



# BUILDING A BRAND

**URNS OUT,** we were branding from day one.

Formed 30 years ago to meet a critical employer need, A.I.M. Mutual kept service as its focal point. Over time, that reputation grew, both in broker circles and among employers in like-minded industries.

With a milestone anniversary on the horizon, senior leadership considered the value of a brand refresh and determined the time was right. They enlisted the help of Massachusetts-based JustJump Marketing, who is helping to crystallize company marketing goals and strategy.

Should you refresh your brand? If so, when? Before deciding, it's important to look back as well as forward.

That's the first bit of advice Michael Standing, President and CEO of A.I.M. Mutual, shares when asked. Consider your corporate objectives—short and longer term—and contrast them with where you were 10 or even five years ago.

"That's how we got started with this process," he says. "Our business is far more competitive and demanding today, and we've done some expanding throughout the region. As we enhance our technology and service capabilities, we want to be sure to get the message out there. At the

same time, our reputation in the market is hard-earned and solid, and we want to hold fast to that."

Branding needs to be part of an overall marketing strategy, according to Abi Troy, Director of IT and Insurance Operations, and Dan Landers, Director of Field Operations, who spearheaded the project. Knowing your exact audience and messaging may seem simple, but it needs real definition.

"It takes time, introspection, and reliance on the knowledge base in your organization," Abi says. "How do you market to a diverse audience—brokers who may be new to workers' comp, for

instance, and those who've made a career of it? How do Millennials and Gen-Xers view the industry versus Baby Boomers? Those are important factors."

Dan Landers agrees, noting A.I.M. Mutual has longstanding relationships with brokers and is looking to establish new ones in select places. "We're well known in Massachusetts and New Hampshire," Dan says, "but in some other states, we're a fairly new face. We expect the benefits of a brand re-refresh to be two-fold: affirming our name recognition in certain markets while establishing it in others. It's a unique opportunity to distinguish ourselves from other carriers."

As for the timing, Mike says the company's 30th anniversary in 2019 worked well for a launch. "This milestone for us really can't be overstated," he says. "We started out as a reciprocal insurance exchange, filling a void for Massachusetts small and midmarket businesses, became a mutual company in 1996, and weathered a number of tough economic and market cycles. Here we are today in five states, nearly 20,000 policyholders, a consistent 'A' rating from A.M. Best, and over \$650 million in assets. It's a credit to our employees and our supportive Board of Directors."

The 2019 B2B marketing plan is multifaceted and ongoing. It includes a new logo and tagline, both designed to heighten A.I.M. Mutual's brand while complementing that of its broker partners. Mike and Dan report the tagline—First we listen—evolved from a common theme from brokers who often remarked their carriers weren't hearing them.

"It goes hand-in-glove with service excellence. Our new logo reflects the carrier, broker, and policyholder partnership we have developed as part of our workers' compensation management approach. It's unique to us. And we believe we do that better than most," Dan says. ▀



## MICHAEL STANDING

**MICHAEL STANDING** is President & CEO of A.I.M. Mutual. He joined the company in August 2012 as Vice President and was elected President effective June 1, 2013 and CEO effective January 1, 2015. Previously, Mike was employed by Guy Carpenter & Co. and had been associated with A.I.M. Mutual and their reinsurance program for over 15 years.



## ABI TROY

**ABI TROY** is Director of IT and Insurance Operations for A.I.M. Mutual, responsible for Premium Audit, Premium Receivables, and Insurance/Underwriting services in addition to IT, communications, and office services. She has more than 25 years of experience in the workers' compensation and technology fields.



## DAN LANDERS

**DAN LANDERS** is Director of Field Operations for A.I.M. Mutual, responsible for underwriting and marketing as well as injury prevention and worksite wellness. He has more than 25 years of experience in workers' compensation operations throughout New England.