



## Leading with Vision: Alignment in Employee Benefits

### *Episode 61 Show Notes*

What does true alignment across brokers, employers, and carriers actually look like and why does it matter more than ever?

In this episode, Sharon Alford and Warren Laird break down how stronger partnerships are shaping the future of employee benefits. They share how communication, education, and consistent support are key to building trust across the ecosystem.

As models like ICHRA continue to evolve, coordination between carriers, brokers, and technology platforms becomes even more critical. When alignment is done well, it leads to better outcomes, improved access, and a more seamless experience for both employers and employees.

### *Vision Care as a Gateway to Employee Health*

Vision benefits are often one of the most consistent ways employees interact with the healthcare system. Routine eye exams support vision health while also helping detect broader health conditions. A routine eye exam is an important entry point into managing overall health.

Sharon explains that expanding access to care has become a major priority. Through investments in technology platforms and new retail locations, VSP is working to reach members in areas where access to eye care has traditionally been limited.

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*Simple, accessible benefits encourage stronger employee engagement with healthcare.*

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### *Broker, Employer, and Alignment*

Sharon and Warren discuss why alignment across brokers, employers, and carriers matters more than ever. Strong partnerships don't just happen, they're built through communication, education, and consistent support for distribution partners.

As models like ICHRA continue to evolve, coordination across carriers, brokers, and technology platforms becomes even more important. When everyone is working together, it leads to better outcomes and a smoother experience for both employers and employees.

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*The most effective partnerships are built on trust, communication, and long-term collaboration.*

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## Leadership in a Changing Benefits Landscape

The conversation also explores how leadership is evolving as the benefits market continues to shift.

Workforce expectations are changing, technology is transforming distribution, and new models of coverage are emerging. Leaders must balance stability with adaptability while maintaining a clear focus on serving customers and partners.

For Sharon and Warren, successful leadership comes from staying connected to the market, listening to partners, and continuing to evolve as the needs of employers and employees change.

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*Leadership clarity creates confidence across teams, partners, and customers.*

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## Notable Quotes from the Episode

“It’s not what we want necessarily. It’s what do our members want?”

— **Warren Laird**

“My job is really uncovering new opportunities and new relationships to grow our division.”

— **Sharon Alford**

“You have to continue, like an endurance race, to manage your partnerships and the relationships.”

— **Sharon Alford**

## ILP Leadership Perspective

Leadership across the benefits landscape continues to evolve as organizations search for better ways to serve employers and employees.

The leaders who succeed in this environment remain focused on listening to the market, strengthening partnerships, and delivering solutions that create real value.

At the Insurance Leadership Podcast, we believe strong leadership is demonstrated through clarity of purpose, thoughtful collaboration, and the discipline to serve partners and customers well.

## What's Next on the Insurance Leadership Podcast

In May, Ben Markland will welcome **Sergio Tigera**, founder of **Gamechangers**, for a conversation on leadership mindset, resilience, and navigating risk in today's evolving business environment.

Sergio's career spans global leadership roles where he built high-performing teams and guided organizations through complex challenges. Through Game Changers, he now works with leaders to strengthen mindset, develop resilience, and perform effectively under pressure.

## Let's Keep the Conversation Going

Have an idea for a future topic or a guest you think we should feature? We'd love to hear from you.

Follow and connect with us on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#) to stay part of the conversation.

If you enjoy the show, leave us a review. Your feedback helps us continue creating meaningful conversations for leaders.

Be sure to follow the Insurance Leadership Podcast on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you listen so you never miss an episode.

Know a leader making an impact in the industry? Let us know. We're always looking to highlight voices that are leading well and moving the industry forward.

**Simple solutions. Real results. That's great leadership.**