

The analogy effectively captures the challenges confronting U.S. life insurers as carriers seek to expand in seemingly mature markets.

Consider the stalemate: the point during a chess game in which the player is left with no legal move,

policyholders seems to represent a tremendous opportunity, on the whole it has remained stubbornly out of reach.

After investing mightily in improving the purchasing experience, insurance leaders may understandably feel as if there are no moves left. Relax underwriting assessment any further, and carriers rightly fear that a streamlined sale today may lead to widening losses tomorrow. Until recently this stalemate seemed destined to continue indefinitely.

To move from stalemate to checkmate, insurers must first understand that the rules of the game have changed.

New Game, New Rules

Today's life insurance consumers are looking for a buying experience befitting the digital age. They want to make quick, convenient, and affordable purchases, but this expectation is often thwarted by onerous underwriting requirements.

Thankfully, the combination of new data sources and automated underwriting technologies have enabled insurers to change the rules of the game. Many insurers have invested in digital applications to improve the customer experience, a necessary and critical step. A positive initial online experience is vital to retaining the interest of the client, but it isn't enough. Carriers now recognize the importance of streamlining the risk assessment process. Most are working diligently to catch up with consumer demand for accelerated end-to-end underwriting. As LIMRA and Life Happens found in the 2019 Insurance Barometer Study, "9 in 10 companies either have or are in the planning stages to develop automated underwriting programs."

These efforts are paying off. The study also found: "Three quarters of those who have implemented automated underwriting say their companies have achieved a 20% or greater reduction in underwriting costs." (Source: LIMRA and Life Happens, 2019 Insurance Barometer Study)

Despite the assistance of technology, approval could still take weeks – and typically applicants were evaluated using the same evidence sources. Because decision technology was tightly coupled with underwriting rules, these platforms proved inflexible. It became increasingly difficult to both manage the platforms and take advantage of emerging evidence sources.

Fortunately, technology has caught up with need. The Software as a Service version of RGA's automated underwriting platform, AURA, is a case in point. The AURA platform has been completely re-architected to enable the efficient utilization of new, emerging, and multiple evidence sources. This allows for comprehensive, accelerated, and precise underwriting analysis of individual risks, finally matching the customer need for speed with carrier demand for accuracy.

See also: *E-Underwriting Technology and Automated Underwriting: How to Accelerate Return on Investment*