or traditional company. While these companies may be successful for a period of time, “dot.com” failures have been widely publicized. Investigating the actual company providing the online product will provide you with critical information.

Companies that offer their products both online and offline in a traditional way bring much more credibility. You will have the assurance that the company has a strong background because it was formed with sound business practices—not developed for Internet use only. Many of these brick and mortar companies that have expanded into e-commerce have the added advantage of an established distribution channel of quality insurance agents.



8

Delivery Time

With most online purchases, timely delivery is expected. With insurance policies, this is not always the case. You will want to understand the approximate approval and delivery time of a policy quoted. If you need to be covered by a policy quickly, and the company cannot give you an approximate time that you will receive your policy, you may not want to purchase insurance through this company. If this information is not readily available on the website, you should contact customer service for a time estimate.



9

Customer Testimonials

Customer testimonials assure you that your experience will be a positive one. By reading firsthand about other consumers' experiences with the company, you will feel more secure in completing a transaction. If actual testimonials do not appear on the website, the company's customer service department should be able to provide this information.



10

Navigation Time

Most importantly, you want a site that is easy to understand and navigate. Nothing is more frustrating than getting lost in screens of text-heavy information or not knowing how to find what you need. The most effective websites have simple button selections to navigate you through. They should also allow you to perform simple functions, such as getting a quote, without the hassle of clicking through and completing too many screens.

While there are many components to investigating websites and purchasing insurance online, we hope that these basic tips will help make your online insurance purchase a simple and rewarding experience.

For More Information Contact:
Bill Messett
1-866-495-4111
bill@GetOnlineQuotes.com
www.GetOnlineQuotes.com