Exclusivefocus

Summer 2024

An Official Publication of the National Association of Professional Allstate Agents, Inc.

Life in the Fast Lane?

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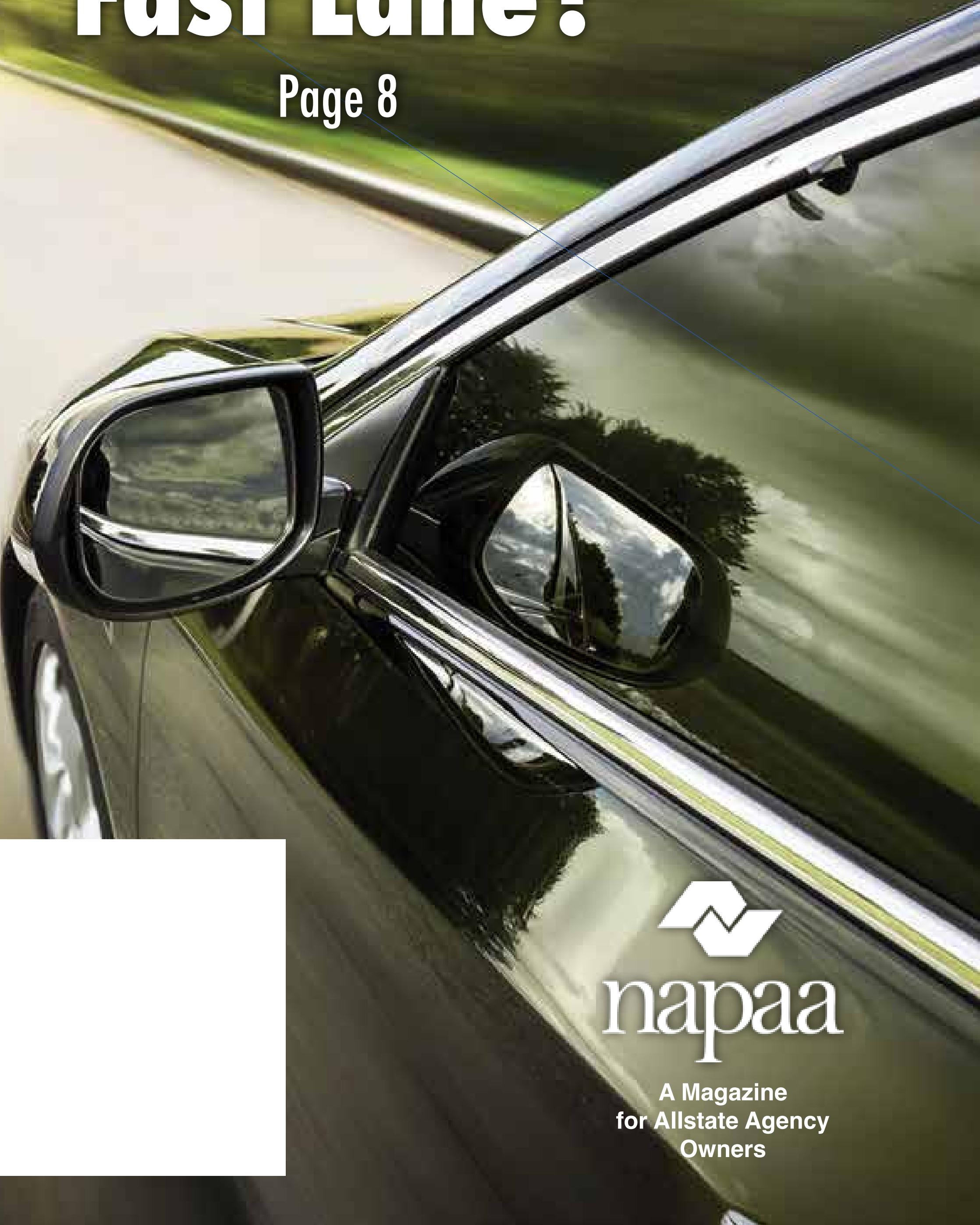

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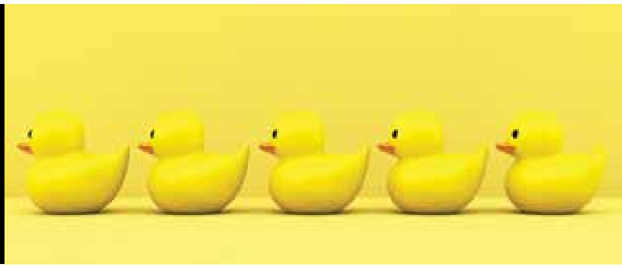

FEATURE

AGENCY MANAGEMENT

SALES and MARKETING

DEPARTMENTS

The Way Forward:

What Empowers Growth in Today's Market?

Join Couri Insurance Associates and unlock your potential.

- **Expansive market reach:** Connect with in-state, out-of-state, regional, and national carriers.
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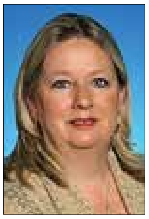


The World is Changing; So Must You

Claudia Gamache, NAPAA President, CPCU, ARM

We are each on our own journey in life. We have no idea if we have a tomorrow or how many we will have. Despite this, we need to prepare ourselves and family members to make a similar journey. Parallel to us are our family members and friends.

How we learned used to be the same. Books, papers, TV news, and the radio. Our schools are to help get everyone on the same page with basic education in reading, writing, and math—as well as the sciences, history, geography, social science, and physical fitness. Many schools offered trade school courses to help graduates head straight into employable jobs in a trade to earn a living without building debt.

Then, one day, the basics were no longer the same. You didn't need to know how to write in cursive, math no longer was black and white. Our education was changed by the addition of coding, computers, and slowly but surely artificial intelligence is moving into our system. Programs were enabled to do our work.

Schools have or are adding vocational programs considering all the debt that's been generated at the college and university levels. Especially when students complete school without employable skills.

Insurance courses are offered at universities and colleges around the country. You can also take courses online at "The Institutes". Courses include underwriting, claims, loss control, risk management, and specialty programs. Make yourself stronger in your position or find other opportunities in your industry. These are accredited programs and transferable to many schools.

As an insurance agent, you've seen the enhancement of tools and technology. You've needed to work through laws that make it difficult to reach out to prospects. Customers are so slammed with information and offers over the internet, phones, text messages, commercials; it's harder than ever to line up prospects. Calling the wrong person can cost you big bucks.

Regardless, each of us, whatever our age, got into our occupations at different points in life. Those who are older had different ideas of how to manage our employment, had different tools and laws, looked for different outcomes. Even now, look at the different ways an agent chooses to service their customers and their view of those agents who wrote business everywhere—they now have their customers looking for an agent closer to home and surprise, you can lose the customer and commission to another agent!

Different rules exist for different agents. Products are not similarly available across the country. It looks like the reward for the company becoming more profitable in various areas is causing the new business requirements to be increased before you earn your variable compensation. Some agents are still having problems with ABO and losing their contracts. Some agents leave and find buyers, while others need to walk away with TPP. TPP is a moving target, it ties into your actual paid commissions. TPP for many agents is a loser. You need to re-calculate where you are each time Allstate changes your compensation.

Back to my initial premise, life flies by if you are not spending time with people you love, or those you might want to know better. You need to assign some of your time to celebrate the moments of your family's life: the birthdays, graduations, celebrations for awards won, sporting events, etc.

Now take a closer look at your own life: what have you given up as you took care of your agency, staff and customers? Are you still having fun? Is the Allstate position the best for you? Are you in touch with agents who have moved on? Do you have time to try something new? I spoke with a two-year IA who has built her new agency to $2 million in two years with two staff, and is enjoying every day without pressure or stress.

Once I left Allstate, I didn't want to build a new business. I wanted to enhance my days with hobbies, healthy activities like biking, walking, Zumba, and weights. Keeping up with Facebook, learning more from X or Rumble and the alternate news media including podcasts, streaming, and instant news. Plus, there is an absolute need to pay attention to your own financials. It is critical because of inflation, a rocky stock market, to work within your new means.

I've been to Europe, and I'm going back again. I'm vacationing more, so can you.

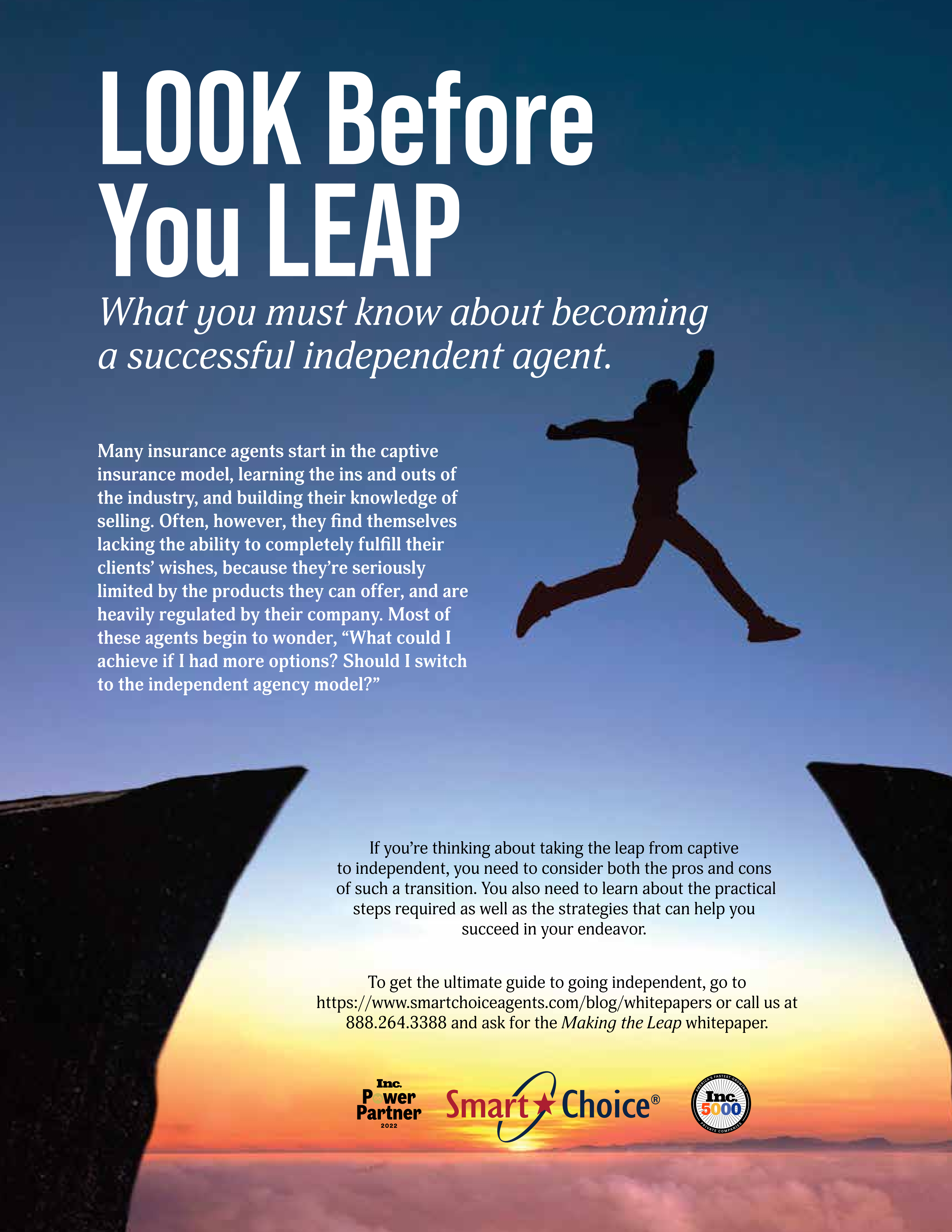
As I'm out riding, I'm reading signs posted on my neighbor's lawns. Graduations from preschool, kindergarten, 8th grade ribbon ceremonies, high school graduations and college gradations. Each was a spot on my timeline. Think about what you want to do, OR not do, and act appropriately.

Membership in NAPAA is and has always been important to me. NAPAA is working to make Allstate be more respectful of your agreement. You have a choice of phone system because of our work. The ability to get your customers on your phone before they wind up at Allstate is part of our work to protect your prospects. Keeping Allstate from interfering with your agency sales has been the wild west across the country. The contract says they approve of the buyer. Period. Yet managers coach buyers on what the Allstate manager prefers, causing agents to have lost prospective buyers. The captive agent is lessening in importance to Allstate. The increased number of agents Allstate has forced out the door in the past few years makes it easy to believe that the footprint of the captive agent will continue to change.

Keep your eyes open and always measure what the changes at Allstate mean to you. Take care of yourself, you are Number 1. Membership in NAPAA is important. There is strength in numbers. Use us as a resource, and make sure you are on the All-Agent's Page. Read your magazine and your electronic newsletters. Keep informed.

Claudia Gamache retired in January of 2023 as an agent for Allstate Insurance, after having been an active agent from 2004 to 2022. She holds a broker's license and plans to continue her insurance education. Over the past years, she has served on various insurance and community Board of Directors. Claudia is currently the President of the National Association of Professional Allstate Agents. She has a CPCU, ARM, and AMIM designation, and her experience includes Management at Branch, Regional, and National levels.

Her experience has been primarily in Property and Casualty, but she also has Life Insurance experience and passed the 6 & 63 exams. She has been on the Company and Agency side of the business, and some of her more interesting experiences have been working with the E&S market and the development of PEO.


LOOK Before You LEAP
What you must know about becoming a successful independent agent.
Many insurance agents start in the captive insurance model, learning the ins and outs of the industry, and building their knowledge of selling. Often, however, they find themselves lacking the ability to completely fulfill their clients' wishes, because they're seriously limited by the products they can offer, and are heavily regulated by their company. Most of these agents begin to wonder, "What could I achieve if I had more options? Should I switch to the independent agency model?"
If you're thinking about taking the leap from captive to independent, you need to consider both the pros and cons of such a transition. You also need to learn about the practical steps required as well as the strategies that can help you succeed in your endeavor.
To get the ultimate guide to going independent, go to https://www.smartchoiceagents.com/blog/whitepapers or call us at 888.264.3388 and ask for the *Making the Leap* whitepaper.
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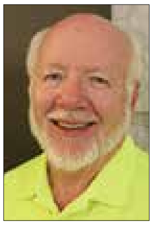
Smart Choice®
Inc. 5000 America's Fastest-Growing Private Companies



Life in the Fast Lane

Ted Paris, NAPAA Executive Director

Some of us were born to just go for it. We were always in a rush to go somewhere. To get to the next level. Always wanting more. While I have no actual data to prove anything, it seems to me that the Baby Boomer generation was trying to do more than their parents before them—go to college, start a career, travel to new places, meet new people and try new things. I was not interested in living life in a small town. I rushed through high school as fast as possible, graduated college in three years, and started my business career by rushing through the four-year FW Woolworth Store Management in two years. When told I had to wait to become a store manager because I was too young, I found a new company that would make me a store manager right away. Then after becoming a store manager, I set my sights on becoming a district manager for that new Company almost immediately. I accomplish that, as well.

Then, I wanted to own my own stores. I didn't slow down for anyone or anything. That last one cost me a great deal of money when my least favorite retail giant opened stores in the two towns where I had stores. They had a lot more money and quite frankly smarts than me. Oh, well...on to the next phase of my business career—insurance. Looking backwards, Walmart was the best thing that ever happened in my business career. They made me change careers. While it was an expensive occurrence at the time, things worked out well. I had moved my young family six times in four years chasing the next promotion. I was living life in the fast lane. After my retail career abruptly ended, I began my insurance career. I started all over again from scratch. Only this time I was a lot smarter. My decisions were better planned and executed.

What is "Living Life in the Fast Lane?" According to Quora, "living life in the fast lane is idiom that refers to living a fast paced, high energy and often hectic or extravagant lifestyle. It can imply a focus on material success, constant activity, and a disregard for the consequences of such a lifestyle. The phrase is often used to describe someone who is ambitious, driven and always on the go." Another description could be living in a way that is exciting and slightly dangerous. According to The Collins Dictionary, the fast lane is "a way of living which seems full of activity and excitement but which often involves a lot of pressure as well." As the late Wide World of Sports announcer Jim McKay often stated it is "the thrill of victory." Finally, Life in the Fast Lane, a song by the Eagles in 1977, "surely will make you lose your mind, life in the fast lane, everything, all the time." Followed later in the song "rushing down the freeway, messed around and got lost. They didn't care, they were just dying to get off and it surely makes you lose your mind, life in the fast lane, everything, all the time."

As an Allstate agency owner, are you Living Life in the Fast Lane? Has Allstate's transformative growth caused you to live life in the Fast Lane? In many ways, I think it has. The Company has always encouraged agency owners to grow, to strive to get better, to earn the trips and bask in the recognition that they promote. And that is all good and even great. We all want to be successful. We all want to be recognized for our efforts. We all want to be recognized amongst our peers. That is human nature. There is not anything wrong with striving to be better and get rewarded for our efforts. These types of trips, rewards, bonuses, and recognition are great motivators. They help keep us focused and involved.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with setting goals to be the best. Nothing at all. There is nothing wrong with setting high expectations and pushing yourself to do all you can. There is nothing wrong in working hard, educating yourself and continuing to push yourself.

ED REPORT *continued on page 11.*

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The Question That Could be Coming for Many Exclusive Agents

While current hard market might be softening, exclusive agents should be exploring strategies to survive

Doug Coombs, Chief Marketing Officer, SIAA

The current hard market has been nothing short of daunting for all insurance agents—exclusive or independent. We're not through it yet, and although we're starting to hear that a slow turnaround, or softer market, may not be too far away, it's not time to breathe easy yet.

It occurs to me that there may be more bad news coming for specific areas of the country: it simply is no longer profitable for a number of companies to write certain lines of property and casualty business in specific regions of the United States. Florida is the easy and well-known example at the moment, but we've been hearing more about California and Colorado underwriting challenges as well.

And now the central part of the country is experiencing weather events that are making business more difficult. That and other hard market factors are impinging on insurance company profitability in that geography.

The situation is challenging enough for independent insurance agents, but what is going to happen to exclusive agents in the impacted geographies when their company (their one and only company) decides it's no longer profitable to do business in that territory?

Impact on Exclusive Agents

Exclusive agents, who rely solely on one insurance company for their product offerings, face a unique set of challenges in this hard market. When their parent company decides to withdraw from a particular market, these agents are left with few options. Unlike independent agents, who can shop around with multiple carriers to find coverage for their clients, exclusive agents are tied to the fate of their sole carrier.

When a company decides to exit a market, exclusive agents must either relocate, change careers, or face the daunting task of explaining to their clients why their policies are being non-renewed. This creates a significant strain on their businesses and personal livelihoods. Of course, I've omitted the most obvious course of action: become an independent agent if the prospect of being tied to ONE carrier seems less attractive than ever.

Strategies for Survival

Independent agents have a significant advantage in this hard market due to their ability to represent multiple carriers. This diversification allows them to pivot more easily when one insurer exits a market. They can leverage their relationships with various underwriters to find creative solutions for their clients, even in high-risk areas where coverage options are limited.

Independent agents can shop around for the best deals, negotiate better terms, and provide a broader array of options to their clients. This flexibility is a crucial differentiator in a hard market, where the ability to adapt quickly to changing conditions can mean the difference between retaining clients and losing them. Make no mistake, however, even independent agents are finding it difficult to place coverage in the most high-risk areas, as the pool of willing insurers shrinks.

Exclusive agents, on the other hand, need to explore new strategies to survive. One approach is to advocate for their clients by lobbying their parent companies to reconsider market exits or to at least provide more support during the transition period. Additionally, exclusive agents might consider expanding their product lines to include services that are less impacted by the hard market, such as life or health insurance. This diversification can provide a more stable revenue stream and reduce reliance on property and casualty lines in volatile markets. This is a strategy that ALL P&C agents should explore—exclusive or independent.

Another strategy for exclusive agents is to seek out partnerships with independent agents or brokerage firms. By doing so, they can offer a wider array of products to their clients, thereby mitigating some of the risks associated with being tied to a single carrier. This requires a willingness to collaborate and possibly a shift in business model, but it could be a lifeline in an increasingly challenging environment. That having been said, perhaps it just makes sense to consider the transition to becoming an independent agent.

The Role of Technology and Innovation

Technology and innovation are playing an increasingly important role in helping agents navigate the hard market. Advanced analytics and predictive modeling can help insurers better understand and price risks, potentially leading to more stable markets. Agents who embrace these technologies can offer more accurate and competitive quotes to their clients, helping to secure business even in tough times.

Telematics is becoming more prevalent in the insurance industry. By leveraging data from connected devices, insurers can offer usage-based insurance policies that more accurately reflect individual risk profiles. This can be particularly beneficial in high-risk areas, where traditional underwriting models struggle to keep up with changing conditions.

For agents, staying informed about these technological advancements and incorporating them into their business practices can provide a competitive edge. Offering clients innovative solutions and demonstrating a deep understanding of the evolving market can help build trust and loyalty, even when times are tough. Of course, for the exclusive agent, if their carrier has not committed to the level of technology as other insurance companies, it becomes difficult to utilize the full complement of these advancements.

Looking Ahead

While the current hard market is presenting significant challenges for insurance agents across the country, there are signs that a turnaround may be on the horizon. Some industry experts predict that as insurers adjust their pricing models and incorporate new technologies, the market will eventually stabilize. However, this process will take time, and agents need to be prepared for continued volatility in the near term.

Because there are considerations beyond the macroeconomics of the current hard market (climate change and its significant impact on certain geographies, for one), the question for exclusive agents is: is it time to consider making the switch to independence?

Doug Coombs is the Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer of SIAA (Strategic Insurance Agency Alliance, Inc.). He can be reached at dougc@siaa.net. SIAA is a national alliance of independent insurance agency members generating hundreds of millions in new premium business annually. SIAA is dedicated to the creation, growth, retention, and evolution of the local independent agency. To learn more about SIAA, visit siaa.com.

ED REPORT *continued from page 18.*

The US Army states "Be all that you can be." As a business owner you owe it to yourself to do everything you possibly can to be successful. But when I am asking you about living life in the fast lane, I am asking something different. Are you trying to balance your life? You are a person first. You have obligations to yourself, your family, your spouse or life partner, your kids, if any, and to others important to you. Not everything in your life revolves around work and making money.

Back to Life in the Fast Lane: Allstate as well as most other companies encourage you to invest your money, time, energy, and efforts in making the Corporation better. When I talk about Life in the Fast Lane, I mean are you letting the business side of your life control you and your time? Allstate changed the compensation program numerous times. While we don't necessarily agree with their decisions, we really have only two options. One is to figure out how to deal with them and how to manage the changes. The other is to do nothing and accept fate. There is one other option but that involves leaving the Company. That is a completely different discussion for a different time.

What I am talking about is letting the Company dictate to you how you run your business and how, if unchecked, to run your life. Since 2019 and the announcement of Transformative Growth, The Company has put agents on Life in the Fast Lane. To thrive, you are required to jump through various hoops to maintain your standing with Allstate. They are forcing you to modify your behavior in many ways. You need to make ABO. You need to make Variable Compensation numbers to maintain income. You need to keep your bundle numbers high and keep retention up to remain Elite or Pro. If you are Emerging, you are forced to be even more on your own with limited help or advice. Every year, Allstate basically ups the ante. They are forcing you to live life in the fast lane.

That FAST LANE can be exciting, rewarding, and profitable. That FAST LANE can also be devastating. It can consume you if not managed correctly.

How does one control the effects of Life in the Fast Lane? First, understand it. Second, determine how fast you want to run. Third, determine what is best for you and your family. All I am really saying is you need to control how you manage your life. Nothing inherently wrong with living life in the fast lane if you can control how you deal with being in that area. I would suggest you have regular discussions with your mentors and family members to determine how they feel about moving forward. A successful career in insurance is not about making money and earning recognition, it is about what it does for you and your family.

Ted began his 30-year career in insurance at Farmers Insurance. There, in his 18 years as a district manager, he personally recruited and trained over 50 scratch agencies. When Ted left Farmers in 2005, his district was the largest in the Indianapolis area and the third largest in the state of Indiana. He continued his insurance career at Allstate, where he purchased three agencies in west-central Indiana. While at Allstate, Ted served on the North Central Regional Advisory Board, and earned numerous awards including the Chairman's Award, the Leader's Club Award, the National Conference Award, and many Honor Rings. Ted was an Allstate agent starting in 2005 until he sold and retired in 2017. He has been the Executive Director for NAPAA since 2017. He can be contacted at ted.paris@napaausa.org.

Embracing Independence:

How Transitioning to an Independent Insurance Agent Opens Doors to Opportunity

Alex Bunch

For captive insurance agents contemplating the leap to independence, spreading your wings, and charting your own course can be both exhilarating and daunting. But beyond the thrill of autonomy lies a world of opportunity—a chance to help your clients in new and meaningful ways, grow your agency, and build equity for the future. So, folks, let's embark on this journey together and explore the benefits that await those who dare to embrace independence:

Tailored Solutions for Every Client: As an independent insurance agent, you're no longer bound by the constraints of a single carrier or limited product offerings, quotas, lower commissions, and unexpected contract changes. You'll be free to quote multiple carriers and provide the best coverage and rate for your customers. Finding a solid partner that provides access to multiple carrier options will help you hit the ground running faster, whether it's with an MGA or as a partner with an Insurance Agency.

Unlimited Growth Potential: Independent agents can represent multiple carriers, tap into new markets in personal and commercial lines, cast a wider net, and attract a broader range of clients. These options lead to much higher closing ratios and, ultimately, higher retention. It is important to find a partner or group that will provide you with ongoing training and support and who can negotiate carrier appointments on your behalf so that you can focus on cultivating your relationship with your customers and writing new business.

Building Equity for the Future: One of the most significant advantages of transitioning to independence is the opportunity to build equity in your agency. Unlike captive agents, who often have little to no ownership stake in their book of business, independent agents have the chance to create tangible value that can be leveraged for future growth or an eventual sale. You've worked hard to build your agency and should benefit from your legacy. Find an insurance agency partner or group with a built-in succession plan for their agents. This should ensure you have a built-in buyer to buy your book at fair market value.

Adopt a Culture of Innovation: Independence breeds innovation, and whether it's adopting cutting-edge technology, implementing creative marketing strategies, or introducing innovative product offerings, you have the flexibility to experiment and evolve with the ever-changing needs of your clients and the industry at large. Finding a partner with innovation at the core of all they do will be crucial to your agency's long-term success.

Fostering Meaningful Relationships: Last but certainly not least, transitioning to independence allows you to forge deeper, more meaningful relationships with your clients, earning their trust and loyalty through genuine care and meaningful choices. And if you partner with a group or agency that fosters connectivity with other agents and a strong culture, you might get a new insurance family out of the deal, too. We learn and grow from these connections, and knowing others have your back through tough times is worth its weight in gold.

Transition to independence is not just a leap of faith—it's a journey filled with boundless opportunities for growth, innovation, and fulfillment. Take a moment to visit twfg.com/freedom to see how TWFG can assist you during your transition to independence. We've successfully helped agents for over 23 years, and your clients, your agency, and your future self will thank you for it!

Alex Bunch is the Chief Marketing Officer of TWFG Insurance.

Feeling like your captive carrier doesn't even care about you anymore? Like this relationship is only holding you back? It's time you asked yourself...

IS IT TIME TO BREAK UP?

Breaking up with your carrier isn't the end. **ASNOA** is here to help you find a better relationship where you can thrive. A brighter future is just one conversation away.

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Understanding E&O

Ted Paris, NAPAA Executive Director

Regardless of the circumstances, when you leave ALLSTATE, you need to understand and take action to protect yourself and family against any future claim made against you for your acts and omissions while you were an Exclusive Agency owner. Buying ERP (extended reporting period) coverage, commonly known as Tail coverage, is critical to your financial well-being. Once you are gone, whether you sold or were terminated, you need to have protection against someone claiming you did something wrong or failed to do something you should have done. Neither Allstate, the buying agent or the servicing agent are going to come to your defense. Without E&O insurance to cover you will be on your own.

My disclaimer, I am not an attorney. I am not offering legal advice. I am not offering professional advice. I am not offering any advice whatsoever; I am only providing information for you to make your own decisions. And the information is as I understand at time of writing. When I spoke with CalSurance recently regarding this she had the following advice. CALL AND TALK TO US ON THE PHONE. Sooner rather than later.

Important dates to know. **Generally, you have 60 DAYS TO BUY ERP** (extended reporting period) after your termination. You should call and talk with CalSurance (888-734-6457) before your termination date to get things moving along. **You have 90 days to request a refund**. If you don't do anything you normally get one year coverage from your termination date. The longer you have been an agent, the larger your commercial book, and the larger your brokerage book, in most cases, the longer your ERP should be. If you took TPP, you should be concerned as there is not a new agent to take ownership. If you sold, your buyer would not want to face the possibility of defending a claim against the agency that occurred prior to their buying the agency. Remember, E&0 is a claim-made policy. There needs to be a policy (coverage) in place at the time the claim is submitted for an event that happened in the past when you were the agent. Generally, one should buy the longest period they can afford. Many agents will request a refund of the existing time remaining on the current policy period and then during the same transaction purchase the ERP. In my mind, one should in most cases ask for a refund if they are going to purchase ERP. Again, the Extended Report Period is a period of time where a claim should be covered if submitted prior to the end of the ERP.

Below I have copied parts of the Frequency Asked Questions from the program. **You can find out more by reviewing the policy and program materials. A complete copy of the specimen policy is available by calling 888-734-6457 or by visiting www.calsurance.com/allstageagent**.

This document is a summary of the coverage provided. All statements contained herein are subject to all terms, conditions and exclusions of the actual policy. In all circumstances the actual policy language will prevail.

What is Errors & Omissions (E&O) Insurance? Errors & Omissions (E&O) provides protection for professionals in the event a claim is made against the professional or his/her staff by a customer. E&O is also called professional liability insurance. As litigation has increased in the United States, E&O insurance has been used to protect professionals in almost every line of work where an individual has to acquire special knowledge or training to provide a service. It has been used to insure insurance agents for decades. You are buying peace of mind! E&O covers claims that are brought for Damages caused or allegedly caused by an act, error, or omission of the agent or a staff member during the course of rendering Professional Services to the customer. E&O insurance pays for the cost of the Damages incurred by the claimant and the expenses associated with defending the claim.

Am I covered for acts committed prior to the effective date of my Allstate Exclusive Agency Agreement? Cover-

age is provided retroactive to the effective date of your Exclusive Agency Agreement with Allstate Insurance Company, the inception of your pre-onboarding commencement (if contracted prior to 10/1/2021), or the inception date of the first claims made insurance Agent's E&O policy that has been maintained in force without interruption, whichever is earlier. Claims arising from acts while you were an employee Agent of Allstate (if applicable) will not be covered by this policy. In the event that a claim is brought against you for an act, error, omission or Personal Injury that occurred prior to the effective date of your Exclusive Agency Agreement, you will be required to furnish proof of your E&O insurance in force at the time of the alleged error, which has been maintained continuously until the effective date of your Exclusive Agency Agreement with Allstate Insurance Company. All coverage is subject to the terms, conditions and exclusions of the policy.

Am I covered for the property/casualty, life, accident, and health companies I write with outside of Allstate Insurance Company? You are covered for the sale and/or servicing of products and/or services authorized or approved by Allstate Insurance Company. You are also covered for property & casualty products, life, accident, and health business placed through a Product Provider approved by Allstate Insurance Company. All coverage is subject to the terms, conditions and exclusions of the policy.

Am I covered for the sale and/or servicing of mutual funds and variable products? As long as you are selling products that you are authorized by Allstate Insurance Company to sell, your activities are covered. You must be licensed by the appropriate authorities to sell such products. There is no additional premium for this coverage. All coverage is subject to the terms, conditions, and exclusions of the policy.

Will the E&O program continue to exclude coverage for violations of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA)? Yes, the E&O policy will exclude coverage for violations of the Federal Communications Commission's Telephone Consumer Protection Act and other similar laws that apply to outbound calling, texting, and faxing. The TCPA is a federal law and is not insurable under most insurance programs, including E&O insurance policies.

What happens if my Exclusive Agency Agreement is terminated during the Policy Period? Coverage automatically ceases on the date your Exclusive Agency Agreement terminates. An automatic Extended Reporting Period (ERP) is provided for one (1) year following the date of termination without any additional cost to the Agency. However, in the event your Exclusive Agency Agreement terminates and you subsequently submit a written request for cancellation and a short rate refund of premium, the automatic one (1) year ERP shall be reduced to ninety (90) days from the date of your Exclusive Agency Agreement termination. **Please note that your refund request must be submitted within ninety (90) days of your termination or you will no longer be eligible for a refund. An ERP provides coverage for claims first made during the ERP arising out of acts, errors, omissions, or Personal Injuries that took place prior to the termination date of your Exclusive Agency Agreement**, but after your retroactive date. The automatic one (1) year ERP shall also be shortened to ninety (90) days in the event you have terminated and failed to pay the full premium.

Upon contract termination, you will also have the option of purchasing a two (2) year, three (3) year, five (5) year, or unlimited ERP within ninety (90) days of the termination date of your Exclusive Agency Agreement. Any optional ERP is in lieu of and not in addition to the automatic ERP provided. In the following termination circumstances: • Loss of any required agent license of Agent or Key Person; • Dissolution of the agency; • Key Person ceases to be employed by the Agent or agency, ceases to be a partner in the agency or is no longer actively involved in the conduct of business of the Agent or at the agency sales location; • Cause; or • Death or Permanent Incapacitation....

Coverage will cease on the date of A. or B. below, whichever occurs first: A. Once the sale of the agency is completed; B. Once the Agent, Agent's legal representative, the Key Person, or the corporation/LLC/partnership elects to exercise the termination payment option under the Agent or Agency Agreement and the Agent or Agency ceases any further conduct of business for Allstate Insurance Company. If coverage should extend beyond the annual Policy Period, the Agent, the Agent's legal representative, the Key Person, or the Corporation/LLC/Partnership pay the full premium due for the next annual Policy Period.

What happens if I leave the insurance business? In lieu of the automatic ERP, you or your legal representative is eligible **to purchase an optional ERP within ninety (90) days** of the termination date of your Exclusive Agency Agreement. **An optional two (2) year, three (3) year, five (5) year, or**

unlimited ERP is offered for an additional premium of 100%, 130%, 200%, or 500% of your last annual premium (annual premium must also include any additional premium attributable to the Securities, EPLI, or Cyber Liability endorsement(s) if elected). **The optional ERPs are in lieu of the Agreement. automatic ERP and not in addition to it.** Payment should accompany the **ERP Election Form and must be received by CalSurance® within ninety (90) days of the termination date of your Exclusive Agency.** The ERP Election Form can be obtained at www.calsurance.com/allstateagent or by calling CalSurance® Customer Service at **888-734-6457**.

What happens if I sell my agency? The Seller (you) has the option to purchase an Extended Reporting Period. In the event an Exclusive Agent sells their book of business to an Approved Buyer, the Approved Buyer does not automatically assume the coverage that the Seller previously had. For coverage to pertain to the Approved Buyer, he or she must enroll upon the purchase of the Sellers book of business. The premium that will be charged for the Approved Buyer will be pro-rated based on the effective date of enrollment. If you are selling your agency to an immediate family member (mother, father, daughter, son, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, brother, sister, or spouse) who is a Current Named Insured, you, the Former Named Insured shall receive an unlimited ERP for no additional premium. Former Named Insureds who are the recipient of such unlimited ERP are not eligible for a refund of their unearned premium under any circumstances. Former Named Insured is defined as the seller of a business entity or book of business who was formerly an Agent or Key Person, who was party to an Allstate Exclusive Agency Agreement with Allstate Insurance Company. Current Named Insured is defined as the purchaser of a business entity or book of business who is an Agent or Key Person who executes an Allstate Exclusive Agency Agreement with Allstate Insurance Company.

Why should I consider purchasing an Extended Reporting Period (ERP)? An Extended Reporting Period (ERP) extends the time an agent has to report a claim after the last claims made and reported E&O policy expires. By electing an ERP and paying a one-time premium, the agent is able to continue to report claims to the insurance carrier for the duration of the ERP. It is important to note that the ERP only applies to acts, errors, omissions, and Personal Injuries that occur after the agent's individual retroactive date and before the agent's termination date. In other words, the ERP does not provide you with coverage for errors made after your contract termination date. You should also be aware that the ERP does not increase the limits of liability of the last claims made and reported policy and the ERP can be voided if you obtain similar E&O coverage with another insurance carrier; however, the premium remains fully earned. In spite of these limitations, an ERP is very valuable, especially if you are retiring or changing professions. **It is important to note that the agent's the ERP only applies to acts, errors, omissions, and Personal Injuries that occur after the agent's individual retroactive date and before termination date.** In other words, the ERP does not provide you with coverage for errors made after your contract termination date. You should also be aware that the ERP does not increase the limits of liability of the last claims made and reported policy and the ERP can be voided if you obtain similar E&O coverage with another insurance carrier; however, the premium remains fully earned. In spite of these limitations, an ERP is very valuable, especially if you are retiring or changing professions.

How will my E&O policy respond if I am named in a claim that I feel I have been wrongly accused of? The policy is written to give the insurance company the right and duty to defend any claim or suit against you seeking Damages to which this insurance applies, even if any allegations of the claim or suit are groundless, false, or fraudulent.

Yes, there is a lot here to read and understand. Yes, it appears to be expensive. You are thinking I've never had an E&O Claim, why should I buy it? I will end with the following statement: You've spent your entire life as an agent telling clients that you need to protect yourself from the unexpected, yet NOW you don't want to listen to the advice you gave to others in your career. Give yourself a break, just DO IT! Purchase the coverage. Sleep better at night. I would not want to be the agent who has to tell his/her spouse, "We are being sued by an old client because of some coverage their attorney told them that I should have sold them. And, because I did not want to spend $$$$ on E&O coverage, we might lose our retirement."

Ted began his 30-year career in insurance at Farmers Insurance. There, in his 18 years as a district manager, he personally recruited and trained over 50 scratch agencies. When Ted left Farmers in 2005, his district was the largest in the Indianapolis area and the third largest in the state of Indiana. He continued his insurance career at Allstate, where he purchased three agencies in west-central Indiana. While at Allstate, Ted served on the North Central Regional Advisory Board, and earned numerous awards including the Chairman's Award, the Leader's Club Award, the National Conference Award, and many Honor Rings. Ted was an Allstate agent starting in 2005 until he sold and retired in 2017. He has been the Executive Director for NAPAA since 2017. He can be contacted at ted.paris@napaausa.org.

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Why and How to Foster Employee Engagement:

7 Critical Components to a Thriving Insurance Workforce

Jennifer Lucas

The insurance industry is complex, dynamic, and competitive. There is so much to learn and so much agility needed to stay competitive. For agencies to thrive, they need a skilled and engaged workforce. They need employees who feel invested in the success of the organization because they know leadership is invested in them.

Without engagement, employees feel like an easily replaceable cog in a machine. The motivation of a job and paycheck can only carry someone's energy so far. After time, people naturally begin to match their efforts to their perceived value. The less they feel valued by leadership, the less effort they put in.

What is engagement? How do you know when you experience it?

Engagement is:

- Going into each day with interest and curiosity.
- Feeling seen and understood by management.
- Feeling important/having a sense of meaning.
- Knowing you can make a difference.
- Having room to grow in your career.

These may sound like challenging feelings to generate in your valued employees, but the basics may already be in play at your agency or organization.

Here are 7 critical components of employee engagement.

1. Respect: Having a culture of employee/employer respect is crucial. This is the foundation of engagement. On its own, it's probably not enough, but without it, nothing else will work. To foster a culture of respect: treat people fairly/equitably, offer corrective performance advice in private and diplomatically, discourage gossip, follow through on commitments, hire sufficiently to keep workloads manageable, listen to and address concerns, and be prepared to apologize. Everyone makes mistakes; being willing to own up to them as a leader is a sign of respect to your team.

2. Appreciation: Let employees know their work is valued. When someone goes above and beyond, acknowledge it. Say thank you out loud and in public, if the employee is the outgoing type who likes being in the spotlight. For those who shy away from the spotlight, email a sincere, "Thank you." But go ahead and cc the team because even employees who are reserved like to have their efforts acknowledged.

3. Getting to know people: While we're on that subject, knowing what type of recognition a person prefers is a great way to keep them engaged. Engagement, like most aspects of leadership, is not a one-size-fits-all matter. Learn about each person's personality. How do they prefer to communicate? When do they seem to do their work best? What seems to stress them out? A leader's job is to remove obstacles from a performer's path. You do that by getting to know what makes them tick. If you're not sure or you want to dig deeper, consider a behavioral assessment, like The Omnia Behavioral Assessment.

4. Openness: This goes along with respect. As a leader, you may not always be able to tell your staff everything, but be as open as you can about what's going on in the company, projected problems, and possible changes that will impact everyday life for the employee. Secrecy shuts people down, but feeling like management is being open and authentic makes employees feel involved and engaged.

5. Opportunities: Make sure there are opportunities for growth. Few people are comfortable doing the same thing over and over forever. Some are—hold on to them and check in with them regularly to make sure they still have everything they need. For the others, talk to them about the future—their future with the company. Make sure they know you want them there in the future. Keep in mind that not all opportunities have to involve advancement to management. Consider cross-training, introducing new technologies, and offering courses in employees' areas of interest. What they learn can benefit the company as well as them.

6. Flexibility: If these last few years have taught us anything, it has been the need for flexibility. Most companies learned that they could move ahead and even thrive by being flexible. Don't forget that lesson when it comes to making adjustments that benefit your employees. If someone is more effective at different times, if family concerns make certain schedules impossible for star performers, if a different approach to the job produces the same results, make a change. It's not always possible, but we've learned that a lot more is possible than we ever thought before. If your first reaction to an ask is "no," explore why you feel that way. "Because it's always been done this way" is not a good enough reason to disengage or lose an excellent employee.

7. Innovation: One step beyond flexibility is innovation. Explore with employees the different ways of approaching goals, processes, and operations. An engaged insurance employee is not a cog in a lifeless machine. This is a person you selected because of experience, intelligence, personality, or an undefinable special something. You've trained them, and they are succeeding. Now, let them train you. No matter how much you think you know about a job, someone who does it every day knows more. This is what you want! Listen to them, act on ideas, and reward successes.

Developing engagement strategies is not simply a feel-good practice; it's a strategic investment in the future of your insurance organization. By building a culture of respect, appreciation, authenticity and innovation, leaders can unlock the full potential of their workforce. This fosters an environment where employees feel valued and empowered to make a real difference. The result? A thriving workforce, a more innovative and adaptable company, and ultimately, a path to long-term success in the ever-evolving insurance industry.

Jennifer Lucas is an Analyst and Senior Manager of Product Development at The Omnia Group, an employee assessment firm providing the power of behavioral insight to help organizations make successful hires, develop employees to their full potential, and effectively engage staff.

Reasons to Reconsider a Franchise

Richard Pope

Are the numbers adding up for you? Are you keeping up with inflation? Is the spouse working to help meet the demands? Do you have kids in college or getting ready to go to college? What about gas and groceries? Where does it all end?

Oh yes, we cannot forget the retirement accounts. Are you saving enough money for retirement (if you can or even want to retire)? `What about your 401K? Over everything that you need to consider, the big question is: "are you properly managing your money?"

Money management doesn't necessarily mean hiring a financial planner, nor does it mean that you must punish yourself. Money management includes many things, the most important of which is your ability to think and reason. Bad investments, gambling on long shots, spending beyond your means, seeking instant gratification, and using those credit cards too much or too often, are all things that can catch up to you quickly. Oh, well, we can't all be perfect, can we? Things happen, emergencies come up and sometimes things come up that were not exactly planned.

In my business, I have seen it all. From the financially well off to the well-meaning family person that is simply living on the edge from day to day. I frequently run into the candidate that is working two jobs just to make ends meet. Recently one of my candidates had just lost his job at age 57—ouch! Without proper planning, an emergency fund, or a specialty that you can fall back on, that can be a killer. It's hard to get a job at age 57. Even if you are lucky enough to get a job at that age, you may have to take less money and when you come into an organization at that age, you are vulnerable to yet another layoff.

SO – ALL THIS DOOM AND GLOOM – WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT IT?

Perhaps it's time to explore your options in franchise business ownership? There are many different ways to go here. You could make a complete career change, or you could focus on increasing your incremental income with a side hustle. Side hustles are frequently referred to as semi-absentee, manager operated businesses, or investor models.

With franchise business ownership, you are in charge of you. You are working for yourself, and your potential is only limited by your own ability, drive, and ambition. You can scale your franchise; you can build equity and value and generational wealth. You can build a business that can shape your future and provide security for now and into retirement.

There are over 4,000 different franchises in the marketplace today, and there is something for everyone. Whether you want to build an empire or just have a side hustle, there is something for you. Whether you are looking for a career change or just an add on that will provide incremental income for now and into your retirement years—there are many different options to choose from. The neat thing about franchise business ownership is that it will surprise you and you may be successful beyond your wildest expectations. Remember that a franchise is a business and, with the right people and focused effort on your part, the returns just might make you smile all the way to the bank.

Hey, that all sounds great, but I have no experience with anything but insurance. How will that work? Well—that is another beauty of the franchise business. They are often referred to as a business in a box (metaphorically speaking), and they come with instructions. Franchise companies just want you to have "business savvy," they can teach you everything else you need to know. They will train you and support you in every way to help you thrive and flourish in your franchise business. In fact, they will often prefer a business mind and a personality over experience. The reason behind this is that a franchise offers a business model with systems in place—they prefer that new franchise owners follow their systems as opposed to trying to implement changes based on earlier experiences.

OK, that is fine but what are some good types of franchise businesses that offer sold incremental income? Of course, they will need to be manager-operated, where I can invest a few hours a week and to keep my present business or job. Also, how much will this cost me?

Service based businesses make the best semi-absentee side hustles. Service businesses do not require bricks and mortar and offer the highest ROI's. Franchise Investments are spelled out in detail in Item 7 of the franchise disclosure document as required by the Federal Trade Commission. They can range anywhere from $50,000 up and into the millions. It's important to focus on businesses that fit you.

There are typical three components to a franchise investment:

The franchise fee which ranges around the $50,000 +/- level and is usually paid for in cash.

The start-up cost, which includes equipment, inventory, build-out, etc., and is typically financed.

Working capital. Most franchise companies want to see you have enough working capital to support the business as it gets up and running (3-6 months). Working capital requirements are spelled out in Item 7 of the FDD.

Note that franchise companies will not approve you if you are not financially sound. They do not want you to be undercapitalized. The expectation is that your debt to equity will be about 70-30. You will also need to show that you have enough personal financial strength to support the family without draining the working capital for the business. A good franchise business consultant will walk you through this and guide you toward businesses for which you are financially qualified.

If the pieces fall into place for you, you can build a nice investment portfolio though franchise business ownership. Let me help you.

Richard Pope is a career franchise business consultant who has been active in franchising for over 35 years and has helped thousands of people find their way through the franchise process. Richard has worked at the highest levels of franchising for several corporate franchising giants and has traveled the world installing franchises. Richard lives in Scottsdale, AZ, and currently works with people from all fifty states. He would love to hear from you.

Richard can be reached directly at 480-575-2705, at rpope@franchoice.com, or www.franchoice.com/RPope.

To book time with Richard, please go to https://calendly.com/rcpope.

If I Could Hire My Dog

Lezlee Liljenberg

This is not to offend you cat lovers out there, but some days I truly look at my dog and think: why can't you come to work for me? Not with me—-for me? OK, my dog is by no means well disciplined, but Frankie is persistent, consistent, determined, self-motivated, loyal, protective, and never ever gives up on getting what he wants. Unfortunately for me as a human, he does not know the word "NO"! To find this in someone who would come to work would be welcomed and appreciated. All of these are traits I think we would all love to have in an employee.

To wrap it all into one word—HUNGRY. He is hungry to please, to fulfill his job as protector, and to make sure his belly is fed. He has a hunger for life that I find very rarely in humans and his consistent love astonishes me every day.

The great thing is that I don't have to cheerlead, jump up and down, or do much to get him fired up! A quick belly rub (not recommended in the office), a few kind words, and he is all ears to whatever I have to say. He intently listens, and when he gets bored he does not tune me out or walk away to go to another family just because it looks better over at their house.

Imagine a world where people at your office were like your dog and they were "down for anything"? Excitement stirs with a new marketing idea, a contest for callouts jazzes them, and they are so thrilled to have the opportunity to run, they are ready when you are, and are set to tackle anything you throw for them.

If my dog could talk, he would tell it to me straight, sparing my feelings, but just get it over with and leave all the drama at the door. He doesn't have time for drama—he has a job to do and that is to protect and provide for his family. It is the easiest most basic task in the world—survival and all the while doing it with a wiggle in his step and a smile on his face.

Here is an example of what I am talking about. I hurt my dog's feelings the other day—it was the most mournful thing I had ever heard in my life. My husband took off on the motorcycle and the dog went crazy—I mean like psycho crazy. Admittedly,

I fussed at him—he was about to take the house apart. Not two minutes later, I heard the saddest sound ever. He was actually crying with a howl. So I realized he actually could talk—he was speaking right to me and making it clear he was hurt. I immediately knew what to do—console him and stop the drama. It was over within a minute. A hug and an apology cleared this right up. It should be that easy with people.

When properly trained and given consistency your dog will never go astray, start making up their own processes, and following their own path of what seems easier. A dog does not understand the road of least resistance. They know one way—the way you taught them and what you do as their leader. Failing to train them, manage, and create a disciplined environment will create havoc for years to come. Breaking bad habits is the same for dogs and people. You have to break down their processes before re-teaching the new ways. This happens to many of us when we hire an agent from another agency that had no set rules or guidelines. We have just adopted the lack of habits and now must turn it around. It is hard work for all parties. So, when you think you won a good employee from someone else you must remember that there are reasons why that yard was not working so well for them. Then again, there are times when we get a gem of an employee who was just not the right fit for their past agency.

To be fair, this whole theory has another side. As employers we have a responsibility to be good, too. Dogs and people are more productive in a happy environment. A business is like a pack, and we can all take a few pointers from our dog counterparts in how to treat employees.

Make sure you know they are appreciated. Giving small treats cost you very little and it goes a long way to develop loyalty.

Bark out approval and at-a-girls & boys.

You will have hard working Rottweilers, loyal Retrievers and persnickety Chihuahuas, so make sure you show appreciation to each. They each offer their own unique qualities and need to know they are appreciated.

Encourage vacations to rejuvenate. Let them take off the leash to cut loose, refresh and replenish. It will drive motivation.

Don't use meetings to always bring out the newspaper to only correct bad actions. Make sure the good stuff is recognized too.

All of these years, I have always been warned about getting close to employees, but we spend more hours with them than we do our own families. It is a fine line to walk, but they are our pack and we need to treat them just like we would want them to treat us.

I can still dream, though, that one day I will wake up and Frankie will be walking on his hind legs, dressed in a suit, ready to jump into the front seat and Ride to Work. Paws down that would be the best day ever!

P.S. By no means am I insulting employees; this is meant as satire but full of love for both our furry friends and the people who surround us on our daily walk.

Lezlee proudly continues to serve on the NAPAA Board of Directors. She lives in Arlington, TX, recently celebrated 22 years of marriage to Magnus Liljenberg (Ex-Allstate Manager) and loves her new career as an Insurance Expert Witness and Author. Her newest publication, "If You Only Knew: Navigating DNA Surprises and the NPE World" was released October 2023. Connect with her through her website www.iamlezlee.com.

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Do You Need to Start Paying Overtime?

The Department of Labor Increases the Minimum Salary Threshold

Dirk Beamer

On Tuesday, April 23, 2024, the Department of Labor published its final rule on the minimum salary threshold for most salaried exempt employees. This new rule will substantially increase the number of workers entitled to minimum wage and overtime pay. If you have employees on your payroll to whom you do not pay overtime, you need to review the rule change very carefully to make sure those employees continue to be exempt.

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is the backbone of the United States' wage and hour laws. Generally, FLSA requires that all W-2 employees in the United States must receive a minimum hourly wage and must receive time and a half for hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week. The law does provide for various exemptions—categories of workers who, under the right fact pattern, will not be entitled to minimum wage and overtime protection. These exemptions are familiar but commonly misunderstood. In particular, many employers wrongly assume that if they pay someone on a salary basis, that person is automatically exempt without more.

The most common exemptions—executive, administrative, and professional—require a two-part test. First, the employee must be paid on a salary basis at or above the minimum salary threshold set by law. This is the key issue in last week's announcement from the Department of Labor. Second, if the salary threshold is passed, employers still need to analyze whether the person's job duties fall within one of the recognized exemption buckets. This is a detailed analysis that looks at, among other things, whether the person has supervisory responsibilities, autonomy in their work, and the ability to make independent decisions that affect the entire organization.

The new rule announced by the Department increases the minimum salary threshold in several stages over time. Currently, the minimum salary threshold sits at $35,568. Under the new rule, starting July 1 of this year, the minimum salary increases to $43,888. On January 1, 2025, the minimum increases again, going all the way up to $58,656. Starting July 1, 2027, and every 3 years thereafter, the minimum salary threshold will be adjusted to account for inflation.

Once you confirm that you have satisfied the minimum salary threshold for an exempt employee, spend some time making sure the employee's job duties match a recognized exemption. For the "Executive" exemption, the employee's primary job duties include managing the enterprise or a recognized department. Plus, the worker must regularly supervise two or more employees and must have authority to fire or hire (or have a significant voice in the process). The "Administrative" exemption is often misunderstood and overused. It does not extend to secretarial or clerical personnel. Rather, an employee properly classified as administrative exempt performs office work directly related to management of the business (versus production). The person must exercise discretion and independent judgment concerning matters of significance. The head of HR or accounting probably is exempt; someone who provides quotes or services customers probably is not. Finally, the "Professional" exemption extends to employees whose primary duty requires advanced knowledge in a field of science or learning, typically acquired through a prolonged course of study. Architects, engineers, doctors and teachers, among others, fall into this bucket. Insurance sales people typically do not.

There is also an exemption for "Outside Sales." This is a trap for the unwary. For an employee to satisfy the duties of this exemption, she truly must be "on the road" going from door to door to find and to support customers. Placing cold calls from an office or home telephone will not satisfy the exemption.

Unless you have analyzed your exempt employees' status carefully and recently, you will do well to review this entire segment of your payroll with fresh eyes and with professional assistance. You can find considerable guidance within the administrative regulations themselves, which are fairly digestible. Misclassification can have serious consequences including the obligation to pay accrued overtime together with interest and penalties. The rule is scheduled to kick-in July 1. It remains possible that a court will strike down or delay the new minimum salary threshold. The best approach, however, is to "hope for the best and plan for the worst."

Dirk Beamer has served the National Association of Professional Allstate Agents ("NAPAA") as General Counsel since 1999. In that capacity, he has successfully defended NAPAA against a federal internet trespass case brought by Allstate. He also sued Allstate on behalf of NAPAA and its members in a highly publicized federal lawsuit challenging Allstate's treatment of its agents. In addition to litigation matters, Dirk regularly counsels NAPAA concerning its ongoing business affairs including contract negotiations, management and employment issues, and member concerns. Dirk provides similar services as General Counsel to The United Farmers Agents Association ("UFAA"). Dirk regularly works with captive insurance agents from across the country, as well as their local attorneys, to handle business issues including purchasing and selling books of business, investigations and disciplinary proceedings with the carrier, employment law and contract litigation. Dirk graduated from the University of Michigan Law School with honors in 1993. He is licensed to practice in Michigan and Ohio, and he is a member of the State of Michigan Bar Foundation—an honor reserved for less than 5% of the practicing bar in the state. In 2014, Super Lawyers magazine named Dirk one of the Top 50 business lawyers in the state of Michigan. He is a past recipient of the National Association of Professional Allstate Agents President's Award. Dirk can be reached at dbeamer@wrightbeamer.com or visit his website at www.wrightbeamer.com/.

What NOT to Do When Planning to Sell Your Agency

Kirk Price

Note: This article was previously published at https://priceagencyconsulting.com/f/what-not-to-do-when-planning-to-sell-your-agency

Fair warning to the reader; I'm going to be stating the obvious from time to time…but only because I continue to see what follows on a regular basis. These issues can aggravate the already difficult process of selling an insurance Agency.

There's an old saying that goes like this; "Once you start to think about retiring, you've already retired". Trust me, I know. The same pretty much holds true when you start "thinking about selling". So, with that in mind, let's get into some of the major pitfalls and challenges (certainly not all) that make selling more difficult than it has to be based on this type of mentality (or complacency).

Manage Relationships with your Company. Like it or not, you do need your Company's assistance and their approval of your buyer candidate (for captive agents) to get the sale done. Cooperate and stay on good terms and in good standing as much as possible. Strained relationships and friction between you and the decisionmakers can create an unnecessary and difficult burden on selling. Be as transparent as possible regarding your intentions and timeline to sell. So in short, maintain open and honest communications with your Company once you've decided to sell to the greatest extent possible, contingent of course on your need and preference for confidentiality.

Don't reduce your staff in order to save on payroll expenses. This is big. And, if possible, don't tell your staff prematurely that you're selling, because that uncertainty can cause them to consider leaving for "greener pastures" unnecessarily. There could be exceptions to this based on your particular situation and the relationship you have with your staff. That is of course something you will have to decide. But as a general rule, I would avoid informing them too early in order to circumvent the inconvenience of losing staff unexpectedly. Give them a chance to meet the new Owner/Buyer before letting them know if possible. At least this affords them the opportunity to form an opinion one way or the other which will make for a smoother transition.

Retaining your staff is critical. A fully staffed agency is much more important and necessary than you may realize. Most companies require minimum staffing requirements for a new agent/buyer. A potential buyer doesn't want or need the burden of recruiting, hiring, and training support staff while navigating your Company's approval process to buy your agency, while simultaneously completing the required education and training along with everything else they have on their plate; such as acquiring the required licensing, securing financing, and hiring an attorney in order to have the purchase agreement drafted. That's a lot. They don't need the additional task of having to hire staff because you decided to save on payroll. So, maintain or shore up your staff! Do not cut payroll to save on expenses prior to selling. You'll make it up on the back side with a more attractive sale price and save yourself the hassle of having to assist your buyer with finding staff to meet your company's requirements, which could slow down or even prevent the sale from going forward. I've seen it happen.

Don't scale down or reduce your Marketing Spend, and/or discontinue your marketing, prospecting and new business generating activities. Buyers are looking for a fully functioning, turnkey operation that's basically "plug and play" on day one. If you want to sell "as is" and market your Agency as a "fixer upper", that's fine, just realize that is not what most buyers are looking for. That strategy will more than likely generate a discounted offer as opposed to fair market value or even a Premium sale price. So, consider yourself forewarned, or at least informed as to what to expect if that's your plan. An Agency that has to be "ramped" back up into full production mode is not as desirable as a fully functioning Agency that is stable or better yet growing.

The office's appearance should be clean, organized and professional. This one should be easy unless you have some major renovations that need to be done, like painting, carpet and updated furniture and equipment. A good first impression when seeing your office for the first time whether in person or online will prevent any "cold feet" or buyer's remorse, especially before a Sales Agreement has been signed. Again, I'm stating the obvious here. Neatness counts.

Don't refuse to consider some form of Seller Financing. This one can be tricky. The Lending landscape has changed, and most Lenders want some "skin in the game" from the Seller depending on the financial bona fides of the buyer. Also consider that most buyers want to do away with the Seller Note as soon as possible by refinancing or simply paying it off early to make the Seller whole and to be free and clear of that secondary loan and its ancillary conditions and concerns. Accepting a Seller Note will also depend on the terms, and whether or not there is a 'standby" provision imposed by the Lender. It depends on the financial institution as to whether or not this is negotiable, and the length of time the "standby" is in effect. It can range from two to ten years if applicable. Also, consult with your accountant, as there may be tax advantages to a Seller Note you may want to consider.

Lastly, don't let your emotions interfere with the negotiations. This is a difficult thing to do, but it can kill the deal if you fail to exercise some restraint, self-discipline and patience. Understand the buyer doesn't know what you know, because they haven't been where you've been, unless of course they have prior industry experience. Expect a lot of questions you may consider to be "ignorant" and even irritating, and resist the impulse to "push back" or argue. Be courteous, patient, and most of all professional. I've learned a little patience, education, and explanation can go a long way in creating understanding and a more conducive atmosphere and environment to viable, credible, and productive conversations during negotiations. This holds true especially if the buyer doesn't understand the difference between an Asset Sale and a Stock Sale. If they're coming from a traditional business background, you will often get push back on the Valuation/Price (Multiple) as its used in our business versus a traditional EBITDA valued business. Which is why I strongly recommend using www.Acuvizori.com for your Agency Valuation. It provides the buyer and lender with a comprehensive and thorough presentation of your Agency's financials, reports, P&L's and historical performance. The importance of having a professional valuation to present to buyers and lenders cannot be overstated. I highly recommend you consider it.

It's always wise to seek professional guidance and advice when selling your agency, especially if you feel uncomfortable handling the process yourself. An accountant or consultant can provide valuable insights and expertise to ensure a smooth and successful sale. If you need assistance or have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know. I'm here to help.

Kirk Price has been working in the insurance and financial services industry for over 45 years. He has experience in various sales roles, including Sales Leadership, Management, Education, Compliance, and as a Registered Principal for Allstate Financial Services, LLC. His main responsibility was recruiting new talent for the Allstate Corporation and recruiting Buyer Candidates for Agency Owners wishing to sell their Agencies.

Throughout his career, Kirk has received numerous awards and recognition for his work as both a personal producer and a Sales Leader. As an Agent and Sales Leader, he earned several awards such as the Honor Ring, Life Millionaire, National Champions, Passport, Chairman's, and Chairman's Inner Circle awards, as well as the prestigious Key Manager Award 17 times. He also earned industry recognition with the National Quality Award and the National Sales Achievement Awards for excellence in sales volume and quality new business. During his 30-year tenure with Allstate, he was widely recognized as one of the top Recruiters in the Company, year in and year out both within the Southeast Region and Nationally. Kirk holds the professional designations for LUTC (Life Underwriter Training Council) and CLU (Chartered Life Underwriter).

Kirk retired from Allstate Insurance in 2014 after a 30-year career that started as an Agent and ended after various roles in Sales Leadership. He is currently the Owner of Price Consulting, LLC, where he recommends, counsels, and advises Insurance Agency Owners and Buyer Candidates regarding all aspects of the Agency sales transaction. Kirk is married to his wife of 50 years, Lisa Price, and resides in Birmingham, Alabama.

Proven Ways to Start and Grow an Independent Agency

Daniel Bruck, CMO, Smart Choice

1. Start with Self-Reflection

The new insurance agent failure rate is high. The Insurance Journal says some estimates put it at around 50%, but it could be as high as 80%, according to at least one source.

If we use the conservative failure rate of 50%, this means one in two new agents will end up quitting the industry after failing to gain a foothold. That's a discouraging statistic, but it's important to realize it doesn't mean YOU have a one in two chance of failing. Some new agents are more likely to fail than others—you may be the type of person who is likely to succeed.

Before you pour all your resources (not to mention your hopes and dreams) into trying to start an agency, ask yourself some questions to make sure it's a good fit for you.

Do you have the industry experience and knowledge necessary to succeed? Agency ownership is not an entry-level position. In addition to going through the required licensing process to sell insurance in your state, you'll need industry and business knowledge you can only gain through hands-on experience. As well as teaching you the ins and outs of the industry, working in an agency gives you ample opportunity to determine whether insurance feels like a good fit for you.

Are you willing to bet on yourself? According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, entrepreneurs tend to be fairly risk-averse. However, they believe in themselves and are passionate about their ideas. To succeed, you'll need to be confident enough to bet on yourself without being so overly confident that you're unrealistic. You also need plenty of drive and a willingness to take responsibility for what happens. If this doesn't sound like you, traditional employment may be a better fit.

Are you a people person? To sell insurance to people, you need to enjoy talking to them. You need to be able to make a good impression and inspire the sort of trust that convinces people to do business with you. If the thought of pitching products to someone fills you with dread, this may be the wrong industry for you.

2. Create Your Transition Strategy

Don't confuse your goal with your plan. Your goal is to build a successful agency; your plan specifies how you'll get there. The more detailed and researched your plan, the better.

This is true regardless of how you approach starting an agency. You might have years of industry experience as a captive agent and are now making the leap to the independent side or you might be starting an agency from scratch. Regardless, you need to be strategic.

Research the competitive landscape. Individuals and businesses certainly need insurance, but if other agencies are already meeting their insurance needs, you'll have a harder time gaining market share. Look for opportunities in the market—for example, people moving into the area or starting new businesses or businesses within a certain niche.

Understand market conditions. Are you in a hard market? Are carriers pulling out of your state? Are rates increasing? Consider these external forces as you build your strategy.

Know your numbers. Set a goal and work backward to determine how many policies you'll have to sell every month to get there.

3. Have Access to the Solutions Your Clients Want

Before you can sell to people, you need to have access to the things they want.

As each of your clients will have different insurance needs, success hinges on having access to a wide selection of product options. You wouldn't open a grocery store before stocking the aisles with food that people want to buy. Similarly, you can't grow an agency without the competitive product solutions clients are looking for.

Do you have access to:

Top-rated competitively priced carriers? The more carriers you have access to, the more options you can give your clients, which increases the odds of finding the perfect coverage fit. If you don't have access to many carriers, your clients may feel they need to look elsewhere to make sure they find the best deal.

Alternative solutions? When insurance premiums surge and carriers become more selective, finding coverage for clients can become more challenging. If you only work with traditional carriers, you may be unable to help some of your clients. If you have access to alternative solutions, you'll be able to help more people.

4. Decide Whether to Specialize or Generalize

As you build your agency, you have two

paths available to you: generalization and specialization. Both approaches have their pros and cons.

Generalization. As a generalist, you offer personal, commercial, life, health, and any other type of coverage you can name. Whatever someone needs, you strive to provide it. On the positive side, this means you never have to turn away prospects because their needs are outside your scope. You can also take any referral business. If a current client has new insurance needs, you can help with that, too. The downside is you have a lot of competition, meaning it can be hard to stand out. Also, although some clients will be fine with a generalist, others may worry that you don't have the specific knowledge necessary to help them with their complex insurance needs.

Specialization. As a specialist, you carve out a niche, such as personal insurance for high-net-worth individuals or commercial coverage for contractors. Your specialization can earn you a reputation as the go-to agency in your niche, helping you to stand out in a crowded market. Your clients can trust that they're in expert hands. This helps you succeed in your chosen area—but it will be a small area. If you exhaust the pool of prospects in your niche, you may need to find a new way to grow your business, such as expanding into a new region or to a second specialty.

5. Partner with a Network

If you follow the nine strategies above, you can grow your agency. There's just one problem—HOW do you:

Gain access to dozens of carriers in multiple lines to give clients the options they want and leverage cross-selling strategies?

Take advantage of the opportunity to earn bonuses, contingencies, and access to exclusive incentives from carriers?

Sell in the excess and surplus market to take on difficult-to-place risks efficiently?

Find acquisition opportunities to supercharge your agency's growth?

Receive financing to take advantage of acquisition opportunities?

The answer is simple: By joining the right agency network.

A network can give you access to top carriers and the insurance products they sell, including excess and surplus options. It can also give you the support you need to place difficult risks, uncover acquisition opportunities, and secure financing.

However, not all networks are the same. Some lock you into contracts and unfavorable commission structures without giving you the support you need. Be sure to do your homework before signing a contract!

How to Get Around the FTC's Non-Compete Ban

Gene Marks

Disclaimer: This article is not meant to be legal advice or make a political statement. It is for your personal information. One should always seek professional advice when making decisions.

This article was previously published in The Hill.

It's funny to me what regulations catch the attention of the small- and mid-sized business owners who are my clients.

Some know that new rules from the Department of Labor (DOL) may require them to classify their independent contractors as employees. Others are familiar with another rule from the Department of Labor that will require them to pay more overtime wages later this year. But few are aware of new harassment regulations from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that make them responsible for their employees' behavior both in and out of the office. And even fewer know about the Corporate Transparency Act, which will require millions of entities to disclose their "beneficial owners" to the government by year-end or face stiff penalties.

All of these Biden administration rules place more burdens on businesses, whether they realize it or not. But there's one new ruling from the administration everyone seems to know about: last month's announcement about the pending ban on non-compete agreements.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has officially stated that—effective sometime in the next four months—companies will no longer be able to use non-compete clauses or agreements with their employees. In other words, employees can leave their employer and work for a competitor down the street or start a competing business next door if they so choose. This is an unprecedented move and has motivated large business associations like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to litigate. Other business groups are following their lead.

These lawsuits may succeed, and most definitely will delay the non-compete ban. Another roadblock will be the pending decision from the Supreme Court this summer (the "Chevron Doctrine"), which may dilute the power of government departments and agencies like the FTC and DOL to implement laws passed by Congress and create even more lawsuits. And, of course, a change in presidential administrations next January would likely suspend this rule altogether, along with many other rules issued by departments and agencies of the Biden administration—because these are rules, not laws.

It's all uncertain and no one knows the outcome. But that's of little comfort to someone running a business. When it comes to the non-compete rule, what do they do?

I say relax and don't worry: regardless of the lawsuits and the upcoming elections, it's not hard for companies to get around this rule. How? By re-visiting and stepping up confidentiality agreements.

Do business owners really care if an employee leaves their company to work for a competitor down the street or start their own competing business? Of course we hate to lose good talent, and every loss of a good worker is a failure. But we can't control what people do. What we really care about is that the employee does not take our trade secrets with them for the benefit of their new employer. That's the main reason why we make them sign non-competes.

The good news for employers is that the non-compete ban doesn't impact confidentiality or non-disclosure (NDA) agreements. So in the next four months, before the ban takes effect, my advice to all employers is to re-visit these agreements and make them as iron-clad as possible, with draconian repercussions to any ex-employee (and their new employer) if there's a whiff that customer lists, processes, supplier prices or any other proprietary information has been taken.

I suggest using AI — ChatGPT, Gemini, CoPilot or Anthropic — to take a first crack at this new agreement. After that you should take that first draft to a smart attorney who can give it even more teeth. Then you should have all of your key current and future employees sign this updated agreement as a condition of employment. You can combine this exercise with the FTC's requirement that you disclose the non-compete ban to your workforce because hey, why not kill two birds with one stone?

If the FTC wants to stop employers from limiting workers changing jobs because, according to chair Lina Khan, it "keeps wages low, suppresses new ideas and robs the American economy of dynamism," then fair enough: let them switch jobs to that competitor down the street. Maybe the lawsuits will stop this. Or maybe Donald Trump will be toss her out come the beginning of 2025.

In the end, I'm not so sure that banning non-competes is such a big deal. That's because it's not just about the employee—it's more about trade secrets that the employee has. Businesses can easily get around this ban by strengthening their confidentiality agreements. While there's still time, I strongly suggest taking this action.

Gene Marks is founder of The Marks Group, a small-business consulting firm. He frequently appears on CNBC, Fox Business and MSNBC.

Leading Your Insurance Agency: The Job to be Done

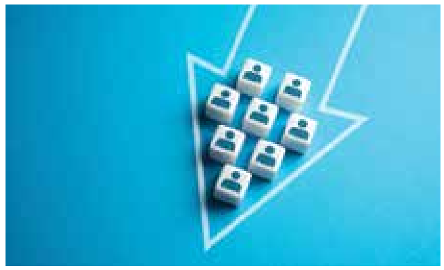
Melanie Otto

The most important role for you as a leader of your agency is learning how to build a machine that generates profit now and in the future. In today's world, your strategy of how to accomplish that may be different than it was five years ago given workforce changes and the pressures on your industry that exist today. As a business leader, you have many roles to play and many hats to wear. As you lead your agency, four of the most important leadership objectives are your business strategy, how you align your organization, your external presence, and talent management and coaching.

Business Strategy

Let's face it, you are in this business to support yourself and your family, and to generate wealth, so your business strategy has to address how to generate profit, both short and long term. Crucial to managing both sides of the P&L is recognizing where profit comes from and how it ties to your core business processes. Technology is everywhere today, so evaluating cutting edge digital tools is easier when you know exactly how your business processes work and where improvement is needed. If revenue growth is dependent on new customer sales, then ensure ample resources (hours, marketing and people) are dedicated to achieving your specific objectives. Measuring the success of those resources can ensure efficient use of operating capital and help you know where to adapt if results aren't being achieved.

Part of your strategy should be how to position your agency in your industry and where you operate by examining competitors, economic trends, technology needs, and talent available. Your strategy guides decision-making and investment decisions. Given an ever-changing environment, you can't just do this one time. Your strategy has to be analyzed based on the results achieved and the changing environment around you. Competitors add to the complexity by never standing still as they too want a competitive advantage, so evaluate their actions and adjust accordingly. Planning some "thinking time" in your schedule should not lose priority under daily



operational tasks as you strive to balance operational efforts versus strategic planning.

Talent Management and Coaching

Post Covid-lockdown expectations of the workforce have created employee demand for hybrid or remote work. Hybrid work may allow you to reduce rent or physical space requirements, but it changes the way business leaders communicate, team build, and manage their culture. A leader who can adapt to the hybrid workforce has to develop a staff that is empowered to work independently yet be available and accountable. The impact of technology is pushing more information into the hands of your team, which can provide them with information power and decision-making authority appropriate for their functional level. This can lead to you having more time to focus on development and coaching your staff versus dissemination of information. Employees welcome your investment in development and coaching as it shows them their work is highly valued. And whatever you do, don't neglect the soft issues as these can lead to a negative culture and an unproductive team. Personal connection makes it clear that you value more than just their work.

Organizational Alignment

Let's face it, we have a plethora of information available at our fingertips. Deciding what data is useful to manage the business is crucial to not put you and your managers into analysis paralysis. Once you decide what data is useful, ensuring a free flow of that information to your team allows you to hold them accountable while empowering them to aid in aligning their individual function with the overall success of the business.

External Presence

Keeping up with customer expectations is a never-ending challenge, so listening to them and soliciting feedback is important to help you adapt to changing needs. Active engagement with customers, industry groups and the community you operate in aids in promoting your agency. Positive engagement in the community at all levels of your team leads to a strong image for your agency and potential referrals. If your staff and customers are happy, they will portray your agency in a positive light. That's important because in today's world, they have communication platforms to let the world know how they're feeling in a matter of seconds.

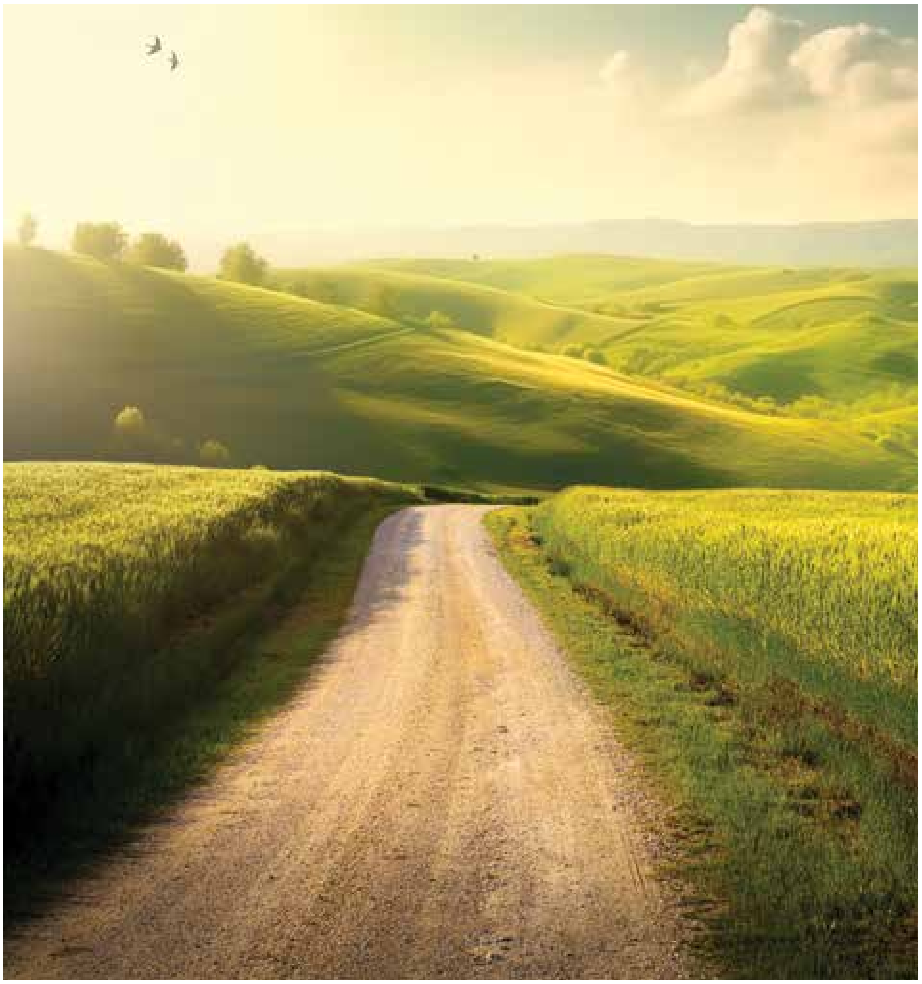
The needs of the customer require understanding and explaining the exposures in a premium range that is manageable for them. Lowest premium isn't always best for the customer, but in some cases, it may be necessary given their economic situation. Listening and asking questions to gauge their decision drivers is important to retaining current customer and earning the business of new ones.

It's a challenging time to lead an agency today. Selling to meet the needs of the customer while hitting the drivers your carrier wants is no easy task in the current environment. Strive to balance short and long term initiatives by finding opportunities for both business growth and operational improvement. Value your team and coach them to reach their goals while exhibiting patience to allow time for them to execute on the strategy. Finally, spread your value in the community to increase your positive image and reach.

Melanie Otto is Senior Vice President of Agency Finance at First Mid Bank & Trust. For over 15 years, she has successfully supported insurance agencies with growth capital, debt restructuring, and acquisition financing. Melanie's consultative approach is highly valued by her customers. To speak to Melanie directly, reach out at motto@firstmid.com and learn more on First Mid Agency Finance's website at www.firstmid.com/agency-finance/ or reach them at 877.294.8785.

Breaking Up is NOT Hard to Do: Your Path to Independence

ASNOA



DISCLAIMER: NAPAA is not encouraging agents to leave Allstate. Nor is publishing this article is a recommendation to join ASNOA. Finally, Allstate normally requires 90 days notice as well. However, 90 days is not hard fast. You can ask for less and The Company can approve a shorter period of time.

Embarking on the journey to independence is a significant step for any captive agent. Breaking free from the constraints of a captive position and transitioning to an independent agent is a pivotal moment in your career. How do you gracefully navigate this transition, especially when it comes to resigning from your current position?

The first step to becoming independent is to resign from your captive position. After you make the decision to jump from captive to independent agent, how do you politely tell the company you've been with that you want to leave? In this article, we'll break down the three major steps (and the order in which to take them) to successfully and politely terminating your employment.

Step 1: Check Your Contract and See the Writing on the Walls

When your captive carrier continuously changes for the worse, it is time to leave. Sure, rates go up and down, however when they:

- Cut commissions
- Change bonus structures
- Limit appetite and
- You lose retention

Unfortunately, there's no cookie-cutter way to resign. We can tell you that whether or not you decide to notify your District Manager prior to your date of resignation depends not only on your contract specifics (e.g. Farmers has a strict 90-day notice vs American Family who does not have a prior notice requirement), but on your relationship with your District Manager. When in doubt, consult your contract, and take note of the specifics.

Another key aspect of resigning is knowing your contract value. If you are considering selling your book to another agent, the length of your non-compete can extend. It might be better to get your contract value (and abide by your current non-compete).

Step 2: The Resignation Letter

Before you give your two weeks' notice, it's time to write your resignation letter. Though it may be tempting to unleash whatever feelings you've acquired over the years (good or bad), your resignation letter must be polite and professional. Try to avoid embellishing as much as possible; your employer will know whether you enjoyed the work environment.

Insurancejobs.com says that the best resignations letters are "short, simple, and positive". You will want to mention how thankful you are for the opportunity to work for the company and for the experience the position gave you. Other important information to include in your resignation letter:

- Your last day of employment (a good practice is to provide at least two weeks' notice to your supervisor, however consult with your contract for specific timeframes).
- A very brief, one sentence overview of your next steps.
- Example: I am leaving to pursue a different path of professional growth.
- The format of your letter should include a formal address to your supervisor

(whomever you report to or work under) and the date you are writing the letter. Here's a quick template to give you an idea:

Today's Date
Manager's Name
Manager's Title
Name of Insurance Agency
Address

Dear [Insert Supervisor's Name]:

Please accept this letter of resignation from [Your Position Title], effective [Insert Timeframe] from today. My last day at [Name of Insurance Agency] will be [date]. Thank you for the opportunity to work for [Insert name of Company] and for the valuable experience I gained from you over the years. I am leaving to pursue a different career path.

Again, it has been a pleasure working for you as a part of [Insert name of Company].

Best regards,
Your signature
Your typed name

Step 3: The "Talk"

Set up a five to ten-minute meeting with your manager. Remember: the purpose of this meeting is to inform your employer of your resignation, not for progress reports or idle chit-chat. Take a deep breath, and calmly and resolutely announce your decision to make a career move. Keep in mind that the intention behind having this meeting is also to make the transition process positive. Setting aside emotions, especially feelings of guilt or remorse is crucial during this step.

Here are the different responses for which you should prepare yourself according to insurancestaffing.net:

- "Clear your desk and leave!"
- "How can you do this to the client?"
- "What can we do to keep you?"
- And finally, and most ideally, "I accept your resignation and want to work out a smooth transition."

Although it may be difficult, you should give your supervisor a chance to explain why they want you to stay. This way the discussion is more likely to be reasonable and respectful, and you're also likely to hear why you are considered valuable. Don't be afraid to reiterate that your decision is final if your District Manager starts to carry on. If you don't know how to respond and your boss is giving you a hard time, thebalancecareers.com offers this: "I appreciate and understand your concerns about my departure, but my decision is final and my last day will be [date]. Please let me know what I can do between now and then to make this transition easier."

Once you have this end date set, you can start creating your agency's entity and taking action to build your brand. Next in this article series, we'll talk about 'Forming an Entity: what does it mean and how do I do it?' in which we'll walk you through the formation of your own independent agency.

At ASNOA, we prioritize seamless onboarding experiences to ensure that every new member of our team feels supported and empowered from day one. Our comprehensive onboarding process is designed to familiarize new employees with our company culture, values, and operations, setting them up for success in their roles. Through mentorship, training programs, and ongoing support, we strive to cultivate a welcoming environment where every individual can thrive and contribute to our collective success. Join us as we continue to build a dynamic and inclusive workplace where talent is nurtured and opportunities for growth abound.

Using the FMLA for Remote Employees: *What to Expect as a Small Business Owner*

Charles Read

In a recent USA Today survey, 35% of respondents had access to remote work. As a small business owner, it's important to understand FMLA for remote employees. While FMLA for small businesses is generally the same for remote and non-remote workers, there are a few key details that you should understand. With the FMLA cheat sheet, you can make sure that you are giving FMLA-eligible employees the unpaid leave they need.

FMLA for Small Businesses

The rules for FMLA for small businesses kick in when you have 50 employees within a 75-mile radius. If you have 50 employees distributed across the country, then the FMLA doesn't apply. Additionally, you have to have 50 employees on your payroll for at least 20 weeks out of the last year. You can essentially look at your payroll to see how many employees you have each week and see if you must follow the FMLA.

How to Handle FMLA for Remote Employees

For the most part, you can treat your remote workers like you treat your other employees. When someone is initially hired at your company, you should walk them through their FMLA rights and responsibilities notice during training. You also must cover the FMLA's general notice about the law's rules and benefits.

If an employee requests leave, you can ask them for a medical certification. Like any other HR activity, you should treat all of your employees in the same way. For example, you should ask every employee for a medical certification from their provider. If you don't treat each worker the same, it can open you up to potential lawsuits later on.

Because remote workers may not come into the office at all, you may need to figure out an appropriate time-tracking mechanism if they take part-time leave. Workers aren't required to take entire weeks off, so they may request a portion of a day or several days in a row off to handle their medical ailment. For remote workers, you will need to use a digital calendar or time-tracking platform to record the leave dates and amount. Employees are only provided 12 weeks of leave in a rolling 12-month period, so it's important to track the leave dates carefully.

Create an FMLA Leave Policy for Remote Workers

To use FMLA for remote employees, you should start by incorporating FMLA notifications and training into your remote onboarding materials. Then, you should calculate which locations and workers are eligible for FMLA leave. As a part of this process, you will need to make sure that each remote worker is assigned to a specific site as their home base.

Even if they never go to the site in person, they are still counted as employed at a single location for FMLA purposes. If the remote worker is at home 100% or works from many locations, you can determine their home base by looking at their manager's locations and the location where their assignments are handed out.

Remote employees must receive the same notifications and training as in-person workers. In particular, you are required to use an FMLA poster, add a notice to the employee handbook, and give workers an eligibility notice. Along with the eligibility notice, you must also give employees a notice about their rights and responsibilities.

Post the FMLA Poster

The first thing you must do is post an FMLA poster from the United States Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division. Remote workers don't go to a job site, so you can alternatively post this somewhere that they have access to and show them where it is. You are allowed to post this notice digitally if your employees are exclusively remote, normally receive notifications digitally, and have readily available access to the poster at all times.

Provide FMLA Information in Your Employee Handbook

When you create your employee handbook, it is important to incorporate FMLA materials. You must give employees the same information that is included in the FMLA poster. This information can be provided in a handout or in the employee handbook.

Give Eligibility Notices

Part of using FMLA for small businesses involves creating eligibility notices. When an employee submits their first application for FMLA, you must give them an eligibility notice that states whether they are eligible or not. You must tell them why they aren't eligible if they don't qualify for leave. Once the employee turns in their request, you only have five days to give them an eligibility notice.

Provide Employees With Their Rights and Responsibilities

If an employee requests leave, you must provide them with a rights and responsibilities notice at the same time as you give them their eligibility notice. You can easily use the Department of Labor's notice to satisfy this legal requirement.

FMLA Cheat Sheet: The Most Important Things to Remember

To simplify using the FMLA in your workplace, we have compiled an easy FMLA cheat sheet that your workplace can adopt to make sure it is in compliance with this act.

Incorporate FMLA Procedures Into Onboarding: One way to make sure you're compliant is by implementing FMLA procedures into your onboarding process. For example, the FMLA notification poster and information on how FMLA works should be included in the employee handbook or given out separately during onboarding.

Remember Covered Conditions: Caregivers can take FMLA if they adopt, foster, or give birth to a new child. Employees can also use leave for a serious mental or physical condition. Additionally, they can also take time off if a spouse, parent, or child has a serious condition.

Request Medical Certification: The FMLA allows you to ask employees to get their medical provider to certify their FMLA-qualified illness. If you request medical certification, you must give your employees at least 15 calendar days to return it to you.

Track the Home Base for Your Remote Workers: FMLA for remote employees is based on how many workers are at their home base. If the remote worker is operating out of an office that has 50 employees or more, they can get FMLA leave.

Give 12 Weeks of FMLA Leave: If a worker qualifies for FMLA leave, they get a maximum of 12 weeks in a rolling 12-month period. Military caregivers are allowed up to 26 weeks in a calendar year.

Provide Proper Notifications: The previous list of notifications, like eligibility notices and FMLA posters, are legal requirements that your business should incorporate into its normal HR procedures.

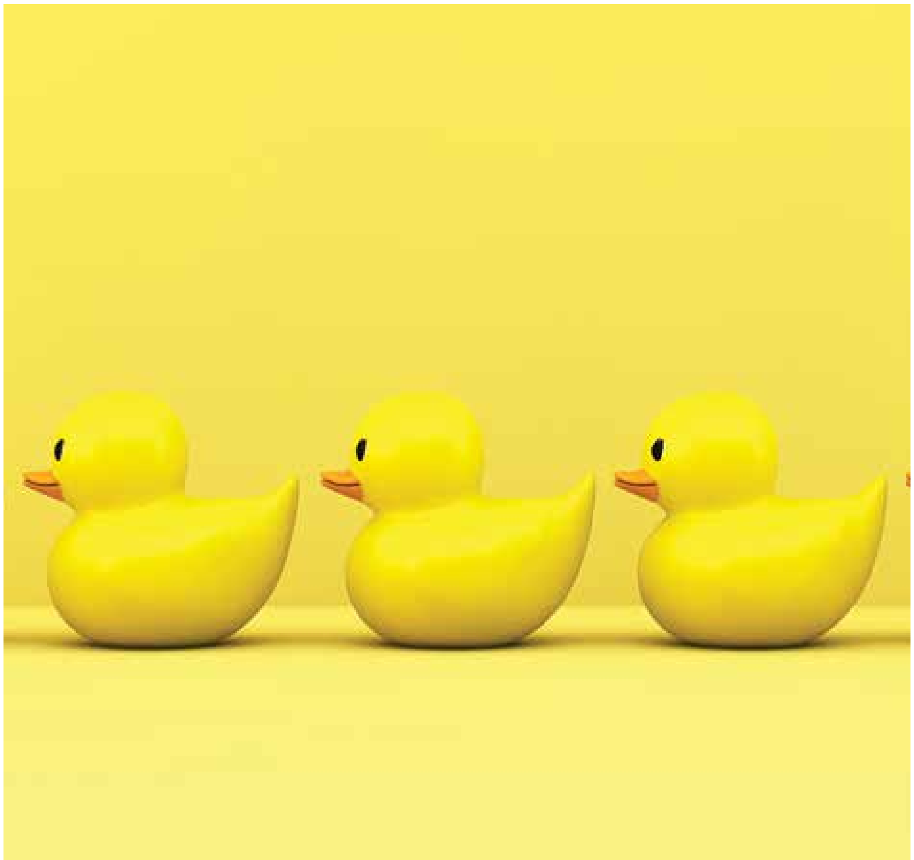
Learn More About How Small Businesses Can Adopt FMLA Requirements

Whether you need FMLA for remote employees or for your in-person workers, there are important legal requirements you need to understand. To learn more about FMLA for small businesses, reach out to GetPayroll's HR and payroll experts today.

Charles Read is an accomplished senior executive and entrepreneur with more than 50 years of financial leadership experience in a broad range of industries. He is also a licensed Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

POV: From an Insurance Expert Witness

Lezlee Liljenberg



Life after being a real estate broker and an insurance agent for 38 years transitioned into becoming an insurance and real estate consultant and expert witness. It is a fascinating, interesting and extremely intense occupation.

It has been five years since I jumped headfirst into this line of work. As I learn more and more about our business from a legal standpoint, I must be honest, it scares the hell out of me to witness how exposed agents are to being sued. And thinking back about how little we were trained to protect ourselves blows my mind.

These revelations made me want to share some tips. These tips are something we all have heard a hundred times. They are not groundbreaking or earth shattering but by not following them it could be life altering.

Before I go into the tips let me convey to you the main reason for my concern.

I am absolutely astounded when having conversations with agents how truly naive so many of us remain, even though we read and hear about adverse situations every day.

Some of the comments I hear are:

"Well, I didn't do anything wrong so there is no worry of my agency having any fear of being sued."

WRONG! You can have all your ducks-in-a-row and still be accused of wrongdoing. Being able to have the necessary documentation easily accessible is paramount. If you were to be sued, you wouldnot want or need the additional stress of finding pertinent information to defend yourself.

"The company has all of the information in the system of how we handle issues, so we are fine. They will provide it on my behalf."

DOUBLE WRONG! If the day comes (hopefully it never does) that you need back-up files and conversations from the carrier, count yourself lucky if the needed files are accessible.

This is not to be taken as negative. It is merely a fact of life and if these comments ring true for you then I highly recommend you keep reading and rethink your stance.

On with the tips.

TIP #1: Processes & Procedures

Have processes and procedures in writing.

How do you do business?

What are the steps your employees are guided (told) to take during every encounter with a customer?

When did you and how did you present these P&Ps to your employees? Monthly staff meeting? Annual Retreat? Document it!

Ask yourself all these questions and more. Then sit down and type or dictate how you want each interaction to play out.

This does not have to be fancy or arduous, but you need your producers, staff, marketers to have a playbook. Include the most mundane tasks such as how to answer the phone, but also include the crucial elements like follow up expectations and file creation.

Change and reintroduce these processes and procedures as necessary. The landscape of business and societal expected behavior constantly evolves. It is your responsibility as an owner to shift and adjust appropriately. Make these steps simple but detailed. I find a bullet-pointed, step-by-step approach works best.

Keep in mind these are not "suggestions" for your employees to think about abiding by when they feel like it. They are mandatory. No need to lead with an Iron Fist but you need to paint a clear picture of how you want them to conduct themselves. Remind them that if you get into a pickle, they will likely be in the same jar with you.

TIP #2: Document. Document. Document.

Did I say "Document"?

Whether it is taking chicken soup and crackers to an ailing customer or creating a presentation for a $50K premium opportunity with an investor, this information needs to be in in your management system. Many people "think" they have a great memory—and maybe they do. However, the employee that has been with you for 20 years will retire some day, and with him/her goes their brain trust. When asked to recall details they will more than likely be diagnosed with CRS (Can't Remember Shit). It is an all too underestimated syndrome.

By documenting conversations, uploading files, reports, and proposals we are creating a bridge of communication between ourselves and the client (and at times the companies we represent). By asking consistent questions of the policyholder during interactions you will create a sense of trust and integrity. In due time this should eventually build and set the stage of honesty on both sides of the equation. Of course, not everyone will appreciate this behavior but be cautioned, by not doing this you leave an inevitable risk exposure for you and your agency.

TIP #3: Keep Files

Realizing we are in the Digital World, it is understandable many people do not keep any paper files. That is way too old-fashioned, you say! Yet, there are many of us unable to release hard copy documentation and in fact by touching it we are more productive. Oh, and if the digital format is ever lost or inaccessible, I lean back on the old way—paper.

I am in the 21st century, but there is something about holding paper whether it be a work file, a book, or a magazine that makes me more productive. However, if you are digital, please be sure you are making files and placing the pertinent information into that file. Do not just leave the data all over different platforms that will take hours if not days to retrieve.

Are you backing up these files somewhere?

5, 10, 15 years from now can you find, download (upload), and print a conversation with a customer that can prove what you or your producer/staff did all those years ago?

I doubt it. Also, I can remember when I was in the trenches as an Allstate agent when the technology department wiped out massive amounts of agency files with extremely valuable interactions and data. In that moment I was so glad I was old-fashioned and double downed with a hybrid model of paper and digital. Determine a way to save the information you preserved while following TIP #1. Be assured most carriers are more than likely not going to have the necessary documentation ready at hand to defend you if sued.

And if you have left and moved on to greener pastures, finding backup to prove you were an agent of integrity, provided an appropriate standard of care, and followed best practices will prove difficult unless you have done your due diligence and retained this information. In hindsight, I left way too much behind by being brainwashed into believing I had no right to my past business dealings. Obviously, it is not appropriate to steal trade secrets or customers but protecting ourselves is essential.

BONUS TIP: Have An Employee Handbook

This has been a hot topic that I have stressed for years and yet I am still amazed at how many people share they do not have an employee handbook. WTH!

If you are one of these people, all I can say is like Nike "Just Do It". It is part of Processes and Procedures from TIP #1. It is a must for your business owner toolbox.

Again, we have all heard this stuff a million times but the question I pose is:

"Are you following these Rules of Engagement in your business?"

POV: You should be!

P.S. just in case you are old fashioned and do not follow social media POV=Point of View

Until Next Time...Happy Selling!

Lezlee proudly continues to serve on the NAPAA Board of Directors. She lives in Arlington, TX, recently celebrated 22 years of marriage to Magnus Liljenberg (Ex-Allstate Manager) and loves her new career as an Insurance Expert Witness and Author. Her newest publication, "If You Only Knew: Navigating DNA Surprises and the NPE World" was released October 2023. Connect with her through her website www.iamlezlee.com.

Mastering the Insurance Agency Game: Overcoming the Biggest Pitfalls in 2024

Berk Demirbulakli

Owning an insurance agency can be a rewarding and profitable venture—or so they say. Lately, it feels like we are being squeezed from every angle, and making a buck is extremely hard. In 2024, two of the biggest problems facing insurance agencies are the lack of sufficient leads for their staff and not having adequately trained employees to close those leads. Understanding these issues and taking real strategic and massive action is key to being better in 2024.

The Importance of a Steady Stream of Leads

One of the most critical elements for any insurance agency's success is a consistent flow of leads. Without leads, your staff will struggle to meet sales targets, and the agency's growth will stagnate. As an agency owner, it is your responsibility to ensure that your employees have enough leads to work with. If your employee gets extremely upset over losing a 3 or 4 car lead like it's the end of the world, it's because you just don't have enough leads in your pipeline. That's it. If you had more leads in your pipeline, would you care if you lost one?

To prevent this scenario, you must focus on generating a robust pipeline of leads. This involves not only traditional methods such as referrals and networking but also leveraging digital marketing strategies like SEO (Search Engine Optimization), PPC (Pay-Per-Click) advertising, and social media marketing. Your website should be optimized to attract and convert visitors into leads. Remember, your website should be a dynamic and up-to-date representation of your agency, not just a static page resembling an Allstate website. Don't be fooled by agencies charging you $3,500 for a website. A website is just a place to get more information. Do you know what happens to a great website if no leads go to it? Nothing happens if you don't drive leads to it, so why spend thousands of dollars on a site that won't do anything?

Training Your Staff to Close Leads

Even with a steady stream of leads, success isn't guaranteed if your staff isn't properly trained to close those leads. Your employees need to be proficient in sales techniques, knowledgeable about the products they are selling, and skilled in customer service. Continuous training and development are crucial to ensure that your staff can handle leads effectively and convert them into customers.

Train your team as if they'll be with you for the next decade, even though the average tenure is about eighteen months. It's not your fault or theirs—it's the industry reality. By emphasizing strong interpersonal skills and resilience, you lay the foundation for long-term success. Always be recruiting, and adopt a "hire slow, fire fast" mentality. Keep your employees busy with meaningful work, primarily focusing on handling leads.

Encourage your staff to always ask for all the business and follow up for referrals from every new and existing customer.

Establish minimum standards and sales numbers. Give yourself and your staff a clear benchmark; it's the best way for them to gauge if they should stay or go. All you have to do is reinforce it consistently.

Keeping up with how many quotes there are and closing percentages will guide the employees to a better closing ratio, but it must be consistent and not confrontational. If it gets confrontational, they shouldn't be in the position.

The Role of Digital Marketing in Lead Generation

In today's digital age, traditional marketing methods are no longer sufficient. Insurance agencies must embrace digital marketing to stay competitive. This includes investing in Google search ads, which remain a crucial tool for generating high-quality leads. Would you rather have a lead who was just woken or startled by a phone call and then asked if they want a quote or to buy life insurance like some telemarketers do, or do you want the person who is looking for insurance to give you a call? I would pick the latter—get them to call you. But how? Google leads, specifically through Google search ads.

Direct mail is good, but the less than 1% return rate just doesn't work anymore, especially when with Google ads you can turn down your daily spend when you hit your goals, saving you overall on your ad spend.

A well-executed Google search campaign can drive targeted traffic to your website and generate valuable leads. The search campaign is still Google's most important campaign, and Google uses the analytical data to feed other campaigns like performance campaigns and leads data campaigns. To simplify it all, agencies should have a Google search campaign that is a callout campaign, directing leads to your direct line so they don't go through a call tree, which most people will just hang up on. In order for a good campaign to be effective, it has to run for a few months and be optimized every 72 hours. Then, you must add negative keywords when they come up so you don't pay for bad traffic. What do I mean by bad traffic? We don't need people who are not your clients looking for your claims department, or you wasting your hard-earned money on that call.

> Remember, in the digital age, staying ahead of the competition requires a proactive and strategic approach to lead generation and staff management. Other agencies are spending money every single day on search ads and ads that get them in front of all prospects. It's now your time to level up and start to scale, or you will be left in the dust in 2024.

The Pitfalls of Misguided Digital Strategies

While digital marketing is essential, it's important not to fall into common pitfalls. One major mistake is relying too heavily on performance campaigns without the necessary data. These types of ads thrive on video and great images, which most agencies don't have nor will spend money making fancy videos. Leave that to the TikTok crowd.

Here's a critical warning: if you let Google decide who you want as a customer, they will spend all of your money. You must be specific and vigilant about your targeting approach. You should decide how to spend your money, ensuring it is not wasted on people who are too young or too old to get the insurance you are offering. By setting precise parameters, you can ensure your ads reach the right audience and avoid wasting your budget on irrelevant traffic.

The Bottom Line

You are already falling behind; these strategies are a must to catch up with other agencies:

Get Your Website Up and Running: Ensure your website is current, engaging, and optimized for SEO. It should be a tool for capturing leads, not just a digital brochure.

Invest in Google Ads: Develop a Google search campaign that directs leads to your direct line. Optimize the campaign regularly and use negative keywords to filter out irrelevant traffic. While Facebook and MSN are great platforms, for your money in 2024, Google is the clear winner.

Keep Your Staff Busy with Leads: Ensure your employees are focused on handling leads rather than getting bogged down with busy work. Continuous training is crucial for them to effectively close leads.

Understand and Implement Geo-Targeting: Use specific geo-targeting to lower costs and increase the effectiveness of your ads.

Be Patient and Persistent: Digital marketing campaigns take time to show results. You will start getting results within a few days of starting the campaign, but it takes time to get the cost per click to an amount where you get a great return on your investment. Be patient and continuously optimize your strategies.

Remember, in the digital age, staying ahead of the competition requires a proactive and strategic approach to lead generation and staff management. Other agencies are spending money every single day on search ads and ads that get them in front of all prospects. It's now your time to level up and start to scale, or you will be left in the dust in 2024. I am here to support your growth and help your agency thrive. Reach out to me at berk@coachberk.com.

Berk Demirbulakli is living the American Dream. With over 20 years of experience in the banking industry, he has managed a substantial $3 billion portfolio in private banking. Berk began his entrepreneurial journey by starting an Allstate agency in New Jersey, which he successfully doubled in size before selling it and relocating to the sunshine state of Florida with his incredible wife and three children.

Berk's educational background is in finance from New York University (NYU), complemented by banking certificates from the American Bankers Association (ABA). He is also securities licensed, bringing a wealth of knowledge and expertise to his ventures.

Currently, Berk is an Elite agency owner of an Allstate agency in Palm Coast, Florida, and the founder of CoachBerk.com, a coaching business that focuses on strategic coaching and lead generation through Google Ads. His mission is to help other agents not just survive but thrive in their careers by leveraging the power of digital marketing and proactive management.

Sticking Together: Customer Retention Strategies for Commercial Insurance

Jerry Thacker, Regional Vice President and Agency Growth Coach, AHA Insurance Network

In the world of commercial insurance, retaining customers is just as important as acquiring new ones. High retention rates can be indicative of customer satisfaction while also being a key driver of profitability and long-term success. Consequently, insurance agents who master the art of client retention have the potential to enjoy sustained growth and a stronger market position within the commercial insurance industry.

Emphasizing Personalized Service

The foundation of robust customer retention is personalized service. In commercial insurance, where each business's needs and risks are unique, it's imperative that interactions and policies are tailored to meet specific demands. Customizing these elements fosters trust and enhances the perceived value of your service, making clients think twice before switching to a competitor.

Understanding the nuances of a client's business, anticipating their needs, and providing solutions that align perfectly with their operational goals and challenges are essential. For example, an agent working with a construction company might focus on offering comprehensive liability and workers' compensation plans that address industry-specific risks, while a retail client might benefit from a business interruption policy that helps cover lost income and expenses if the store is unable to operate due to covered perils, such as a fire or natural disaster.

Proactive Customer Engagement

Proactive engagement is the key to strong client retention. This strategy involves more than just responding to questions and claims; it includes regular check-ins, personalized risk assessments, and staying ahead of potential issues. Techniques such as scheduling annual policy reviews, sending industry-specific tips via newsletters, and using customer relationship management (CRM) tools to track and analyze client interactions can significantly enhance engagement levels.

For instance, using data analytics an agent can identify patterns in claims or emerging risks and proactively reach out to clients with recommendations on how to mitigate these issues before they lead to larger problems. This not only demonstrates an agent's commitment to their client's well-being but also helps to strengthen their reliance on the agent's expertise.

Building Long-term Relationships

Viewing client relationships as long-term relationships changes the dynamic from transactional to collaborative. Building these long-term client relationships is essential for sustained success and growth. Here are some approaches to consider:

Shift from Transactional to Collaborative: Instead of viewing interactions with clients as one-off transactions focused solely on immediate needs, it's beneficial to adopt a collaborative approach. This means actively engaging with clients to understand their evolving needs, challenges, and goals over time. By positioning the relationship as a partnership, where both parties work together towards mutual success, trust and loyalty are fostered.

Regular Feedback Sessions: Regular communication with clients through feedback sessions allows for ongoing dialogue about their experiences with the agency's products, services, and the overall client experience. This feedback can be invaluable for identifying areas of improvement, addressing concerns promptly, and ensuring that the agent continues to meet clients' evolving expectations.

Involvement in Policy Adjustments: Unsurprisingly, clients appreciate being involved in decisions that affect them directly. By seeking their input and involvement in policy adjustments, such as changes to pricing, product offerings, or service delivery methods, agents demonstrate a commitment to meeting clients' needs and preferences. This involvement also reinforces the collaborative nature of the relationship and fosters a sense of ownership and investment from the client's side.

Strategies Aligned with Long-Term Business Goals: Rather than focusing solely on short-term gains, agents should align their strategies with clients' long-term business goals. This might involve offering tailored solutions and services that support clients' growth objectives, anticipating their future needs, and proactively providing value-added services or advice to help them achieve their desired outcomes.

Recognition and Reward for Client Loyalty: Acknowledging and rewarding client loyalty can go a long way in strengthening relationships and increasing retention rates. This can take various forms, such as personalized thank-you notes or gifts. Recognizing and appreciating clients for their continued support reinforces their sense of value and encourages them to remain loyal to your agency.

Building long-term relationships with clients requires a proactive and client-centric approach that prioritizes communication, collaboration, and mutual benefit. By investing in these relationships and consistently demonstrating value and commitment, agencies can foster loyalty, drive customer retention, and ultimately achieve sustainable growth and success.

Training and Development

Adopting a continuous learning mindset ensures agents remain at the forefront of the commercial insurance industry and any trends in client services. Investing in training programs, particularly those that focus on risk management techniques, empowers agents to provide better advice and service. An agent's competency and confidence can improve client relationships, lending itself to trust and satisfaction.

Community Engagement

Engaging in community activities can also help to enhance commercial client retention. Businesses sometimes prefer to do business with those that demonstrate a commitment to their communities. Insurance agencies can participate in or sponsor local events, support charitable causes, or implement sustainable practices in their operations. This helps build a positive brand image and creates emotional connections with clients, and even potential clients, who value corporate responsibility.

Embracing Opportunities: Commercial Client Retention Through Personalization, Engagement, and Partnership

Effective customer retention strategies in commercial insurance hinge on personalized services, proactive engagement, and long-term partnership building. Integrating these strategies with ongoing learning and development can help agents maintain and enhance their client relationships and overall market presence. Implementing these strategies consistently and effectively can help to ensure that an agency retains its valuable clients while also, potentially, gaining some new ones.

Jerry Thacker is regional vice president and an agency growth coach for AHA Insurance Network. In this role, Thacker is instrumental in providing continuous mentorship and coaching for member agencies, helping agents to optimize the resources provided by AHA to maximize their growth and success.

The AI Revolution: An Urgent Wake-Up Call for Insurance Agents

TJ Larkin

Fellow insurance agents, let's cut to the chase. The AI revolution is already here, and you're likely not ready for how fast it's going to change your business. If you think AI won't impact you for another 5-10 years, think again. The next 12 months will bring seismic shifts in how you work, sell, and interact with clients. Buckle up—it's time to dive into what's happening now, what's just around the corner, and why you need to act today.

The State of AI Today

AI technology has progressed so much farther, and in such a short amount of time, than even those working in the AI field expected. The technology exists today to have the equivalent of a tireless assistant who knows your business inside and out, processes information in seconds, and never misses a detail. That's AI. Today, AI agents can handle everything from data entry and policy management to customer interactions and claims processing. They work 24/7, never take breaks, speak every major language, and eliminate human errors. It's like having a supercharged team member who's always on point.

AI Voice Tech: The Future of Client Interaction

Think AI voice technology is just glorified phone trees? Think again. Picture this: A client calls with a complex query about their policy. Instead of waiting on hold or navigating a frustrating menu, then a confused human who can't actually figure out what to do, they're immediately connected to an AI voice agent that understands their question, accesses their information, and provides a precise answer within seconds. These AI voice agents can converse naturally, manage detailed questions, and keep their cool with even the most irate customers. It's a game-changer for client satisfaction and efficiency, while reducing labor costs by 80% or more.

AI-Driven Workflows: Real-Time Updates Across Systems

One of the most transformative aspects of AI is its ability to automate and streamline workflows. Imagine an AI-driven system that updates all your platforms in real time. When a client updates their policy details, this information is instantly reflected across eAgent, Gateway, and a note is filed in the comments. No more manual entries, no more discrepancies, and no more staff forgetting to update a specific system. This ensures that every part of your business is synchronized, accurate, and efficient. It's like having a well-oiled machine where all the cogs work in perfect harmony.

Embracing the Change: Why Now is the Time

Thinking through the potential impacts of these new technologies can be pretty scary. But here's the reality: AI is going to be a massive unlock of productivity for your agency. Your team members won't have to take 30 minutes for every quote, or spend 15 minutes updating multiple systems for every policy change. Those agents who embrace the technology will gain a significant edge over those who hesitate. Start by exploring the AI tools available, experiment with small-scale implementations, and train your team to harness these technologies. Think of it as investing in your future. The more you embrace AI now, the better equipped you'll be to thrive in an AI-driven world.

Conclusion: A (Somewhat) Positive Outlook

AI is set to transform the insurance industry faster than we anticipated. The advancements in AI agents, voice technology, data management, and more are already having a huge impact on the industry. You need to be prepared to be disrupted much sooner than you thought. But by embracing these innovations now, you can not only keep pace but lead the charge into a brighter future. Don't get left behind—start exploring AI today, educate yourself and your team, and be ready to leverage these tools. The future is bright for those who are prepared. Make sure you're one of them.

TJ Larkin is a former Allstate agent and co-founder of Insure Metrics.

Agencies for Sale

ARIZONA

Flagstaff

The Halstead Agency
928-380-6357
chbd36@gmail.com
Asking Price: Negotiable
PIF: 3000 Premium: $3.58 million
Number of Staff: 4
Number of Licensed Staff: 4
60+year award-winning established agency. Longstanding loss ratios below 40%, high retention rates, and cross-sales. Beautiful and inexpensive office location in a vibrant downtown location. Rare and very unique opportunity to own a thriving business in a highly desirable mountain town. Mild seasons and natural beauty make for extensive outdoor living, with activities like skiing, hiking, biking, and dining. The town boasts a diverse population, a major university, and a vibrant arts community.

Scottsdale

Frank and Barb Schubert Insurance & Financial Services, LLC
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
Asking Price: $3,300,000
PIF: 6720 Premium: $12,500,000
Number of Staff: 8
Number of Licensed Staff: 8
AZ is Growing - Top Producing Agency Opportunity now available - don't wait, cash flow is amazing! This established $12,500,000 premium agency is located in highly sought after Scottsdale. The agency owner has built an amazing business, will be retiring and is looking for the right successor to take over the reins and continue growing. The agency has been a multiple-year Trip & Bonus Qualifier, with a fully trained staff of 8, plus an in-house financial planner, all ready for the transition. The Scottsdale metro area is an easy place to own a business, has an inviting community feel, highly rated public schools, and easy access to all the amenities the Valley has to offer. The Scottsdale area has a median home price of $750,000 and an average income of approximately $180,000. Families represent 65% of the community, and nearly 55% of residents own their homes. Search no more, you have found that turnkey opportunity that helps balance work and family!

CALIFORNIA

Carmichael

Alain Ionescu
916-752-7706
alainul01@yahoo.com
Asking Price: Negotiable
PIF: 2700 Premium: $3,300,000
Number of Staff: 2
Number of Licensed Staff: 1
Organically grown agency since 2000, only Allstate agency in Carmichael CA, multiple awards, 47% loss ratio, 89% retention. An elite agent with an average of $ 350,000 commission over the last 2 years, agent ready to retire. Furniture and computers are included in the selling price, turn-key operation, and the agent is ready to stay on board for training.

COLORADO

Commerce City

Petrov Insurance Corp
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
Asking Price: $600,000
PIF: 1420 Premium: $3,100,000
Number of Staff: 2
Number of Licensed Staff: 2
Established Award-Winning Agency Located in Reunion, Colorado. This established agency is located in Reunion, CO, a growing community just 15 miles northeast of Denver. It has a small-town feel with excellent public schools and focuses on small business owners while offering amenities and easy access to larger cities. With the University of Colorado in Boulder and the Rocky Mountains to the west, Denver International Airport to the east, Cheyenne, Wyoming to the north, and Denver to the south, it's the perfect central location to live and work!

Denver

The Mathes Agency
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
Asking Price: $680,000
PIF: 1523 Premium: $3,200,000
Number of Staff: 2
Number of Licensed Staff: 2
Are you looking for a turn-key business opportunity with excellent growth potential, located in the highly desired state of Colorado? This established, $3,200,00 premium agency is located in Denver, Colorado. The agency owner has built an amazing business, will be retiring and looking for the right successor to take over the reins and continue growing. Denver is an easy place to own a business, has a sense of community, and a great feel. Denver has a median home price of $750,000 with an average income of approximately $144,000. Families represent 60% of the community, and nearly 72% of residents own their homes. Proximity to both Denver International Airport and a short drive to the mountains creates an ideal location to live and work. Now is the time for you to find that work and family balance!

Fort Collins

Newendyke Insurance Agency, LLC
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
Asking Price: $495,000
PIF: 1350 Premium: $2,650,000
Number of Staff: 1
Number of Licensed Staff: 1
This established $2,650,000 premium agency is located in Fort Collins, CO, a growing community just 50 miles north of Denver. Fort Collins is part of the "Gateway to the Rockies", has a small town feel with excellent public schools, and focuses on small business owners while offering the amenities and easy access to larger communities. With Denver International Airport about an hour to the southeast, University of Colorado in Boulder to the southwest, Cheyenne, Wyoming to the north and Denver to the south—it's the perfect central location to live and work!

Johnstown

JK Meksch Financial Services, Inc
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
Asking Price: $640,000
PIF: 1435Premium: $2,800,000
Number of Staff: 2
Number of Licensed Staff: 2
This established award-winning agency is located in Johnstown, CO, a growing community just 30 miles north of Denver. Johnstown is part of the "Gateway to the Rockies" and has a small-town feel that focuses on small business owners while offering the amenities and easy access to larger cities. Within 45 minutes to Denver International Airport to the east and Estes Park / Rocky Mountain National Park to the west, 30 minutes to Colorado State University in Fort Collins to the north and Denver to the south—it's the perfect central location to live and work! With median home prices around $580,000, now is the time for you to find that work and family balance you've been hearing about!

Littleton

George Sechrist Insurance Agency
720-779-1500
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
Asking Price: $716,000
PIF: 1233 Premium: $3 million
Number of Staff: 2
Number of Licensed Staff: 2
This established, 25+ year agency is located in south Jefferson County, CO, a growing suburb of Denver. The agency owner is looking to retire and is looking for the right buyer to take over. With a 92% retention rate, this opportunity is primed for further growth! South Jefferson County has a small town feel with excellent private school and home school options, and focuses on small business owners while offering the amenities of larger nearby cities. With Denver International Airport about 45 minutes to the northeast, Colorado Springs about 60 minutes to the south and the mountains a short drive to the west, it's the perfect central location to live and work!

Longmont

Heath Orvis Agency LLC.
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
Asking Price: $1,375,000
PIF: 2400 Premium: $5.5 million
Number of Staff: 3
Number of Licensed Staff: 3
Colorado - The #1 State to Own a Business
This established $5,500,000 premium agency is located in a highly sought after Norther Colorado city. The agency owner has built an amazing business and is looking for the right successor to take over the reins and continue growing. The agency has been a multiple-trip and bonus-winning location. The Northern Colorado area, often referred to as the Tri-City Region, is an easy place to own a business, has an inviting community feel, highly rated public schools, and easy access to all the amenities of a larger city. Many people call this town a hidden gem, with easy access to the mountains to the west, Denver International Airport to the east, and Denver to the south. The median home price is $650,000 and average income is approximately $120,000. Families represent 65% of the community, and nearly 55% of residents own their homes. Search no more, you have found that turnkey opportunity that helps balance work and family!

Agencies for Sale

FLORIDA

Apopka
Allstate Agency
407-913-8522
malcolmzx7@gmail.com
Asking Price: $850,000
PIF: 1534 Premium: $3,953,794
Number of Staff: 1
Number of Licensed Staff: 1
After 17 years of dedicated service, I have decided to embark on a new chapter in my life, Retirement! We are seeking a new owner to carry on our legacy of trust and reliability, ensuring that families and businesses continue to receive the protection and peace of mind they have come to know and deserve. Please call or email via the contact info above. Please leave a message if I don't answer. I will call you back.

GEORGIA

SW
678-223-7397
nicole@sammconsulting.com
Asking Price: $1,250,000
PIF: 2524 Premium: $5,200,000
$5.2M Allstate BOB in South West, GA. This is a seasoned book, with experienced staff. Call SAMM today for NDA and more info.

HAWAII

Mililani
Manuel Buenconsejo: Allstate Insurance
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
PIF: 3000 | Asking Price: $755,000
Premium: $3,500,000
Number of Staff: 3
Number of Licensed Staff: 3
Excellent Growth Potential in Mililani, Hawaii. Are you looking for a turnkey business opportunity with excellent growth potential, located in the highly desired state of Hawaii? This established, $3,500,000 premium agency is located in Mililani, Hawaii. The agency owner has built an amazing business, will be retiring and looking for the right successor to take over the reins and continue growing. Mililani is an easy place to own a business, has a small town feel with a sense of community, and great views to match the island vibe. Mililani has a median home price of $780,000. Families represent 63% of the community, and nearly 70% of residents own their homes. Look no further for a location with access to the beach/ocean, highly rated schools, hiking in the nearby mountains, convenient travel in and out of the local airport. Mililani is an ideal location to live and work. Now is the time for you to find that work and family balance!

ILLINOIS

Aurora (Western Suburbs of Chicago)
Harvey A Goodwin
630-404-7077
harveyg414@aol.com
PIF: 1858 | Asking Price: 2x TPP
Premium: $2,647,000
Number of Staff: 1
Number of Licensed Staff: 1
36-year agent ready to move on when the opportunity arises. Either take over (rent $500 all-inclusive) or merge with our other agent. 37.44% LR, 89.31% RR, TPP (termination payment plan).

INDIANA

Evansville, South Bend, Carmel
The Tod Wilson Agencies
812-457-0089
todwilson11@gmail.com
Asking Price: Between 2x-3x annual comp
PIF: 8200 Premium: $9.8 million
Number of Staff: 9
Number of Licensed Staff: 9
Evansville: $5.1 million 4,400 PIF 90% retention
South Bend: $3 million 2,600 PIF 91% retention
Carmel: $1.7 million 1,200 PIF 88% retention
Each is sold separately.

IOWA

Des Moines
Jane Ketelsen Davis Agency, Inc.
720-902-5200
gchitwood@g-forceac.com
Asking Price: $915,000
PIF: 2500 Premium: $3.5 million
Number of Staff: 3
Number of Licensed Staff: 3
Excellent Growth Potential in Des Moines, IA
Are you looking for a turnkey business opportunity with excellent growth potential, located in the highly desired state of Iowa? This established, $3,500,000 premium, agency is located in Des Moines, IA. The agency owner has built an amazing business, will be retiring, and looking for the right successor to take over the reins and continue growing. Des Moines is an easy place to own a business, has a small town feel with a sense of community, and a great family vibe. The median home price is $230,000, families represent 63% of the community, and nearly 70% of residents own their homes. Des Moines is an ideal location to live and work. Now is the time for you to find that work and family balance!

MARYLAND

Savage
Fred Hazeltine
443-758-8534
fredhazeltine@gmail.com
Asking Price: $249,000
PIF: 21377 Premium: $1,268,559
Number of Staff: 1
Number of Licensed Staff: 1
Agency available in Savage Md., just north of Laurel.
Pro level agency with a nb percentage of 6.7%. 25 years in business, high customer satisfaction, current loss ratio 39% retention 88.1. Best to contact by email.

MINNESOTA

Waconia
Watermark Insurance Agency, Inc.
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
PIF: 3410 | Asking Price: $1,175,000
Premium: $6,900,000
Number of Staff: 3
Number of Licensed Staff: 3
Suburb. The agency owner has built an amazing business and is looking for the right successor to take over the reins and continue growing. The agency has been a multiple-trip and bonus-winning location. The Waconia area is an easy place to own a business, has an inviting community feel, highly rated public schools, and easy access to all the amenities of a larger city. Many people call this town a hidden gem, with easy access to the lake! The Waconia area has a median home price of $500,000 and an average income of approximately $120,000. Families represent 65% of the community, and nearly 55% of residents own their homes. Search no more, you have found that turnkey opportunity that helps balance work and family!

MISSOURI

Bamhart
The Blechle Agency, Inc
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
PIF: 840 | Asking Price: $275,000
Premium: $1,500,000
Number of Staff: 3
Number of Licensed Staff: 3
This established $1,500,000 premium agency is located in Barnhart, MO, a growing suburb just 20 miles south of St. Louis Missouri's Gateway Arch. Barnhart has a small-town feel with several small surrounding municipalities located in the 7th largest county in MO, with excellent public schools and a focus on small business owners, while offering the amenities and easy access to major interstate highways. Larger communities, St. Louis Airport, and Busch Stadium are all within a 30-minute drive to the north and historical towns to the east and south—it's the perfect central location to live and work!

Columbia
Wobig Insurance Group
573-999-3893
lynnwobig@gmail.com
PIF: 1694 | Asking Price: $negotiable
Premium: $2,300,000
Number of Staff: 2
Number of Licensed Staff: 2
Long-time agent retiring. Excellent location in the downtown area with great parking!

Nixa
Hall Insurance Professionals, LLC
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
PIF: 700 | Asking Price: $225, 000
Premium: $1,200,000
Number of Staff: 3
Number of Licensed Staff: 1
Located in Nixa, MO, a growing suburb south of Springfield. This established $1,200,000 premium agency is located in Nixa, MO, a growing suburb just 15 miles south of Springfield. Nixa has a small-town feel, with excellent public schools and a focus on small business owners, while offering great amenities and easy access to Branson and the Springfield Airport, all within 30 minutes—it's the perfect central location to live and work!

MONTANA

Kallspell
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
Asking Price: $945,000
PIF: 2620 Premium: $4,000,000
Number of Staff:3
Number of Licensed Staff: 3
This established $4,000,000 premium agency is located in Flathead County, MT, the fastest growing county in Montana. The agency owner has built an amazing business, will be retiring and looking for the right successor to take over the reins and continue growing. Flathead County is an easy place to own a business, has a sense of community, and a great feel. The median home price is $615,000, families represent 63% of the community, and nearly 70% of residents own their homes. Look no further for a location with skiing at Whitefish Mountain, highly rated schools, hiking in Glacier National Park, convenient travel in and out of the Kalispell Airport, and relaxing by the lake in the Village of Bigfork. Flathead County is an ideal location to live and work. Now is the time for you to find that work and family balance!

Agencies for Sale

NEW YORK

Staten Island

Lana Pikman Agency
646-644-0606
Lanapi0606@gmail.com
Asking Price: $150,000
PIF: 338| Premium: $786,000
Number of Staff: 1
Number of Licensed Staff: 1
Retention 96.64%
Annual revenues $78,686

Suffern

Dean Gentile Agency LLC
845-642-3637
deangentile@allstate.com
Asking Price: $1,150,000
PIF: 2900 | Premium: $4,400,000 + Commercial Book + Ivantage Book - Allstate Approved Carriers
Number of Staff: 4
Number of Licensed Staff: 4
Premier agency fantastic book of business for sale in Rockland County, NY. Brand new remodeled office and new furniture in 2017. Bundle 67%. Retention 92.41%. Loss Ratio 45%. 2016 - Honor Ring Winner. 2017 - Honor Ring & National Conference Winner. 2018 - Honor Ring Winner. 2019 - On Pace Achieved Production Credit.

OHIO

Youngtown

Rocco Nolfi Agency
330-729-5657
rocconolfi2@allstate.com
Asking Price: $900,000
PIF: 1176 | Premium: $3,564,574
Number of Staff: 2
Number of Licensed Staff: 2

PENNSYLVANIA

Walnutport

Havighurst Insurance Agency
610-428-2750
wehavhome@yahoo.com
Asking Price: $1,349,000
PIF: 4546 | Premium: $5,750,000
Number of Staff: 4
Number of Licensed Staff: 3
40+ year old Pro level agency with Great Cash Flow, High Retention, Low Loss Ratio. Agency location is agent owned and ideally located.

Havighurst Insurance Agency

720-902-5200
g-chitwood@g-forceac.com
Asking Price: $1,450,000
PIF: 3990 | Premium: $5,700,000
Number of Staff: 4
Number of Licensed Staff: 3
Premium agency in highly sought after Pennsylvania suburb! This established $5,700,000 premium agency is located in a highly sought after Pennsylvania suburb, ideally located between the Poconos and the Allentown metro area. The agency owner, who also owns the building the office is located in, has built an amazing business and is looking for the right successor to take over the reins and continue growing. The agency has been a multiple-trip and bonus-winning location. The Walnutport area is an easy place to own a business, has an inviting community feel, highly rated public schools, and easy access to all the amenities of a larger city. The Walnutport area has a median home price of $335,000 and an average income of approximately $82,000. Families represent 65% of the community, and nearly 55% of residents own their homes. Search no more, you have found that turnkey opportunity that helps balance work and family!

TEXAS

Hurst

Kretschmar Allstate Agency
817-614-6829
skretschmar@hotmail.com
Asking Price: Negotiable
PIF: 2963 | Premium: $7,423,000
Number of Staff: 5
Number of Licensed Staff: 5
Established agency. One of the original dating back to a Sears booth. Low loss ratio. Office is ready to go if buyer chooses. 2023 revenue was $1,050,000.

WISCONSIN

Madison

Koss Ins & Fin'l Svcs
608-244-8855
bobkoss@allstate.com
Asking Price: $700,000
PIF: 3,260 | Premium: $3,400,000
Number of Staff: 2
Number of licensed Staff: 2.
I'm a hub participant which means you can continue this occupancy or relocate. Retention is over 91%, Loss ratio is 42%. Bundle is 84%.

NAPAA Leadership

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Lockport, IL

Executive Vice President
Lezlee Liljenberg
Arlington, TX

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Michael Curley
Queens, NY

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COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
Liz Purvis

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Exclusive*focus*

National Association of
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Letters to the Editor: All letters must include an address and a phone number. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and space.

This issue of Exclusivefocus magazine may contain articles of interest submitted to NAPAA by outside authors. NAPAA is not responsible for the opinions, advice or accuracy of any information provided therein.

NAPAA's Mission Statement

NAPAA is dedicated to the success of Allstate Exclusive Agency Owners and to advance the independence and entrepreneurial spirit of our members.

NAPAA's Goals

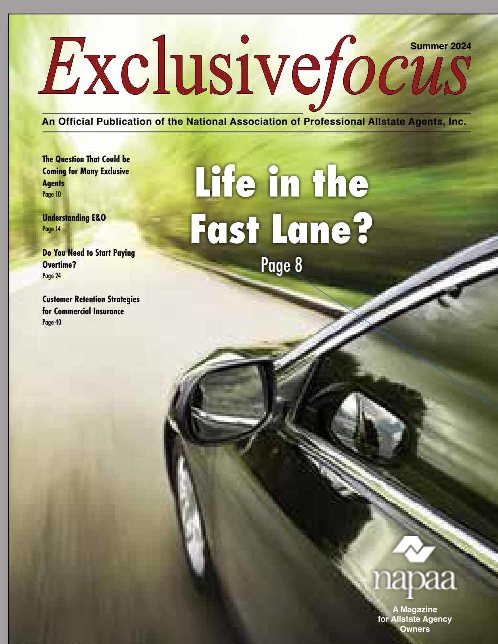
Our goals are subject to alteration, influenced by a constantly changing environment and the needs and wishes of our members.

NAPAA encourages its members to actively participate in the process of defining and refining our Mission, Goals and Positions.

Our General Goals:

- To provide an organization specifically tailored to benefit Allstate Exclusive Agents
- Monitor legislative and legal issues pertinent to Agents and their clients
- Provide reliable communications on all issues that affect Agents and the ability to call upon our members to act
- Provide Agents with a distinct voice on issues that affect them, continually exploring options and solutions
- Make tools and resources available for members in an effort to increase agency value and success.

For more information, please visit
www.napaaUSA.org



Summer 2024

this issue of Exclusive*focus* is brought to you by the National Association of Professional Allstate Agents.

Sometimes the best word you can hear is **NO...**

Looking to purchase your own office space?
NO prepayment penalties!

Thinking about purchasing another Allstate agency?
NO brokerage fees!

Considering a business line of credit?
NO monthly or quarterly audits!

How about a rewards business Visa Credit Card?
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