

APRIL 2011

# UNITE

THE UNION IN AXA UK

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## AXA BRANCH DEJA VU

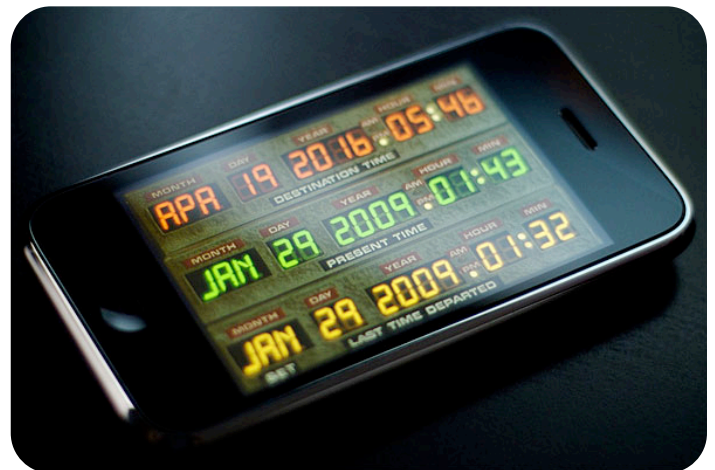
**Yesterday's announcement of the Commercial Lines organisation review has a definite 'Back to the Future' quality about it as the company turns back the clock and reverts to a de-centralised branch structure for its Commercial Insurance organisation**

Unfortunately the decision is not without a negative impact on employees as a number of jobs lost, many in management grades,. However, the restructure and empowerment of staff should see **AXA** able to regain its position in a highly competitive market and secure employees jobs for the future.

Clearly a number of you will be very frustrated by the *volte-face* and angry about the impact has on colleagues who have worked hard for **AXA** in recent times. We share that frustration, least of all because we were never convinced with the previous Branch Transformation Project which closed a number of branches, increased the number of managers compared to staff and centralised work.

However, it is pointless engaging in a blame game, the situation is now that **AXA** Commercial's gross written premium has fallen sharply and costs risen so action has to be taken to secure the long term viability of the commercial operation.

Commercial is fortunate in that the new CEO Amanda Blanc has had experience of **AXA** Commercial as a customer herself, suffering the problems and frustrations first hand and this has driven the decisions on centralisation to be overturned and a return to the previously successful branch structure.



Additionally, as with Personal Lines, management has realised that there are too many layers of employee between the top and bottom, stifling decision making and making **AXA** very bureaucratic. The planned reduction in the number of layers from nine to six will see employees empowered to make speedy decisions, helping service customer needs and making work more interesting.

An eye will need to be kept on those decisions and staff given the appropriate training to make them. Employees cannot be asked to undertake work they are not competent in, then blamed for mistakes made. **Unite in AXA** will ensure that the promise of adequate training for branch staff to undertake their increased responsibilities is kept.

**Unite in AXA** have been engaged in detailed consultation with the commercial management and have provided robust challenge throughout the planning stage. We will of course work with the company to maximise redeployment and reduce compulsory redundancies.