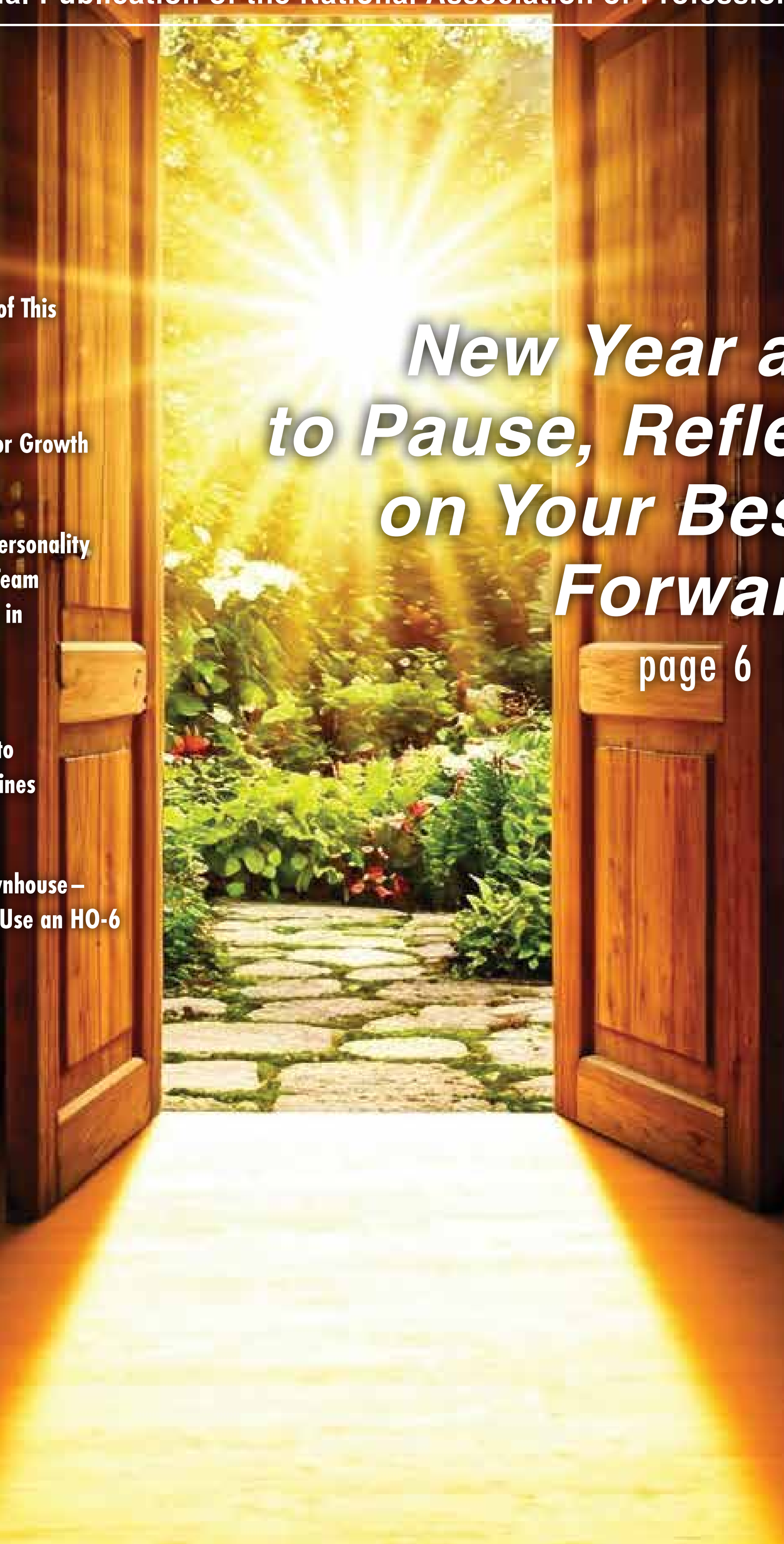
Winter 2024/2025

Exclusive*focus*

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



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napaa

A Magazine for Allstate Agency Owners

Exclusive*focus*

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The Way Forward:

What Empowers Growth in Today's Market?

Join Couri Insurance Associates and unlock your potential.

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- **Entrepreneurial freedom:** It's your business, your name on declaration pages.
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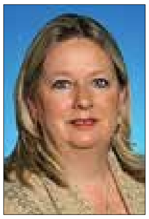


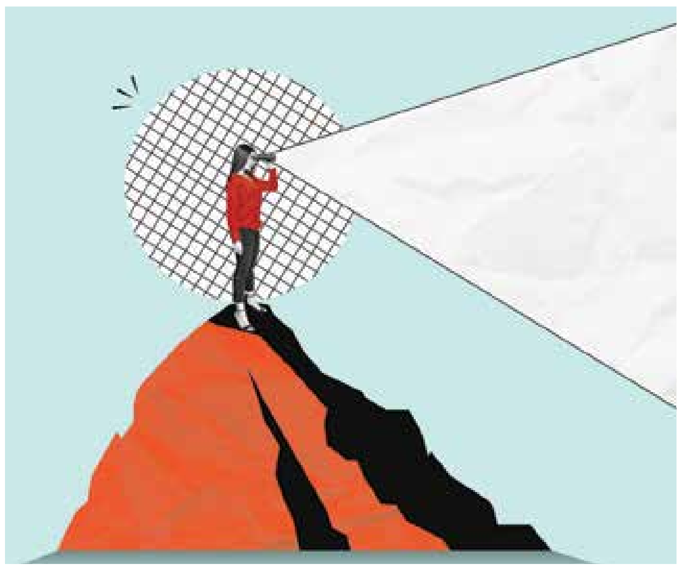
New Year a Time to Pause, Reflect, Focus on Your Best Path Forward

Claudia Gamache, NAPAA President, CPCU, ARM

2024 has ended and, as is the norm, agents worked hard to make their numbers to earn bonus and tiers where possible.

You depend on the financial rewards of owning an Allstate agency because it provides a living for you and your family as well as your staff and their families. You're likely considering how you did this past year in building your small business and taking care of your customers.

You are selling the promise that the financial risks of your customers are protected if something happens to their car, home, or life, and you want to know them well enough to know you have identified their financial risk and protected them. Many of you are in the business to keep the customer educated and to ask them all the questions that should develop information needed to sell the right products or at least have made the offer. In 2024 going into 2025, are we the trusted insurance agent, or the local sales person with limited time to learn more about our customers?



So much has changed, and you as an agent need to decide if the latest Allstate changes are the ones that will enrich you or put you out of business. Years ago, the company helped agents with their expenses by providing office supplies, marketing supplies, good training, a great help desk, and a pretty good rating system. Today, not so much of anything.

We have a lot of agents who are part of the All Agents Page, a good percentage of agents who are members of NAPAA, and more who have contributed to our legal defense funds.

Over the years, NAPAA has tackled many problems. Programs and measurements keep changing and the agents keep changing, but it's amazing how many things stay the same. Questions show up on the All Agents Page asking about the hours your agency needs to be open and who is working the day after the holiday. You throw out some crazy claim results to see if you are alone in your assessment of the actions taken. You are able to rely on each other by communicating on the All Agents Page with your questions, concerning products or corporate changes or someone to help your customer in their territory. But it is also apparent that enough time is not spent reviewing your contract with Allstate.

It's a disappointment that a company as profitable as Allstate, with well-paid management, seems to find no end to using a carrot and a stick to get more work for less money from you. Meanwhile, the expenses and the business financial risk remain yours. It's probably a very good idea to ask questions about new product launches or the new rating tools because training sounds minimal.

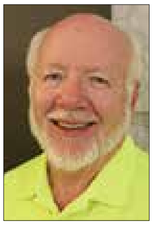
Thankfully, many agents continue to succeed with Allstate. You may have been allowed to buy a book to help with cash flow, or perhaps you are in a territory that is competitive, or you've found the super salesperson who is helping you make things happen. Maybe you are one of those who is not happy, but you're buckling down and will find a way to make more money. There is also the group that is deciding that the reward for the risk is no longer worth it, and who is looking for the exit strategy.

The number of agents continues to shrink, and this is by design. I think about myself and others who didn't want to be with the company as they continued to shrink the paychecks or change the method (sales/service) in which you want to work. The mysterious Transformation…I left at the end of 2022, when future cuts were again being discussed with no end in sight and selling your agency to another agent or outside buyer was not likely to happen. My mental health and tolerance for these changes—which always took from the agent—determined that it was my time to retire. As the president of NAPAA, I continue to feel the pain with you.

During our last NAPAA board meeting, we talked about the latest changes and what could be done within the contract. Outlined in your contract is the requirement that any changes Allstate makes to your base commission must be communicated to you with 90 days advance notice. We know how concerned you are with the changes. Base commission appears to be the least they want to pay, and that looks like the fate of the emerging agent. Then there are variable payments, which sweeten the pot and could be considered base + (Pro?), and then additional payments geared for elites—let's call that Base++—but we know that these goals are not easy and you will work harder to get those dollars and yet, many will not be able to achieve those goals. You need to verify that you can survive on the minimum proposed commissions.

I've thought about the changes Allstate made years ago, when the Canadian agents were going through their changes; Allstate was reducing the footprint and moving agents into community groups. Today there are 60 groups across the country with 6-8 employees per office, and everyone is an employee.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *continued on page 15.*



What is Next at Allstate?

Ted Paris, NAPAA Executive Director

Is there going to be an exclusive agency model in the future? To be honest, I don't know and I am not even sure that Allstate knows for sure. Or is the Company going to continue to reduce the agency force down and bring the Canadian model south to the USA? Another question is whether you as a captive agency owner can even afford to remain an exclusive agent with Allstate.

When one looks at what Allstate is telling the investment community and what they are telling you, the message is a little different. They tell you the EA channel is the most important part, and that they can't do without you. However, the Company and Tom Wilson have been telling Wall Street that they want to become the low-cost provider leader in the insurance industry. They are telling Wall Street that they want the Company to mirror the wants of the insuring public by having a major footprint in all three ways that people buy insurance: direct to consumer; availability through independent agencies and availability through captive agents—EAs. Mr. Wilson has stated numerous times that one-third of people want to buy direct from a company, one-third want to use an independent agent, and one-third a captive agent of the company. He mentions frequently that Allstate, as a company, on auto insurance is already close to those numbers for new business NOW. He states that Allstate is on the verge of being the only major insurance company with such a strong foothold. However, other companies such as Farmers Insurance and American Family are doing similar programs in their companies. State Farm is starting to get into the IA channel on a more limited basis. Their Company already writes policies direct to consumers but unlike Allstate all those policies go back to an agent. Progressive and Geico are both making changes regarding how they can sell to consumers. As you know, Geico now is allowing independent agents to sell as well. All insurance companies are looking to market their products via different channels. The lines are being crossed and blurred. Nothing is traditional nor transparent in today's insurance industry.

All of that being said, my opinion is that Allstate will not do away with the traditional EA model of today. I base this on Allstate's incredible ability to get EAs, its independent contractor model, to continue to invest their money into growing the Allstate brand. The Company has been able to convince thousands of agency owners to invest in their agencies and spend money on staff and marketing as Allstate does less and less. EAs used to get 'Build an ad' money as well as money on an Executive advantage card. The Company would advertise nationally to see your local agent. Now they don't do any of that. And while that support has stopped, agents are continuing to invest more and more of their money to "earn a yearend bonus" and to make variable compensation numbers. And, to earn points for trips and the Elite agency status. Trips are nice but if you pay a fair commission I could afford to buy my own vacation. Allstate has been adept in getting you to spend your own money; in getting you to work harder in order to make the same. And, what about this lofty "ELITE" status? They promise and promote several things but in reality, none of their promises are true. It's still up to their discretion to approve you buying anything. It's up to them to allow you to sell. Most times, getting any kind of actual benefit as an ELITE agent is more difficult than putting your left elbow in your right ear. I know this is cruel, but it is true.

Back to the agency channel and whether Allstate will continue it. One reason to keep the system is that when agents want out, if The Company won't approve a sell, Allstate saves approximately $140,000 on each two million in premium that they farm out to agents at 2%. And agents gladly accept this "free' money although it's likely to cost the agents more time and trouble than they are worth. Allstate doesn't have a trained workforce to handle the influx of service, so they farm it out to the agency force. While I state I don't believe The Company will do away with the EA channel, I don't mean to say that they will continue to work with smaller agencies. By smaller agencies, I mean those under $10 million in premium. Anything less than those numbers, owning and operating an agency will be difficult for an agency to survive from both a profitability and cash flow viewpoint. Remember, the total number of agency locations has gone from 13,000 in 2012 to 10,800 in 2019 to 6,300 in 2024. My database shows only 4,700 agency owners operating 6.300 locations. My records show 1,100 agency owners operating in over 3,000 locations and 3,600 agency owners operating in one location. Will this consolidation continue? I think YES. Agents need to go big or go home. As far as a time frame, I am not sure. But expect the Company to move quickly.

ED REPORT *continued on page 15.*

The Winners of This Hard Market

Shawn Walker

Simply put, this hard market has taken its toll on all relevant parties in the industry. The clients are suffering from huge rate increases, nonrenewals, changes in coverage conditions, and more complicated underwriting. The agents are working harder than ever to retain and educate clients as to why this is all happening, while some distribution channels have even seen commission cuts. And finally, the carriers have been hunting for profit for three years now. Many carriers have thrown in the towel, folded up shop, or completely walked away from unprofitable, capital-intensive product lines.

Having said all that, the cyclical nature of this industry is in motion. The winds of change have not stopped blowing (in a good way), and most carriers are feeling confident about their footing going into 2025. Third-quarter results are rolling in, and for the most part, they add another quarter of positive, profitable momentum in the right direction. The fourth quarter (historically) is almost always a "give me" on profit, and it is expected this hard market will soon be a distant, albeit painful, memory.

The good news: if you are reading this, you are still in the industry. In the last three years, you survived the culling of the herd. You were talented enough to make it through "the hardest market in a generation, if not ever."

As I look back, I observed some specific traits from the strongest, most resilient agencies over the last three years. Allow me to detail some of those traits for you now:

Agents who not only survived but thrived in this hard market were able to pivot to other lines of business. When I speak to young professionals as they consider and enter this incredible industry, I lead with what I love most about Insurance: the learning curve of insurance is indefinite. You can be a lifelong learner in insurance. The more you learn, the more valuable you are to the industry and your clients. Many agents who love to learn looked at this hard market, saw the need to expand professionally, and chose to learn new product lines. They chose to figure out how to fill a new leads pipeline and become a power producer with new products. They chose to attend commercial schools or get new designations. The inverse of this statement is true. I saw some agents refuse to proactively learn and grow and minimize the opportunity education provided to expand into other product lines. Some got lucky and survived. Maybe they had a large enough book to live off, but some were crushed by their lack of desire or ability to learn new product lines.

Agents focused on the positives. I heard Progressive report that early in the hard market, they were experiencing some of their largest months of quoting activity they had ever seen in the history of their company. This meant new opportunities, new at-bats, and new clients. Some agents looked at the market conditions not as a time to "retreat and retain" but as a time to "grow and sell." Some agents thought, 'If everyone is shopping, I got to get a bigger funnel!' Agents focused on the total WP growth, which, of course, led to higher earnings. They focused on what they could do instead of what they could not do. A perfect example of this could be found in the agencies actively engaged in account rounding the monoline property book with an auto or additional lines. They focused on the ability they had to represent multiple carriers and or write multiple product lines.

Winning agents focused on acquisitions of talent and or book purchases. The biggest winners saw an opportunity to build their teams to a greater degree. Winning agents picked up talent from all different backgrounds and walks of life, growing their teams and acquiring agencies in this complicated time. They realized it was not time to sell or fold but to acquire and build empires. Some agency owners capitalized on the fact they were in a great position to provide carrier access to new producers or even seasoned professionals. Agency owners with their appointments and their contracts with carriers put them in a position to recruit talent and grow.

Great agents invested in technology that made it clear where production opportunity within an agency exists and where profit is available. PGI made our second largest technological investment with a third-party vendor to create so much more than an agency dashboard that shows agency owners the opportunities that exist within the agency, both from a new business and account rounding perspective. Additionally, it provides insights into opportunities within agencies to drive more profit.

Winning agents communicated with all the constituents involved to a whole new degree of clarity and professionalism, and they asked that all the parties involved did the same. Everyone had to elevate their standard of communication. They communicated with the carrier(s), the customers, the agency staff, and their lead providers. They communicated with their underwriters, their claims teams, and the executive teams. They provided feedback. They provided insights. They provided market intel. They educated the client. They asked about target markets and reports that showed how and where they could mine more gold from their existing gold mine. They formed more professional partnerships focused on profit and then growth. They worked hard to create and communicate wins for their customers and their carrier partners.

In the end, the winningest agents took the time and money to invest in themselves and their agency. They invested in technology. They invested in education. They invested in relationships. They invested in processes. They invested in communication. They pivoted. It is clear these investments, in all their different formats, have created stronger agencies and stronger agency owners. These trying times have culled the industry of the weakest agents and have lifted the industry average to a new, more qualified place.

You make it through "the hardest market of a generation, if not ever." You are a better insurance agent for it. I'd love to hear what you did during these trying market conditions. Please reach out to me and let me know what you specifically did to keep on winning these last few years. Let me know how you evolved.

Shawn Michael Walker is Senior Vice President of Premier Group Insurance and can be contacted at Shawnw@pgiagents.com.

Decisiveness

Richard Pope

Are you decisive, or do you pore over minutia and get bogged down with analysis paralysis? As the old saying goes, "He who snoozes, loses" or said another way, "When you snooze—you lose." This does not mean that you actually snooze but rather that you hesitate, you can't make up your mind, you wait for some proverbial sign from above, or you simply can't make a decision. WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

Being decisive is different from being spontaneous. Being decisive is the ability to take the facts that are offered and available and to make a decision. In many businesses, the ability to process facts quickly and decisively is part of the job description. This is especially true in dangerous occupations. It's also true in businesses that are service oriented. Think about that. If you had a plumber or an air conditioning technician come to your house, you would expect him to find the problem, offer a solution, and fix it. You do not expect him to have to research the problem and overcharge you for the time he had to spend.

Spontaneity, on the other hand, is different. If you are spontaneous with your shopping habits or eating habits, that is usually OK. If you like it, you buy it—within reason. Spontaneity usually comes with a price ceiling. As the price increases, you don't want to jump too quickly without doing a little homework first.

Most of the readers of this publication are in the insurance business. I can't imagine that you run into many clients who spontaneously buy insurance BUT, I'll bet you do have many clients that are decisive. They come into your office for insurance, they get the details, and then they make a decision. We love those types of people because they don't waste our time. They get the facts and make an "informed decision."

As most of you know, I am a career franchise professional. I have been in franchising for 40+ years. I have helped many people in their search for fulfillment of the American Dream. They want to escape corporate America, be their own boss, call their own shots, and reap the rewards of their own hard work. They want to create generational wealth and a legacy. These people KNOW WHAT THEY WANT and THEY ARE DECISIVE!

In my career, I have worked with all types of people and have experienced a high level of success. Decisive people are easy to work with. They know what they want and what they don't want and when they find the right franchise opportunity that matches up with their likes and dislikes, they know how to pull the trigger. The indecisive candidate, however, can be a bit of a challenge. Instead of looking for the positive attributes of a business opportunity, they look for anything negative. One failure out of hundreds of success stories is enough for them to back off or delay their decision. In most businesses, "time is money" and it's not something to waste. That's why most franchise companies cherish the decisive candidates. They know that to be successful in business, one must be sure, confident, and quick in their decisionmaking. To put that statement into context, you wouldn't want to make a rush trip to the emergency room and have a doctor that had to consult the medical library before rendering a treatment decision.

So, this brings us back to the opening paragraph: “When you snooze, you lose.” This just happened recently and it’s what prompted this article. As I said earlier, I have been in the franchise business for 40+ years and I don’t see it often, but it does happen. It happened to me twice this year. The franchise candidate couldn’t make a buying decision and had their ideal franchise territory sold right out from under them while they were trying to make up their mind. You certainly can’t blame the franchise company for that decision. The indecisive candidate could never buy and ultimately walk away. The new candidate knew what they wanted and didn’t find it necessary to re-invent the wheel in their decision-making process.

In my business, it should take no more than 4-6 weeks for a buying decision. The guidelines are simple.

- Work with someone that you trust.
- Identify 3-4 options that fit you: financially, operationally, and with availability in the area of your choice.
- Talk with the companies and decide (over a couple of weeks) which ones you want to drop and which ones you want to keep.
- Get the facts—validate the facts—make an “informed decision.”
- Attend a discovery day at the company of your choice; talk to the people that make the company do what it’s supposed to do.
- MAKE A DECISION—sign a contract—pay a franchise fee and then schedule your training and start making plans to get your business open.

It is important to note that the decision to purchase any given franchise goes two ways. The company first must approve you as someone that they think can thrive and flourish within their system. They will approve you and offer the franchise to you. Typically, you are expected to make a FINAL DECISION within 2-3 days following approval.

If you, or anyone you know, has an interest in franchise business ownership, either as a career change or a side hustle, I would be happy to talk with them.

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 direct 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.

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Why Should Larger Agency Owners Support NAPAA’s Lawsuit?

This is a good question. Actually, there are several great reasons larger agency owners should support the effort to rein in Allstate’s overreach in how you run your agencies.

But before we go there, here is what the lawsuit is not about:

1. **It’s not a class action suit meant to hurt or harm the brand.** It never was and never will be. No monetary penalty is being asked for on behalf of NAPAA. Only to get the Company to stop some current activities.
2. **It’s not about trying to argue that agents are employees.** No one wants to go back to being an employee. The independent contractor argument is not being argued as it is extremely complex.

The lawsuit is about getting Allstate to stop imposing procedures on how you run your agencies. It’s about letting you decide what phone system to use. It’s about letting you decide what lead system you use and where you buy those leads. Agency owners should not violate Company standards and State and Federal laws, but we feel it’s **YOUR** money being invested and spent, and **YOU** should able to decide how to best spend that money.

This is what the lawsuit **IS** about:

1. The lawsuit is about **stopping Allstate from allowing over 60,000 insurance agents who are not under the EA Agreement** from having a better quoting system and far, far fewer restrictions than you have as an EA.
2. The lawsuit is about **making acquisitions of smaller agencies easier and quicker.**
3. It’s about Allstate **honoring the agreement to allow agency owners to be able to “transfer its entire economic interest in the business written under this Agreement** by selling the economic interest in the business to an approved buyer. ” Currently the rules and procedures vary, and you all know sometimes it’s who you know and rules are not consistent.
4. It’s about **making Allstate honor the agreement between you and them** as they make you honor that same agreement.

We hope, when all is said and done, that Allstate management will start respecting and appreciating the current agency force — the ones who built the Company. Again, the lawsuit is not about hurting the Company, it’s about getting the Company **to stop hurting you and untie your hands** so you can get back to growing your book.

Donations are anonymous.
DONATE via **GoFundMe** at: https://www.gofundme.com/f/reclaim-your-agency?utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link_all&utm_source=customer

DONATE **via NAPAA** at www.napaausa.org
For those of you who have previously donated, THANK YOU. If you can offer additional support, we appreciate it. For those with questions or concerns, Ted can be contacted at **ted.paris@napaausa.org**. or 812-605-1237.

Can They Do That?

Ted Paris

Here are some answers to common questions I get and to comments on the All Agents Page:

Question: How can TC get away with changing commissions?

Answer: On page 7 of the Allstate R3001 Exclusive Agency Agreement, Section XV, A; The Company reserves the right to change commissions upon a 90-day notice being given to agents.

Question: Can we sue TC for changing commissions?

Answer: No, It's the agreement you signed that allows them to do so.

Question: How can TC change the bonus and increase VC more than once a year?

Answer: On Page 7 of the agreement, under XV, section B, The Company may provide Agents/agency with bonus, awards, prizes and other remuneration based on performance, if any, as it may prescribe in its sole discretion. This means that TC can change at any time with or without notice. TC considers anything other than BASE commissions to be a BONUS. So, the Annual bonus, the VC payments and the number assigned to you, AAP numbers for Pro and Elite can be changed at ANYTIME or for matter-of-fact ELIMINATED if Allstate wants to.

Question or Statement: I am going to sue TC because they are causing my TPP to go down because of commission cuts.

Answer: No, you can't sue because the TPP is being reduced due to the commission cuts. Well, you could try, but you would not win. As a point of fact, do you realize that for all agents appointed after 2000, that TPP is NOT guaranteed? Your agreement only mentions that agents own an economic interest, as defined in this Agreement and the incorporated Supplement and EA Manual, Page 8 Section B of the agreement. Remember the Supplement and EA Manual can be changed at any time. TPP is not guaranteed, and the description of the economic interest can be modified at any time.

Statement: I don't have to provide service clients of TC that I did not write, and who are not in my agency.

Answer: Page 2, II Duties and Conditions; A, "As an agent of the Company, Agent/Agency will provide customer service, including the collection of payments, for any AND ALL [emphasis added] Company policyholders and will assist in claims administration in accordance with the Company's rules and procedures." So be forewarned, you are in violation of TC policy if you don't provide service, and you could be violating your States DOI requirements as well.

Statement: TC cannot legally terminate for failing to achieve ABO. We should be able to sue for wrongful termination.

Answer: First, from a legal definition, independent contractor cannot be wrongfully terminated. TC can terminate your contract for any or no reason. See Page 8 XVIII. Section B, it may be terminated at any time, with or without cause. You can try to sue for breach of contract but not for wrongful termination. And, Page 2, Section II, section B, "Agent/Agency will meet certain business objectives established by the Company in the areas of profitability, growth, retention, customer satisfaction and customer service." At this time, ABO is the requirement that TC is using.

There are more statements, comments and statements but this is enough for now.

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *continued from page 6.*

NAPAA is looking forward to ending our current legal issue with Allstate soon. Our next goal will be to reopen a line of communication with Allstate that allows us to share what we are learning from you as your issues and to make recommendations for resolving them. Everyone keeps telling you that NAPAA needs a good proportion of the agents to be members to put weight behind what NAPAA wants to work on with Allstate for you. Many agents believe that, in the near future, Allstate will not have exclusive agents. Currently, NAPAA believes Allstate likes their 3-prong attack to accumulating customers; direct, exclusive agents, and independent agents. So, if you are willing and able to stick with Allstate there should be a place for you. At least for a while.

Wishing you a great end to 2024 and a better 2025. Consider joining or renewing with NAPAA. Let us know if you'd like to be on our board of directors. Nominations and elections will be here in a few months. Thank you for participating in the NAPAA offerings. Look for your magazine on the Bookshelf, look in your emails for your newsletters, and participate in the All Agents Page. If you have left or are considering your options, NAPAA also hosts a Plan B Facebook Page.

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.

ED REPORT *continued from page 8.*

Briefly, let's talk about the Canadian model. A few short years ago, Canadian agents were like you, independent contractors. But Allstate changed that. The Company did a reverse from what they did in the USA. They terminated all the independent contractors and made them employees again. In Canada, the Company now have 60 community locations. In total, there are 2,900 agents and employees. I checked out the size of the community locations. Most have around 6 to 8 actual agents per location. If it is true, then the majority of the 2,900 are, lacking better terminology, LSPs. Will Allstate in the USA do the same? I don't think so, but who knows? Could they, yes? The answer is hidden in the infamous Transformative Growth Stage Five plan.

My final thoughts are can you afford to remain as an exclusive agent with Allstate? And do you want to remain? This is the $64,000 dollar question for those of us who are a little older and understand the meaning from an old TV show in the 1960s. My thoughts are twofold: first, to survive going forward you will need to be a call center and produce a ton of new business. Second, you need to have a big base of renewal and new business premium in order to "afford" the privilege of being an Allstate EA. Third, are you going to stake your family's future on Allstate deciding that you are not expendable in the future? Unless the Company becomes transparent and shares stage Five of transformative growth plan, I am not sure how much, if any, I would continue to invest in what seems to be a declining asset.

I just have a problem not being able to develop a one-year, three-year, five-year, and ten-year plan unless I know for certain that the EA model is definitely part of the future with Allstate. Fool me once, fool me twice...but don't fool me forever. Agents need to stand up as one and demand to know what the future might being. NAPAA is here to help carry this to the Company. If not a member, join now at www.napaausa.org

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.

Unlocking Opportunity: Why Captive Agents Should Consider Becoming Independent

Doug Coombs, Chief Marketing Officer, SIAA

Author's Note: As I write this article, the recent news of Allstate's decision to, yet again, alter the commission structure of its exclusive agents is fresh on my mind. There will be a time lapse between writing this and the date of publication, but it is my belief that this is a discussion worth having—especially as it relates to emerging agents.

As the insurance market begins to open again, many captive insurance agents are reassessing their positions within the industry. Captive agents—those who represent a single insurance carrier—have long benefited from brand recognition, marketing support, and a predefined product line. However, the evolving marketplace offers compelling reasons for these professionals to consider transitioning to an independent insurance agent model. For agents eager to expand their potential and meet diverse client needs, going independent may be the next logical step.

Before going further, it's important to understand the fundamental difference between captive and independent agents. Captive agents work exclusively with one insurance carrier, selling only the products and services of that carrier. While this arrangement provides stability and often comes with training and administrative support, it also limits an agent's flexibility and earning potential.

Independent agents, on the other hand, can partner with multiple insurance carriers. This arrangement allows them to offer a wider range of products and tailor solutions to the unique needs of their clients. As the market opens and becomes more competitive, this adaptability can be a significant advantage.

One of the most notable benefits of becoming an independent agent is the ability to work with multiple carriers and offer a diverse product portfolio. Captive agents often face the challenge of fitting their clients into a limited range of products. If a client's needs fall outside of the captive carrier's offerings, the agent risks losing that business.

Independent agents are not bound by such restrictions. They can source policies from various carriers, ensuring they can meet the unique needs of each client. For example, if a prospective client has specific requirements for home insurance that Carrier A cannot accommodate, the independent agent can explore options with Carrier B or Carrier C (or even place business through a wholesaler). This flexibility enhances client satisfaction and positions the agent as a trusted advisor rather than a mere salesperson for Carrier A.

While captive agents often receive a steady salary or base commission structure, independent agents typically operate under a commission-only model. This may sound risky at first, but it's important to recognize the upside: unlimited earning potential. Independent agents can set their own targets and expand their book of business without being constrained by carrier-imposed quotas or limitations.

Additionally, independent agents often receive higher commission rates. Since they aren't reliant on a single carrier, they have the freedom to negotiate competitive agreements with multiple insurance companies. Over time, this can lead to substantial income growth, especially for agents who are proactive in building and maintaining client relationships. And since they aren't dependent on a single carrier, they have more flexibility when one carrier imposes a more stringent commission system.

The independent model places a strong emphasis on client satisfaction. When you're tied to a single carrier, there may be instances where you must push products that aren't an ideal fit for your clients. This misalignment can strain relationships and damage your reputation.

As an independent agent, you can prioritize the client's best interests. By offering tailored solutions and finding the best policies across a range of carriers, you'll build trust and loyalty. In a market where consumers are increasingly seeking personalized service, a client-focused approach can set you apart from the competition. Don't make the mistake of believing this approach dismisses the need for online/digital communication; many business relationships are fostered through electronic communication.

The insurance industry is not static; it's shaped by economic and industry conditions, regulatory changes, and shifting consumer expectations. Captive agents are often at the mercy of their carrier's ability to adapt to these changes. If the carrier is slow to innovate or expand its offerings, the agent's business may suffer (as well as experience lower commissions, as witnessed with recent events).

Independent agents, however, have the flexibility to pivot and adapt. If one carrier's products become less competitive, they can shift focus to another carrier with better options. This agility allows independent agents to stay ahead of market trends (or at least better adapt to them) and continuously meet their clients' evolving needs.

Modern technology has made it easier than ever for independent agents to succeed. From customer relationship management (CRM) systems to comparative rating tools, there are numerous resources available to streamline operations and improve efficiency. Many independent agencies also belong to networks (such as SIAA—The Agent Alliance), which provide access to training, support, discounted technology, and additional carrier relationships. These tools enable independent agents to compete effectively with larger organizations while maintaining the personal touch that clients value.

For captive agents considering the switch, it's natural to have reservations. One common concern is the potential loss of support provided by the parent carrier. Captive agents often rely on their carrier for marketing materials, training, and administrative assistance.

As mentioned previously, many independent agents find that these gaps can be mitigated through partnerships with networks. Furthermore, the autonomy of being independent often fosters greater creativity and innovation, empowering agents to build a brand that reflects their unique vision and values (which is part of the beauty of being an entrepreneur).

As an independent agent, you're no longer tied to the identity of a single carrier. This freedom allows you to establish your own brand and market your business in a way that resonates with your target audience. Whether you focus on a specific niche, such as small business insurance, or position yourself as a comprehensive risk advisor, the possibilities are endless.

Building your own brand also means you can create longterm equity in your business. Captive agents often find that their book of business belongs to the carrier, limiting their ability to sell or transfer their client base. Independent agents, on the other hand, typically own their books of business, giving them the option to sell their agency or pass it on to the next generation.

Transitioning from a captive to an independent model requires careful planning and preparation. Here are a few steps to help you make the leap:

One of the most notable benefits of becoming an independent agent is the ability to work with multiple carriers and offer a diverse product portfolio

Research Carriers and Networks: Identify reputable insurance carriers and networks that align with your goals and values.

Develop a Business Plan: Outline your target market, financial projections, and marketing strategies.

Obtain Licensing: Make sure you have the necessary licenses to operate as an independent agent in your state.

Build Relationships: Start networking with carriers, industry professionals, and potential clients.

Leverage Technology: Invest in tools and software that will streamline your operations and improve client service.

As the insurance market continues to open up, the advantages of being an independent agent are becoming increasingly clear. By breaking free from the constraints of a single carrier, you'll gain the freedom to diversify your offerings, grow your income, and build a client-focused business. While the transition requires effort and determination, the rewards—both personal and professional—are well worth it.

All the above being said, the intent here is not to diminish exclusive/captive agents in any way—nor is it to slight the approach of any one carrier. The point here is to suggest that the time is now for some inner soul-searching about how the future best plays out for each insurance agent individually—as a captive agent, or as an independent—and the degree to which each of us would prefer to control our destiny.

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What I Said About Base Salaries and Overtime? Forget That.

Federal judge overturns Department of Labor Rule that increased the minimum salary threshold

Dirk Beamer

Lawyers specializing in employment law spent much of 2024 talking about a new rule from the United States Department of Labor (DOL) that increased the minimum salary threshold, ie., the lowest salary amount that can legally be paid to an employee who will be deemed exempt from overtime considerations. I published an article on the topic in the Summer 2024 issue of this magazine. After all of the planning and, in many cases, upward salary adjustments, a federal district court judge in Dallas has struck down the DOL's implementation of the new rule and, in all likelihood, pronounced its death sentence.

Rules Refresh

The whole topic originates under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which is the backbone of the United States' wage and hour laws. FLSA itself remains unchanged, and so does the basic analysis to determine if an employee can be deemed exempt from overtime rules.

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 need for further analysis.

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 that the DOL sought to address in the rule that is now on hold.) 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.

What DOL Tried to Do

The new rule announced by DOL in April of 2024 increased the minimum salary threshold in several stages over time. Previously, the minimum salary threshold was at \$35,568. Starting July 1 of 2024, based on the new rule, the minimum salary went up to \$43,888. Had the rule stayed in effect, the minimum salary would have risen again on January 1, 2025, going all the way up to \$58,656. In addition, under the rule, the minimum salary threshold would have been adjusted to account for inflation every three years starting July 1, 2027.

What the Judge's Decision Says and Does

In a lawsuit filed by the State of Texas against DOL in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, Judge Sean D. Jordan issued a sweeping opinion on November 15, 2024. According to Judge Jordan, DOL exceeded its rulemaking authority by announcing a rule that basically eliminates "consideration of whether an employee performs 'bona fide executive, administrative, or professional capacity' duties in favor of what amounts to a salary-only test." In other words, the new rule inappropriately shifted focus away from the historic two-step analysis in favor of a heightened salary threshold.

The judge found that both of the minimum salary threshold increases required by the rule—$43,888 in July of 2024 and $58,656 in January of 2025—were improper. As a result, the decision reinstates the $35,568 minimum salary threshold that predated the rule change. Additionally, the judge determined that the DOL could not enforce the proposed tri-annual adjustments for inflation that the rule had required.

What's Next?

This question will likely be answered by the time this publication hits your desktop. As I write, DOL still has the option to appeal the decision to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. With a new administration set to take office in late January 2025, that seems unlikely. Most experts expect the Trump administration to reverse course and let the judge's decision stand.

For employers, the question becomes, "Can we undo pay raises we gave in order to meet the former rule's requirements?" The answer is likely yes. The Ohio State University gave salary increases to more than three hundred employees in November and December of 2024. After analyzing the judge's decision, the university announced that those increases would be reversed in January of 2025.

Notwithstanding Ohio State's chosen course, caution is recommended when considering a pay decrease. In particular, employers should not lose sight of the two-step analysis. Exempt employees still must properly fit within a recognized exemption. If that proves to be a close call, employers may not be anxious to lower salaries and irritate potentially misclassified workers, who will be all the more motivated to talk with a lawyer about their circumstances. At a minimum, before reversing a salary increase, employers should review the facts with legal counsel.

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@wright-beamer.com or visit his website at www.wrightbeamer.com.

A Blueprint for Growth

Whether you're building a house or a business, you need a brick-by-brick plan

Troy Korsgaden

When I wrote my first business plan many years ago, it was a single page. I wrote it in the backyard with a friend. I told him I'd been inspired to do so by a book I'd read recently, so we both sat outside and crafted our plans. Mine wasn't a detailed document; it was really just a vision of what my future business would look like. But it became my guiding light. I kept it on my desk where I could see it every day. My friend stuffed his in a drawer.

Ten years later, my friend was in the exact same spot he had been when we wrote those plans—the same number of clients, the same location, the same number of employees, the same everything—while my business had grown by leaps and bounds, and I was recognized as one of the top multiline insurance agents in the company.

The moral of this story is clear. Creating and executing a business plan can transform your business: I know this is true because it has worked for me for the 30-plus years I've been in the industry. But your business plan must be a living document— one you refer to daily, focusing on the activities that move you toward your vision. When I talk to agency owners about their business plans, I am often surprised by how many of them view the annual business planning process as a chore that takes them away from their real job of selling and service. So many simply go through the motions of creating a plan and then stuff it in a drawer or, worse yet, skip planning altogether.

I get it. You're busy. Financial services and insurance professionals are some of the busiest people I know. You spend your days (and often your nights) developing new leads, meeting with prospects and clients, training team members, networking in your community...the list goes on and on. It's hard to carve out time to stop doing and start planning. But, think about it, would an architect build a house without a blueprint, or a pilot fly a plane without a flight plan? Of course not. No matter how experienced they are—how many houses they've built or flights they've completed—these professionals understand that their success depends on having a clear vision of the desired outcome and a plan for how to get there. Your business deserves the same level of professionalism. You owe it to yourself, your team and your clients.

Passion, Purpose, People

Rather than feeling like a chore, the planning process should inspire and engage you and your team. (And I hope it goes without saying that you should include your team in the planning process.) I find that many agency teams rush through the vision, mission and values portion of the business plan. The plan is all about the numbers: appointments held, policies sold, client retention, revenue growth, and all the other indicators of agency success.

Yet, planning can also be an opportunity to reinforce your shared purpose and reignite the passion for what you do. The real value of planning lies in the process, the conversations you have and the questions you ask. Take time to review all that you accomplished in the previous year— not just the number of policies sold, but the people you helped. Remember, your true purpose is being there when people need you most.

And, speaking of people, where are they in your business plan? Ultimately, your plan is about them, not numbers. The numbers explain how you will know you've succeeded; they are essential to the plan and to your ability to grow and sustain a thriving business. But your end goal is all about people—as a business owner, it is about serving your clients, and as a leader, serving your team. Remember: serve first, and the results will follow.

Here are a few questions to discuss with your team during the planning process to inspire passion and purpose:

What do we believe in as an organization and what do we want to be known for?

What inspires us to keep going even when it's hard?

What can we do to better serve our clients—to surround them with protection?

How can we support each other, working as a team to achieve our goals?

What makes us proud to be a part of this team? Rather than rushing through this part of the plan, use these questions and the conversations they inspire to lay a foundation for the rest of the plan that puts people directly in the center.

5 Essential Elements

I've learned much over the years, and my business plans changed as I gained more experience. My most recent plan is 150 pages long. It is still very much a vision of what I want my business to look like in the future, but now it also includes detailed strategies in the areas I've identified as essential for sustainable growth.

Often, when agency owners share their business plans with me, what they really have is a marketing plan, and no matter how strong it might be, it is not a business plan. As business owners, you must look at the entirety of your practice. Think of your practice as an ecosystem of interdependent parts that work together toward a common goal. Your practice is only as strong as the weakest link in the ecosystem.

You will need to examine these five areas of your practice as you develop your business plan: organizational structure and staffing, business development, client retention, operational alignment and culture and team engagement.

1. Organizational Structure and Staffing

An effective organizational structure clarifies roles, responsibilities and expectations. It is the foundation for how your business operates and grows. Questions to consider include:

Does your current business structure support your growth goals?

Does your compensation strategy attract and retain top talent?

Do team members have the skills and resources they need to perform to a level of excellence?

Do your onboarding and everboarding processes set team members up for success?

What external expertise partners would help you to grow your business and serve your clients?

Look at where you are now and where you want to be, and ensure you have the structure in place to achieve your vision.

2. Business Development

This, of course, is at the heart of what you do. Expanding into new markets, developing leads and increasing household product density are essential for growth. Understandably, this is the area where many agency owners spend most of their time in the planning process. As you build your plan and set goals, I recommend asking these two questions that are often overlooked:

Are we generating enough appointments every day to sustain a consistent selling cycle? In my experience, this is an area where many agencies fall short. They simply aren't scheduling enough appointments. To maintain a consistent selling cycle, you must "fill the seats" every day. I recommend a minimum of 10 agency appointments each day.

Are we maintaining a balanced book of business? This is important both for your agency and your clients. A balanced book creates more efficiency within your practice. It is easier to manage 1,000 clients with four products than 4,000 clients with one. It also encourages you to include cross-selling strategies in your plan. Your current clientele is your most valuable resource for growing your business. A balanced book benefits your clients by ensuring that you truly are surrounding them with protection and helping them achieve their financial goals.

3. Client Retention

Neglecting new sales will result in stagnation. But maintaining a strong focus on client retention can ensure steady revenue and profitability. To increase client retention, focus on these three questions:

How can we continually deepen relationships with our clients? Every client interaction is an opportunity to deepen the relationship. As part of your business plan, identify strategies to gather more information about your clients and connect with them more often. You should be in contact with clients at least seven times a year.

Are we providing an unrivaled experience for our clients? Client experience is the true differentiator today. As you execute your business plan, unexpected challenges and opportunities will undoubtedly arise. You must be flexible enough to adjust to changes that occur while still maintaining focus on your objectives. As opportunities and challenges come up, continually ask, "How does this affect our plan? Does it move us toward our goal or distract us from it?"

For a variety of reasons, we seldom use the word promise in our industry. Still, I think it is worth looking at the difference between a promise and a plan. Your business plan outlines the actions you intend to take to achieve your goals, while a promise involves commitment and accountability.

Which is your business plan, an intention or a commitment? The most powerful question you can ask to drive the successful execution of your plan is: "How will we hold ourselves accountable for the success of our clients, the agency and the team?"

How are we representing ourselves to the communities we serve? Your brand, marketing and public relations efforts, social media presence, and community involvement all affect the public perception of your agency, which, in turn, affects your ability to attract new clients (and new team members). Ensure that the image you are presenting to your clients, prospects, potential team members and community aligns with the vision of what you want your organization to be, the purpose you serve and the values you embrace.

4. Operational Alignment

Your organization's systems and processes must support your efforts to grow your business and serve your clients. Three important questions to ask regarding operations during your planning process are:

What is the financial health of our organization, and how will that affect our plan?

How can we leverage technology to increase efficiency and provide unrivaled ser- vice to our clients?

Are we prepared for the unexpected?

Additionally, you need to pay close attention to three key areas of your business.

Business Financials. I am often surprised at how many agency owners have only a rudimentary understanding of their organization's financials. While you don't need to have the in-depth knowledge of an accountant, you should be able to read and analyze a profit and loss statement, cash flow statement, and balance sheet. Understanding these documents will help you assess the financial health of your business, make strategic decisions, and plan for the future.

Business Systems. Clients today have high expectations for efficiency and convenience. Examine your agency's systems and processes to identify opportunities to leverage technology. How can you provide better service to your clients or increase team productivity? What data can you collect at the local level that will provide valuable insight into your marketplace?

Business Continuity. A business continuity plan ensures that critical business functions can continue during and after an unexpected event. These may be external events, like a natural disaster that shuts down your office, or internal events, like the loss of a key team member. Either way, business is disrupted. And, just as we tell clients that the worst time to figure out what kind of coverage they have is at the time of a loss, it is also the worst time for a business to start thinking about its continuity plan.

5. Culture and Team Engagement

Studies have shown that culture and the work environment are key drivers of performance, productivity and retention. You must be intentional in how you build yours. Here are some questions to consider as you create your business plan:

What kind of culture do we want to create? How do the actions of our people, processes and systems support that culture?

What can we do to strengthen the team's connection to our purpose and increase their engagement in achieving our goals?

What framework is in place to foster teamwork and high performance?

What can I do to become a stronger leader? Leadership skills have become increasingly important as more companies and agencies move to team selling. The skills that made you successful as a solo practitioner are not the same as those you will need to lead and engage a team. As you develop your business plan, remember to include a plan for your personal development as well.

Addressing these five essential elements for growth in your business plan while continually asking, "What can we do to better serve our clients and achieve our goals?" will put you well along the path toward a strong and successful future.

The 4 Steps In A Proven Plan

AIM: Focus on where you have been and where you are going. Get clarity around the 2-3 goals that will drive everything else in your business.

DEVELOP: Evaluate all the key initiatives that you could include and then narrow the focus (3-5 at the most) to the key initiatives that you should include.

SCHEDULE: Be sure that your key initiatives show up in your calendar for the coming year and your weekly scorecard.

EXECUTE: A strong weekly team meeting and quarterly conversations with team members are key strategies for execution.

Troy Korsgaden is an author, trainer, speaker, consultant and the founder of Korsgaden Insights. Troy's expertise, industry knowledge and ability to transform are unmatched. His energy, dynamism, humor and distinctive ability to connect with his audience truly set him apart and keep him in high demand.


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Learn a Little About a Lot

Lezlee Liljenberg

In business, it is always good to stay in touch with day-to-day activities. Keeping in tune with employees is helpful. Staying abreast of societal changes keeps you up to speed with technology, the political climate, and the areas that affect you and those around you.

Yet, there are many areas of life and business professional insurance agents avoid because it is "Just Not Their Department." However, I challenge that knowing a little about the following categories can place you head-and-shoulders above your competition. In this dog-eat-dog insurance industry, everyone is fighting to get the consumers' attention, and fighting price wars is proving to be a losing battle. So how can you make yourself stand out in a crowd?

Come along with me as I describe a few areas that absolutely affect you and your customers daily. From experience, by having a better grasp of these topics, I know I won business, was able to conduct various seminars, and was a "go-to" resource for many.

KNOW YOUR POLICIES—this first one may seem like an easy decision, but I venture to ask, have you read the policies you sell? It is next to impossible to do this, and I understand that, however, the homeowners and auto policies you sell every day deserve a reading. We all get the basics of diminishing roof coverage, the purpose of uninsured/underinsured motorist, the importance of primary insured and much more.

Let me ask though:

Do you know how the personal umbrella policy responds at the time a claim is made?

When does Ordinance or Building Code coverage step in and how will it assist the policyholder?

Are you looking at the exclusions placed on a policy? It does not matter if it is a personal or commercial policy! You need to be aware of what is being underwritten and at the end of the day you are the one that can possibly be held liable for an exclusion or change to a policy (even when you are not aware of such changes).

There are elements that can be added by underwriting or the carrier may have decided to remove or change the coverage you have been selling for years. In most cases, they will be too busy (just like you) to convey this very important piece of information.

Work hard to know what you are procuring on behalf of an insured, who you are selling it to, and whether it is meeting the needs of the parties.

REAL ESTATE & MORTGAGES—Be knowledgeable about the workings of a real estate transaction. No need to get in the weeds about understanding the ins and outs of commercial property closings, which can be more complex, but if you have the residential down you could be helpful during commercial transactions, too. You can be a much more effective insurance agent if you recognize the underlying steps real estate agents, escrow officers, and mortgage specialists contend with to get the deals closed.

Why are they beating you up on price? The mortgage person has a solid reason. They need to get the client qualified and a few dollars here or there can make or break a deal. Help your staff understand this. The mortgage representative is not just trying to be a jerk. They are trying to do their job, and it often does not make sense. There are times where the request is just unreasonable and there is nothing that can be done, so know when to walk away.

Many times, though you can help them get to closing. Then after the fact you can make recommendations for changes and upgrades to the policy to your customer. I am not saying to ever provide an inferior product or service. Yet, most policies have some areas that can be addressed after you have gained the business. If you have a handle on how the real estate processes work you have the capability to assist in a smooth closing, you gain a customer and you can address issues such as building ordinance, identity theft, lower deductibles (if possible), cross sell the auto or write a Personal Umbrella Policy afterwards.

In most areas, there are title companies offering continuing education courses for real estate agents. What better way to learn, gain their respect and make friends than to entrench yourself in their world? Attending a two-hour course to supplement your skill level in the real estate realm and assisting you in being a better insurance representative is never a waste of time.

I have held my real estate broker license since 1987 and have continued my education in the field all these years. I can attest this background was a huge advantage in growing and maintaining my insurance business for over 20 years.

WILLS, ATTORNEYS, TRUST-OH MY! Yep! Believe it or not, these professions are an integral part of your life and business. Having knowledge of these professions has the capacity to help you. Surely, in all your years (or if you are just getting started, then listen up) you have had to deal with a death, divorce, or legal situation. Be aware if someone merely calls you and asks to cancel a parent's policy because they are moving to an assisted living or they have passed, or "remove my husband because he is a no-good, cheating scoundrel" you cannot do this.

In the parent situation, you need to see documentation. Does the person calling have Power of Attorney? If so, get a copy of the will that states this. Or are they the executor? Here again, get a copy of the paperwork that proves this and keep it in your files. Then and only then should you make any changes to a policy. There may still be a mortgage on the home or a loan on the auto to which there is still an obligation to protect them. People do crazy things when it comes to money and the message here is—protect YOU! When the family starts fighting over inheritance you do not want to be a party to the fallout.

Do you know the difference between POA, Executor, Medical POA, Trusts? If you answer "no" to any part of the question I highly recommend you brush up on the basics. Let me reiterate—by no means am I telling you to start being an advisor or do something you are not licensed to do. I am merely recommending you gain a better understanding of the industries that envelope and include insurance.

Oh, and that "low down scoundrel" may have an entirely different story. Plus, if he is a primary insured on the policy you will want to pick up the phone and have a conversation with him. Discretion is obvious in these situations. Insurance agents are trusted; you are a part of many people's lives, and you will be pulled into circumstances that are unimaginable. This is why you need to be aware of your limitations and what you need to do to protect yourself.

I was once caught in the middle of a murder/suicide situation (on Thanksgiving Day, no less!). I am so thankful I had an understanding of these topics to better handle the call. Yes, I took the call on Black Friday in the days when we were forced to be opened. My personal success stories go on-and-on-and-on where I can share, I was a better agent because I knew what to do in difficult situations.

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY AND AREA—This last one is the reason I was sparked to author this article. There are very few things in life that drive me crazier than when I am traveling and I ask a local person directions, information about their surroundings, restaurants, events, entertainment, you name it, and they look at me as though I have three heads and say, “I dunno”. The shrugging of the shoulders can put me into a head spin.

Insurance agents are trusted in any community. Well, you should be! Things are changing and this is understood but what if you were the point of reference for information on your community? Can you imagine how many more people would contact you, trust you, and admire you because you care about not only what you do but where you do it?

Not saying you have to be the local tourist advisor but being aware of your world, where things are located, is necessary for you and your staff. Being directionally capable of knowing where the local DMV, library, banks, chambers of commerce, and a restaurant are after a long drive into town, for any reason, can make all the difference to a weary potential policyholder.

TAKE AWAY: Advancing your knowledge in these areas is easy. Again, not saying you need to be an expert at any of this. Bottom-line is a basic understanding of how all of these industries affect you can only assist in making you a better agent, and provide a skill set most competitors never take the time and effort to obtain.

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.

Building Trust: The Role of Personality in Fostering Team Relationships in Your Agency

Jennifer Lucas, Omnia

In a fast-moving, rapidly evolving, and challenging industry like insurance, having a cohesive team is the key to success, and trust is the bedrock to creating that team. Building trust in your agency requires open communication, transparency, and a commitment to creating a supportive culture. It also requires self-awareness and a willingness to meet others where they are.

Personality traits significantly influence how individuals interact and collaborate. When team members have complementary personalities, they can leverage their strengths and mitigate weaknesses.

Different personalities provide opportunities for everyone to benefit from others' strengths and compensate for their challenge areas. Appreciating individual differences is vital in building trust and working through any personality clashes that may occur in a productive way.

What Makes Up Personality Traits?

Personality or behavioral traits are enduring patterns of thought, feeling, and action that characterize people's responses to the environment. These traits impact the type of insurance-related responsibilities team members find motivating and appealing, how they approach an assignment, and how they build relationships.

People's behavioral traits and how they show up in team situations can have a strong influence on the development of trust within that team.

Here are some examples of how that could play out:

Helpful and agreeable people get a feeling of satisfaction by supporting the team. When their efforts are valued and reciprocated, trust is built. But if that helpfulness is taken advantage of, not reciprocated, or not acknowledged by other members of the team, that can hinder trust building.

Big-picture people can offer creative, high-level solutions that help the team achieve goals. They could team up with a details person who helps bring the project home so that everyone wins. However, if they never consider the details or if they try to delegate too much, that could breed resentment. Conversely, they could feel stifled if others on the team are so focused on details or processes that they're unwilling to consider new ideas.

When a team is made up of both introverts and extroverts, it's necessary to take both into consideration when it comes to communication. If all ideas and input are solicited in public at meetings, introverted personalities may never get a voice. On the other hand, if everything is decided in writing (via email or chat), extroverts may feel left out. Trust is built when everyone on the team feels heard and included.

Self-Awareness Is Critical

The best way for people to become valued and trustworthy members of a team is by understanding themselves and the ways they're most comfortable contributing to agency goals and client needs. It also means being willing to step outside of their comfort zones to help (for example, by doing a task they dread to give someone else a break or a helping hand).

Self awareness is vital to learning how to do both. When team members understand how their behaviors might impact others, they can adjust accordingly.

Tools like behavioral assessments can supercharge self-awareness. The Omnia Development Profile, which is based on the Omnia Behavioral Assessment, can provide insight into individual personalities, strengths, challenge areas, preferences, motivators, and how they all play out in an agency. It also provides tips about what to be aware of when it comes to interacting with others.

Having diverse personalities working within the insurance industry allows for the creation of well-rounded teams. Nobody is perfect and no trait is perfectly suited to every situation. Assertive individuals can take the lead with confidence, but they need to understand when it's best not to so others have a chance to shine. People who enjoy speaking up can introduce new concepts and topics of conversation and foster engagement. But they need to see when their own silence would give someone less outgoing an opportunity to share.

How Can Leaders Help?

By recognizing and appreciating the unique contributions of each individual, agency leaders can create a sense of belonging and value. Additionally, addressing challenge areas in a supportive and constructive manner can help team members grow and develop, strengthening trust and collaboration.

Leaders need to foster a safe and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected. This requires open communication, empathy, and a commitment to fairness. By creating a culture of trust and respect within the agency, managers let team members feel empowered to share their ideas, take risks, and support one another.

If clashes do happen, leaders can give teams the tools they need to work through them by providing opportunities for team-building activities and training on conflict resolution skills. If intervention is necessary, they can help best by encouraging team members to express their perspectives, listen actively, and seek common ground.

It comes back to trust.

Without trust, there is no team, just a group of people doing the tasks assigned to them. With the complexities of the insurance industry, that's the perfect recipe for things to fall through the cracks and for lackluster results. If team members trust one another, they're more willing to step up when others are having a bad day.

Trust is built when both team members and leaders approach teamwork from an understanding that every person has something to contribute and everyone has something to overcome to be successful. Being willing to be self-aware and self-reflective is the best way to maintain the trust essential to a successful team.

If you're interested in learning more about how Omnia can help build effective within your agency or if you want to explore our Omnia Development Profiles to enhance self-awareness for all team members, contact us today at https://omniagroup.com/contact-us/ or 800-525-7117.

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.

The Gen Z Perspective

Amy C Waninger and Olivia Scales

Generation Z's numbers are increasing in the workforce. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 70.9% of the civilian noninstitutional population between the ages of 20 and 24 are in the civilian labor force. Pew Research Center defines Generation Z as individuals born between 1997 and 2002, although there are differing cut-offs depending on who you ask (some people use the 1995 cut-off for example). Older Gen Zers, such as myself, are starting their professional careers, and we bring a different perspective to the workplace.

But how is Gen Z different from their tenured counterparts? I love discussing career goals and priorities with friends and colleagues my age. However, I don't usually see many articles on professional development from professionals my age. That said, let me give you a glimpse of the Gen Z perspective.

Work & Personal Life Balance

Gen Z brings a unique perspective to the workplace in many ways. One of the most notable is their approach to work-personal life balance. We will work hard during the workday, but we are also less likely to answer work emails after hours or on the weekend unless absolutely necessary. Gen Z is very open when it comes to prioritizing mental health and personal well-being. By establishing clear boundaries, we increase our chances of maintaining the proper balance between meeting our career ambitions and goals and needs outside of a professional work setting.

Job Fulfillment

This is probably my biggest consideration when looking for jobs, and I am not alone. It seems to be a consistent trend when I talk to other professionals my age. I value my time. If I devote my time to a company, I want my contributions to be meaningful. This means we are less likely to stay at a job for years at a time for just the pay. If we do not receive that sense of accomplishment in our work, we are not shy about going elsewhere!

Pay and Benefits

This will seem like a direct contradiction

to the previous paragraph, but hear me out.

As I mentioned, job fulfillment is incredibly important to Gen Z, but to quote one of my friends I discussed this article with, "You gotta be able to live." Gen Z is less willing to accept the "You have to have the heart for it!" approach. This sentiment is often a justifier for low salaries and wages. Generation Z and Millennials have been more vocal about calling for higher wages. At the end of the day, it truly is a balancing act of doing what you love while also standing up for yourself to make sure you are being fairly compensated.

Work Environment

At a leadership development event I attended recently, we discussed the two elements that younger workers often choose over loyalty to a company: genuine connections with the individuals they collaborate with and passion for the work itself. This trend originated with Millennials and is now embraced by Generation Z.

There are many factors that come into play when discussing a company's work environment. People, generally speaking, want to work for ethical companies with a clear mission. Gen Z specifically places emphasis on a work culture that allows for organic collaboration and authentic relationships. We like it when managers have enough confidence in us to work on tasks without being micromanaged. This strengthens the rapport of work teams, builds employees' confidence, and provides a sense of fulfillment in their roles.

Diversity is another critical piece of an employer's work environment. Since Generation Z is one of the more diverse generations, it is important that such diversity is reflected and represented within any given company. This is more than just meeting the numbers of a diverse employee base. It includes making sure all employees feel like their concerns are taken seriously and can exist authentically within their work environment.

In terms of the physical work environment, it may surprise many that many Gen Z workers are wanting more in-person interactions. While we are generalized (albeit somewhat fairly) as a generation that is constantly online, we are fatigued from constantly having a large chunk of work engagements online. Personally, I 100% agree with this sentiment. We are ready to be in person and start building professional relationships!

Individual Growth

We are used to fast-paced working and educational environments. After all, many of us had to teach ourselves to some extent during the pandemic. We embrace a challenge and are self-sufficient in expanding our skills. From an employer standpoint, it is worth getting to know your employees and knowing what types of learning opportunities they are interested in. This gives them the ability to personalize their role and bring a holistic perspective to your company.

What Do You Think?

This by all means is not a comprehensive list; rather a collection of observations both personal and from my peers. As a Gen Z worker, what considerations did I miss? If you're an employer of young professionals, what are some perceptions that you have or had of the Gen Z workforce? We would love to hear your thoughts!

Amy C. Waninger is the Founder & CEO of Lead at Any Level, where she improves employee engagement and retention for companies that promote from within. Amy offers assessments, advisory services, and training on essential skills for inclusive leaders. She is the author of eight books. Learn more at www.LeadAtAnyLevel.com.

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Expanding Into Commercial Lines

Mark Brandt, VP Smart Choice

When launching a new agency, no one ever says, "I want to succeed by quoting only half of the business opportunities available to me." Yet, that's exactly what many new agency owners do when they choose to focus solely on personal lines insurance. While personal lines are often more familiar and arguably easier to sell, they are also easier to lose. Personal insurance is a volume game—you need to sell many policies to match the commission you could earn by securing just one large commercial account.

If you've made a conscious decision to dominate the personal insurance market in your area, that's a valid strategy. But if you're sticking to personal lines simply because it feels comfortable, it may be time to reconsider. Expanding into commercial lines, with the right support, can be straightforward and may unlock significant growth for your agency while helping you weather market fluctuations. For many agents, transitioning from personal to commercial lines is how they elevate their agencies from good to great.

The commercial insurance market is likely bigger than you think. According to the US Small Business Administration, there are over 33 million small businesses in the country. In fact, the US Chamber of Commerce reported a record 5.5 million new business applications in 2023. Many of these new business owners need guidance on their insurance options—and the good news is that you likely already know some of them. Many homeowners are also business owners. Offering commercial insurance to these clients allows your agency to become a full-service provider, which can prevent competitors from using commercial insurance to drive a wedge between you and your clients.

When individuals need homeowners, renters, or auto insurance, they may enlist the help of an independent insurance agent. However, more frequently, they secure coverage directly from carriers or online aggregators. The Big "I" 2023 Market Share Report revealed that independent agencies placed only 38% of all personal lines written premium in 2022, but a whopping 87% of all commercial lines written premium. If you're not building your commercial lines book, you're missing out on a huge opportunity to secure a larger market share—you might as well be handing business to your competition.

Want to learn more about Commercial Lines and how an insurance network can help you get started? Then go to https://www.smartchoiceagents.com/blog/white-papers and click on Expanding Into Commercial Lines.

Mark Brandt, VP, Commercial Lines, has nearly 30 years of experience in the insurance industry, across a broad spectrum of products in Property & Casualty and Life. He served as Vice President and Senior Business Development Manager at Victor US, spent five years as National Accounts Manager at Dovetail Insurance, and spent 11 years at Grange Insurance, managing the Smart Choice partnership at both. In his role at Smart Choice, Mark helps drive the company's Commercial division's strategy by facilitating carrier relationships regionally and nationally.


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The Million Dollar Shift: Busting Insurance Myths That Keep Agents Stuck

Craig Pretzinger

It was 2 PM on a Tuesday when I realized my retention numbers had hit an all-time low. The notification popped up on my dashboard like a neon sign announcing defeat. My team sat quietly at their desks, making their hundredth unanswered call of the day. Declining premiums, and a static note payment that seemed to mock our growth targets, pressed down on my shoulders as I studied the monthly revenue report. After ten years as an Allstate agent, I felt like I was watching my agency slowly sink into quicksand.

Sound familiar? If it does, read on...it gets worse. Way worse. Remember those retention numbers I mentioned? They weren't just dropping—they were plummeting faster than a lead balloon. Our premium per policy looked like a sad joke compared to our expenses, and don't even get me started on our contact rates. We were lucky to reach 5 out of 100 prospects, and most of those conversations ended with "I'll think about it," "I'm at work" (then why'd you answer a call from an unknown number?), "I already got a quote", or our favorite "F- OFF!!!" Every morning felt like walking into a ghost town of silent phones and rejected calls.

I want to share some more of the discoveries we had back in 2019 that propelled us through the dark days of Covid and beyond. The lessons were so powerful they totally changed how I think and operate, transforming the agency from middle of the road, low revenue, and stress, to high-energy, growth, and profits. As evidence: today, our retention has stabilized, premium per converted lead is up almost 2x, and we're grabbing tons of Google reviews (mostly 5-stars). But more importantly, we've discovered that what we thought were insurmountable challenges were doorways to unprecedented opportunities.

The Reality Check

Let's be honest about where we are. Our industry faces three major challenges that can feel overwhelming:

Customer retention rates have been declining across the board, with some agencies reporting drops of up to 30%.

More than 80% of agents face significant comp reductions—potentially agency-killing reductions over the last couple years.

Meanwhile acquisition costs are up, and people are less likely to answer calls from numbers they don't recognize.

Back then, we didn't have a daily huddle (this is 100% one of the biggest gamechangers you can implement if you don't already do it). I watched these trends impact my agency month after month. Our team's morale followed the downward trajectory of our numbers.

Myth 1: Internet Leads Have Crappy Retention

Remember how my team used to make 100s of dials and never connect? Well, it's even harder now, and depending on my sales team to do the prospecting to quote the number of households needed to hit our VC goal was mathematically impossible. Before you call me a drama queen, watch this math...we just weren't making enough dials.

Let me explain.

We weren't making enough dials. Here's what we found: when we were making 2, 3, maybe four calls per lead we'd have about a 3% contact rate. Once we replaced our LSPs prospecting with an outsourced lead caller, we started to see a huge difference—in fact, literally, 10x. Why? Well, because you just created an entire full-time job unto itself (prospecting) and plugged it with labor that costs a third of in-house labor. But it gets better: my lead callers NEVER miss a day, and do the job asked of them! (Amazing, right?)

And the best part? Your LSPs love it: imag-

Customer retention rates have been declining across the board, with some agencies reporting drops of up to 30%.

ine being an LSP in an environment where you just show up and take calls—just like GEICO, but with a fun environment. Case in point, last month we gave our top sales producer an ultimatum: get to work on time or get out. She opted to get out (I'm assuming she thought it is optional elsewhere). More on this later—you'll love it. And your LSPs are happy, your wallet is happy. But the BEST part: when you make 5000, 6000, 7000 dials a day, you end up closing some leads on the 100+ dial! These 'long tail' conversions decrease your cost per sale and INCREASE your lifetime value! WHO KNEW!?

Myth 2: Internet Leads Are Bad Business

Sure...they can be. But so can anything. When we provide too few leads a day and make a 10th of the required dials on these, the only people that we'd get ahold of were the shoppers. Those people who are eager to answer the phone and that you connect with on the first dial tend to be the least sticky of all the new business. Why? Because they're easy to get ahold of, they're easy to close, and they're easy to leave because they have no loyalty. That's why most agents seem to believe internet leads are the worst.

The folks driving a 1995 Corolla and living off McDonalds and CNBC are less likely to fall into the 'preferred bundle' we're seeking. The great news is these folks are more prone to answer sooner and tend to pick up less as time goes on.

Myth 3: Nobody Answers Their Phone

A truer statement would be "I don't answer my phone"—unless of course you call me 100 times. So right back at the first two myths, it falls right in line. It takes dials to get contacts, usually a minimum of six times before you have a chance of getting ahold of any leads worth anything. If you remember back to the first myth, you'd recall our low contact rate and how detrimental it was (and it was self-inflicted). Fast-forward to where we see a 3% contact rate—now by the 90th day, we look at almost an 80% contact rate. The insight? Persistence isn't just about making calls—it's about understanding that leads are only 'good' or 'bad' based on contact rate. If you're partnered with a good vendor, following the playbook we designed in Million Dollar Agency, most, if not all leads are basically the same: their quality is determined by your process (or lack thereof).

Look, if you're nodding along to any of this—the endless dials, the frustrating silence, the retention nightmares—you're not alone. I've been there. We've all been there. It's a normal part of the journey, not a reflection of your abilities or potential.

Acquisition costs are up, and people are less likely to answer calls from numbers they don't recognize.

But here's what changed for me, and what can change for you: when we finally got our systems right, everything shifted. Not just the numbers—though those are great—but the quality of life. I'm talking about being able to take that family vacation without checking my phone every five minutes. About making it to my kid's soccer games and watching them play. About my spouse noticing how much more present I am at dinner. About finally having the mental space to enjoy that morning coffee instead of dreading the day ahead.

And remember that LSP who thought she'd find a better opportunity elsewhere? She ended up at an agency who was not buying leads, not following a system like we do, ensuring that all an LSP must do is show up on time and crank out ten new quoted households per day. While it was emotionally tough to let her leave (she does 40-50k a month!), I knew, logically, that she'd be back, begging. And when we "reluctantly" made her an offer to come back, I knew she'd tell her story to all her coworkers. She sure did tell everyone how great they have it, because she saw for herself, that there isn't a better opportunity than the one she almost let go. That sort of culture attracts candidates, instead of pushing them away like I used to, costing myself over $50k every time a 3-month hire walked out the door.

Ready to transform your agency and your life? Join us in the Free Elite Community on Skool: https://bit.ly/eliteskool where we dive deep into growth strategies, sales techniques, hiring secrets, and everything else about running a successful insurance agency. You're not in this alone—let's grow together.

Craig Pretzinger is an agent with multiple locations and over $10 million in premium on the books. He is co-creator of The Insurance Dudes Podcast, one of the top 100 Marketing podcasts in America, with over 500 episodes published. The Insurance Dudes' mission is to help insurance agency owners create a predictable, consistent, and profitable agency sales machine. Learn more by heading to live.teledudes.com, or check out the podcast or YouTube channel.

EDUCATION CORNER:

Condo vs Townhouse—When Not to Use an HO-6

Ray Manfredi, LUTCF, FSCP, MBA, PhD

The information contained in this article might vary from State to State. Be sure to check your specific State form for accuracy. This is not meant to be legal advice as it is for informational purposes only.

Condominium?

A prospect calls and says they need Condominium (Condo) insurance, and specifically they were told to buy an HO-6 Unit Owners policy by the property manager, realtor, or mortgage broker—all of whom are not licensed insurance professionals. Before an agent starts an application, they need to really understand the risk as it will be reviewed at the time of loss, not application.

When it comes to insurance, not all condos are in fact condos, much like how a county record might consider how many levels a home with a crawlspace has versus how flood insurance calculates the same information. So before writing an application, it is important to get a true picture of the risk. The first rule is to understand that the definition of a condo changes by region. Northern states tend to consider condos and duplexes starter homes while a townhouse or rowhouses in the same area are considered high value 'yuppie' risks. Go south and the lower half of the nation may feel townhomes to be starter homes and condos a higher end retirement choice. Now none of that really matters for insurance, but it does make a difference in how the developer (construction company/seller) may have incorporated the subdivision, to help increase sales or pricing, and in doing so, sent many an insurance professional down the wrong path, when it comes to how we should insure the structure.

So, what defines a traditional condo? Boundaries! The best practice is to ask the prospect to provide a copy of the Condo Association Declaration of Covenants, which is provided to every potential buyer, in advance of closing, along with the Condo Owners Association (COA) Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, and governing Architectural Review Conditions rules documents. Specifically, it is imperative to read the section titled, 'Unit Boundaries'. A traditional, true condo, will show that the unit owner is responsible for the following: "Unfinished interior and drywall in, unfinished floor up, unfinished ceiling down, in addition to all utilities, HVAC, plumbing, electrical, fixtures, cabinetry, doors, windows, improvements, and balconies that serve the individual unit owner exclusively." Although the exact wording may be different, it essentially implies that the unit owner is responsible for everything inside the unit between unfinished walls, floors and ceilings such as, the wall-coverings (paint, paneling, chair rail, etc.); ceiling fan, carpeting or other flooring, plus all fixtures, toilets, sink, cabinets, and any pipes or electrical conduits that tee off the master distribution system shared by other units in the building. Doors both interior and exterior, windows and even balconies fall under the unit owner's responsibility, as do installed appliances and any improvements completed to the interior of the unit. You can quickly see that the cost to replace all these items is much more than the standard 10% to 30% of contents coverage extension provided in most HO-6 forms, and as such an endorsement should be made to increase said limit.

The COA Master Insurance Policies will only cover the items owned by the COA in joint/common. In the typical definition, this is the framing, joists, rafters, outwards, including the roof and shingles, exterior siding, plumbing or electrical conduits prior to when such split off to individual units.

When the definition of unit boundaries reflect anything less—like the unit owner is responsible for all items from the unfinished exterior wall in (this now includes framing, drywall) and/or the unfinished foundation up, (joist, and floor board), and/or unfinished exterior horizontal boundary and down (roof boards and rafters), the rules of coverage need changes significantly as this COA Master Insurance is limited to the roof shingles and the siding, and the unit owners take on much more responsibility.

Under this latter definition, it may be more prudent to recommend a HO-3 townhome or single family connected dwelling policy like that for a rowhouse, duplex, etc. In these scenarios, there are two truths—first, the HO-6 will not adequately protect the dwelling unless you increase the 'building or improvements' protection considerably.

The second is the HO-3 will slightly over insure the home, because it also accounts for expenses related to exterior finishes, roof shingles, brick, vinyl, etc., which are more than likely always covered under the COA Master Insurance, because the COA wants to control those outward appearance items. When considering both, being over insured may be the safer option. Of course, increasing the HO-6 building improvements coverage benefits will work as well, but the premium may well be higher than if the dwelling was insured under an HO-3 instead.

Pushback can be expected from time to time, when a property manager or realtor (again both not licensed to recommend insurance products versus need) or a COA Board advises the acquisition of an HO-6. It is important to remember that boards are usually made up of volunteer homeowners who have been told something incorrectly once and have since continued to pass it along as fact. As an insurance professional it is your job to properly insure your customer, not necessarily care what the rest of the COA unit owners are doing. The fact that prior losses may have been paid under the Master Insurance Plan—is not an indicator that an HO-6 is still the right choice. Master Plan claims may occur and be paid incorrectly because that insurance company did not review or catch the discrepancy—but if they ever do, your customer should not be adversely affected as a result, so prepare correctly in advance.

Why this happens is clear when we go back to the developer and how they wanted to market the dwelling—Incorporating the Association as an HOA verse a COA may make a significant difference is marketability and price, and as such, the definition in the Unit boundaries means much more than what the subdivision is called by name.

Red flags to look for, before even getting a copy of the governing documents, which may suggest a townhouse/duplex/attached housing versus a condo scenario include: the customer describes their dwelling as 'multi-level; or having no other units above or below their unit. The customer describes a single family detached dwelling in a retirement or other community that has been incorporated as condos.

It is important to educate the prospect that the Master Plan is not an all-inclusive insurance, and they need to secure their own coverage, for the risk as it is truly defined.

New FH Rules For Condo Insurance

In 2012, after the crash of 2009 that left banks holding defaulted loans on many stripped to the bare walls' condos, without proper levels of insurance, the FHA and many banks followed a new directive which required a new condo buyer to secure building improvements coverage equal to or greater than 20% of the total 'market value' of the home. Now this is certainly much better than the 10% to 30% of coverage based off the content's coverage purchased, that most HO-6 plans provide—but it may also be inflated, if the home is in a high demand area, and the land value is much higher than normal. Example a 1,000 square foot condo in Washington DC, NYC, or Los Angeles may sell for millions but cost the same to rebuild as a similar condo in a small town five miles away. Therefore, market value is not as accurate a tool as we might hope, versus construction costs—where a true condo under true risk may only require 30% of the rebuild cost estimate. But the 20% is a good place to start if you do not know construction estimates.

Closing Tip

Save your customer some aggravation when it comes to claims. Did you know all non-contents claims on a condo policy are typically denied until the customer provides a Denial Letter from the Master Insurance Plan, which is considered the first insurer. The customer must first file the claim with the Master Plan and get rejection for a HO-6 to consider providing coverage. But this puts the policyholder in a predicament we see all too often. The customer can't get a denial letter, because the 'property manager, bookkeeper, or the association board of directors' refuses to open a claim, and states it is not covered. They are not licensed to make such a determination, but they do so anyway. To avoid this catch-22 issue you should recommend to all condo policy holders that they secure annually (as is their right as an owner) a copy of the Master Plan Certificate of Insurance. Giving a copy to the agent so we can coordinate deductible protection, this document will provide everything the customer needs to open a claim directly with the Master Insurance Plan and get the denial letter as may be required.

Ray Manfredi; FSCP, LUTCF, MBA, PhD is a Licensed Insurance Agent and Trusted Advisor since 1988, specializing in Estate Planning and Property & Casualty, he is often asked to teach the regional staff members at other agencies the Insurance Review and Customer Service/Retention techniques he is known for in the industry.

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EDUCATION CORNER:

Rented, Leased, Borrowed, Newly Acquired vs Temporary Replacement Car Coverage Surprise Facts

Ray Manfredi, LUTCF, FSCP, MBA, PhD

The information contained in this article might vary from State to State. Be sure to check your specific State form for accuracy. This is not meant to be legal advice as it is for informational purposes only.

This article will be helpful for the new and experienced property & casualty agent, as well as to help customers understand some of the hidden rules and facts about transportation expense coverage and/or how or when liability and physical damage extends (or does not) to rented, leased, borrowed, or non-owned vehicles, a subject often misunderstood by even seasoned insurance professionals. In addition, it will discuss rental car company tactics, which can work to confuse policyholders.

One important thing to understand is the differences between personal use and business use, and how they apply to all the benefits associated with this article. A personal auto policy insures vehicles used by the named insured in daily life routines, not commercial exposures. A vehicle designated as 'Business Use' on a personal auto is limited to personally owned and registered vehicles used in 'employment' like a realtor or an insurance agent, not in conjunction with a third-party owned business, corporation or limited liability corporation, or sole proprietor entity—which should be insured under a commercial or business auto policy.

Myth vs Fact

Did you know that when a renter of a vehicle pays for liability and physical damage coverage under a rental contract, often the rental car company will ultimately subrogate against the renters' personal auto policy to recover all paid damages? This means the renter's will still reflect a claim, loss, accident on their history, and only really avoids paying a deductible out of pocket for the expense of this optional rental contract protection.

Rental car companies use a lot of persuasive tactics to attempt to convince a renter to add liability and physical damage protection, at a significant daily cost. One such tactic is the claim that the renter would be responsible for the daily charges while the rental car was out of commission, after an accident. This tactic is what we refer to as the "fear of loss" approach used by many car rental companies. The truth is, these charges, which in fact often fall under liability coverage, just like if the policyholder was to damage a phone utility box and be subject to all the loss phone service revenue during the outage, have often been reversed, if at all posted. The rental car company would need to prove two things first to even have a chance at such recovery, the first being negligent liability. If a windstorm blows a tree down and damages a vehicle, there is no liability, let alone negligence. The second thing would be loss of revenue. Just because the vehicle is out of commission for repairs, the rental car company would have to prove a loss of rental income, as a result. Did they sell out every day the car was out of commission, thus not having that vehicle available prevented additional income?

Many rental companies have a misleading sign on their counters that advises renters that their personal auto policy does not cover moving van or truck rentals. This is a twist in the facts, and they misrepresent the truth in most cases. The truth is a personal auto policy will extend protection benefits to a rental van or lightweight truck used for "personal use", such as moving from one apartment to another, if the vehicle does not exceed the weight limit as described in the policy. But it is also important to note that if the customer is charging a fee to move someone else, coverage will never extend from a personal auto policy but could from a commercial policy with the correct "hired auto or non-owned" endorsement.

The rental car companies also try to scare renters by indicating that your credit card on file with them can be charged for the entire amount of the damage or deductible if a loss is reported, and although technically true, the fact is, if a claim is opened immediately, the insurance company will take assignment of the loss, and the process is so fast, that an insured rarely encounters such charges, aside from the applicable coverage deductible.

Benefits & Hidden Rules

A personal auto policy extends liability coverage to any vehicle rented or borrowed (temporary loan) by an insured for "personal use", but there are some exceptions as to which insurance company might not pay for specific damages. This extension or lack thereof is often misunderstood by even a seasoned insurance professional, and is regularly incorrectly discussed with policyholders, leading to E&O issues or, in the least, upset customers.

If the insured is renting a vehicle for leisure, travel, or to move personal property, they are good to go when it comes to liability and physical damage, assuming they have those benefits on their personal auto policy. In the scenario where a policyholder has multiple cars, with unequal benefits, the broadest coverage listed on any insured vehicle would apply to the temporary, borrowed, leased, rented, or newly acquired* vehicle. [*Newly acquired vehicles have specific time restrictions for both liability and physical damage extension of benefits, which can be as little as four days from acquisition and no more than thirty days.]

It is important, however, to discuss with the policyholder the big exception in providing coverage, often missed and which could put them into a denial of coverage scenario. When a policyholder asks, 'is my rental car covered?', before answering yes, be sure to discuss, payment method concerns. Many customers might own their own business and might use their business debit or credit card to reserve the rental car. In doing so, they have legally transformed the rental car situation from "personal use" to "commercial use" and a personal auto policy would then deny coverage, as a commercial or business auto policy would be needed for that risk. (Note: A commercial or business auto policy must be properly endorsed to include coverage for other non-owned loaned, borrowed, rented or leased vehicles).

Who Pays

When a customer borrows another person's vehicle, often the question arises, who is responsible for damages if the vehicle is in an accident? The policy contract is clear on this scenario, yet it is often misunderstood and improperly explained to a policyholder.

First, let us assume this is an at-fault accident, and take the third-party liability out of the picture for simplicity. John Smith is driving Jane Doe's vehicle and John causes an accident, hitting another vehicle or object—whose policy pays, John or Jane's?

Jane's policy would cover most losses in most scenarios, if John was just borrowing or using Jane's car out of convenience. Example: John was driving so Jane could rest, or he was making a run to the store as a favor to Jane, or Jane and John swapped vehicles for a weekend getaway. Under these scenarios the constant rule—coverage follows the owner, applies. However, if John was using Jane's car because his vehicle was 'out of commission' due to mechanical failure, flat tire, or an accident, then John's policy would extend coverage to Jane's vehicle for damages. In other words, a policy contract will define the specific situations where the non-owned vehicle would be considered a temporary replacement vehicle and therefore covered under the driver's, not the owner's policy. (These rules do not apply to a rental car, which does not require the absence of need or other insurance). As to liability benefits, which always follow the person, or named insured, both John and Jane may be considered liable in an accident, one as the driver and the other as an owner, and individually protected by their respective policies.

Recommendations

A customer should be made aware of the coverage they have, both liability and physical damage as well as applicable deductibles, when inquiring about borrowed, leased, or rented vehicles, and when considering buying a new car, including how long and how those benefits will or will not extend.

A customer may want to reduce their out-of-pocket risk by selecting optional rental car insurance protection from a rental car company, when they are securing a rental car due to a recent accident, only to reduce the risk of having to pay two deductibles out of pocket in such proximity of time. Otherwise, the benefits provided do not necessarily require securing this additional optional cost, when it is likely covered under their personal auto anyway.

Always confirm with the customer how they expect to pay for a rental car, to avoid a denial of coverage, should they use a business credit card or check, or use a business name on the rental agreement.

When customers call in, prior to acquiring a new vehicle they should be advised of the limited extension of benefits, especially physical damage protection, and when they need to notify the insurance company. They should also be advised that the dealership rarely notifies the insurance company, and it is their own responsibility to provide the insurance company with the related information to acquisition, before coverage exists.

Ray Manfredi; FSCP, LUTCF, MBA, PhD is a Licensed Insurance Agent and Trusted Advisor since 1988, specializing in Estate Planning and Property & Casualty, he is often asked to teach the regional staff members at other agencies the Insurance Review and Customer Service/ Retention techniques he is known for in the industry.

Married to Catherine since 1987 and proud father of two children, Thomas and Noelle, all of whom are active in the family agency. Ray is also an Author of several insurance industry training manuals and master networker. When not working in his agencies, Ray advocates for children with special needs, serving on several foundations and community boards. He is a volunteer police officer and an ordained minister, remnants of his earlier life as a USAF K9 Handler and a child actor turned stand-up actor/writer. He holds several professional designations, as well as a master's in business administration and a Doctorate in Metaphysics. You can reach Ray directly through email: ManfrediInsuranceGroup@gmail.com.

Agencies for Sale

ARIZONA

Flagstaff

The Halstead Agency
928-380-6357
chbd3.6..@gmail.com Asking Price: Negotiable
PIF: 3000 Premium: $3.58 million
Number of Staff: 4
Number of Licensed Staff: 4 NAPAA Member: Yes
6o+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.
Date Posted: November 6, 2023

CALIFORNIA

Carmichael

Alain Ionescu
916-752-7706
alainulo1@y:ahoo.com
Asking Price: $890,000 (Negotiable)
PIF: 2500 Premium: $3,500,000
Number of Staff: 2
Number of Licensed Staff: 1 NAPAA Member: Yes
Organically grown agency since 2000, only Allstate agency in Carmichael CA, multiple awards, 56% loss ratio, 88% retention. An elite agent with an average of$ 370,000 commission over the last 3 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.
Date Posted: Oct 2, 2022 Updated August 29, 2024

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!
Date Posted: February 23, 2023

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!
Posted June 20, 2023

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!
Date Posted: May 20, 2023

Littleton

George Sechrist Insurance Agency
720-779-1500
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
Asking Price: $750,000 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 minuets to the south and the mountains a short drive to the west, it's the perfect central location to live and work!
Date Posted: June 4, 2024

Longmont

Heath Orvis Agency LLC.
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com Asking Price: $1,375,000
PIF: 2400 Premium: $5.5M
Number of Staff: 3
Number of Licensed Staff: 3
Colorado - The #1State To Own a Business
This established $5,500,000 premium agency is located in a highly sought after Northern 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 times 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!
Date Posted: April 23, 2024

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
NAPAA Member: Yes
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.
Date Posted: October 2, 2023

GEORGIA

Savannah

Pence Family Agency, Inc.
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com Asking Price: $2,600,000
PIF: 4220 Premium: $8,500,000
Number of Staff: 3
Number of Licensed Staff: 3
Georgia is growing - don't wait, cash flow is amazing! This established $8,500,000 premium agency is located in highly sought after Savannah. 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 3 all ready for the transition. The Savannah metro area is an easy place to own a business, has an inviting community feel, highly rated private schools with college acceptance rates in the 90%+ and easy access to beaches, boating, fishing and other coastal towns! The Savannah area has a median home price of $500,000 and an average income of approximately $100,000. 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!
Date Posted: June 6, 2024

SW

SW
678-223-7397
nicole@sammconsulting.com Asking Price: $1,000,000
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.
Date Posted: September 21, 2023, Updated August 29, 2024

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 turn-key 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 $78 0,000. 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!
Date Posted: November 11, 2023

ILLINOIS

Aurora (Western Suburbs of Chicago)

Harvey A Goodwin
630-404-7077
harveY.g414_@aol.com
PIF: 1858 Asking Price: 2xTPP
Premium: $2,900,000 NAPAA Member: Yes Number of Staff: 1
Number of Licensed Staff: 1
38-year agent ready to move on when the opportunity arises. Either take over (rent $530 all-inclusive) or merge with our other agent. 37.44% LR, 89.31% RR, TPP (termination payment plan)
Date Posted: March 2, 2022 , Updated: August 29, 2024

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 NAPAA Member: No
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.
Date Posted: May 31, 2023

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 NAPAA Member?: Yes
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!
Date Posted: March 4, 2024

MISSOURI

Nixa

Hall Insurance Professionals, LLC
720-902-5200
GChitwood@G-Forceac.com
PIF: 700 Asking Price: $225,ooo
Premium: $1,200,000 Number of Staff: 3
Number of Licensed Staff: 1
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!
Date Posted: October 2, 2023

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
Highly desired state of Montana. 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.
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!
Date Posted: June 22, 2023

NEW YORK

Staten Island

Lana Pikman Agency
646-644-0606
LanaP-io6o6@gmail.com
Asking Price: $150,000
PIF: 338 Premium: $786,000
Number of Staff: 1
NAPAA Member: Yes Retention 96.64%
Annual revenues $78,686
Date Posted: February 24, 2023

Agencies for Sale | Agencies for Sale | Agencies for Sale | Agencies for Sale

PENNSYLVANIA

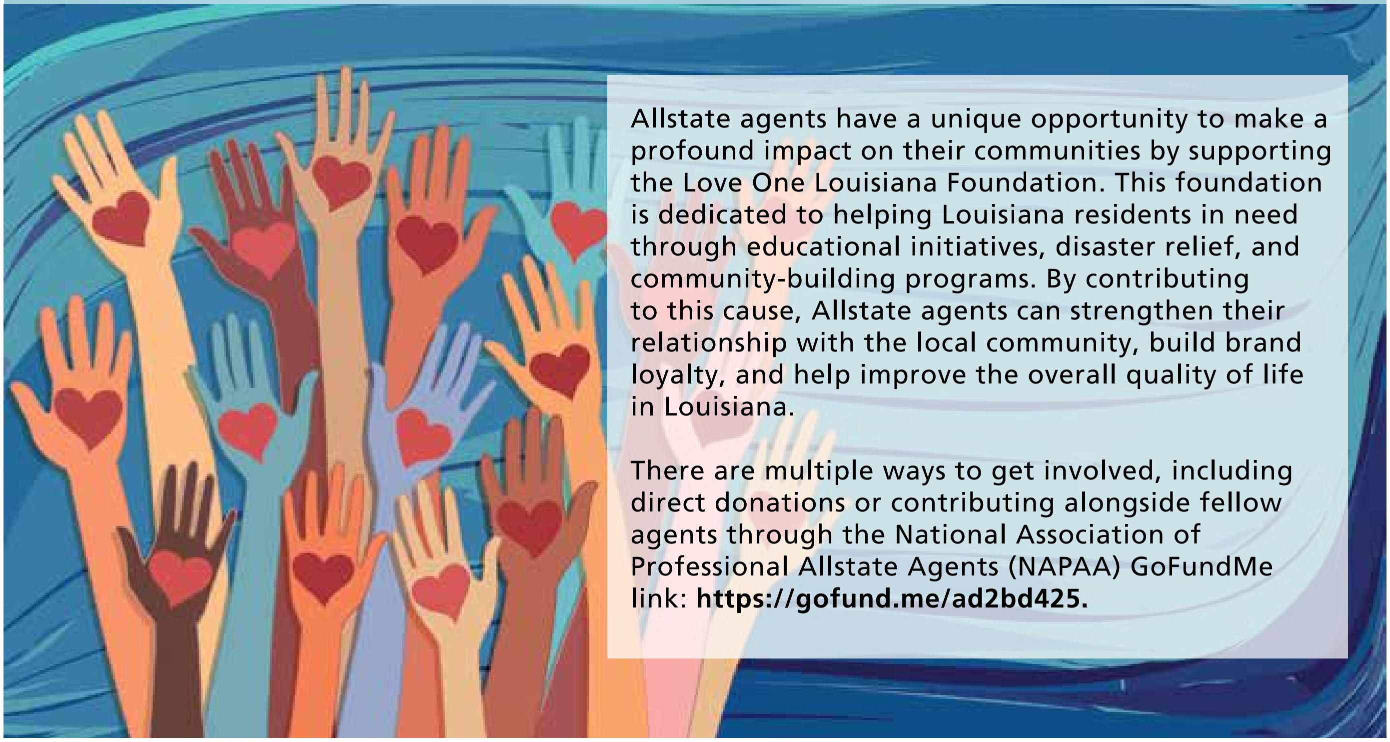
Havighurst Insurance Agency
720-902-5200
g-chitwood@g-forceac.com
Asking Price: $1,399,000
PIF: 3990 Premium: $5,700,000
Number of Staff: 4
Number of Licensed Staff: 3
Premium Agency in highly sought after Pennsylvania suburb!
This established $5,700,000 premium agency is located in a highly sought after 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!
Date Posted: April 17, 2024

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 agencies dating back to a Sears booth. Low loss ratio. Office is ready to go if buyer chooses. 2023 revenue was $1,050,000
Date Posted: April 17, 2024

Rockwall
Mike Akers Allstate Agency
972-672-1970
mikeakers1954@gmail.com
Asking Price: Negotiable
PIF: 790 Premium: $2.4M
Number of Staff: 2
Number of Licensed Staff: 2
Date Posted: May 21, 2024

NAPAA Community Response to New Orleans Tragedy



Allstate agents have a unique opportunity to make a profound impact on their communities by supporting the Love One Louisiana Foundation. This foundation is dedicated to helping Louisiana residents in need through educational initiatives, disaster relief, and community-building programs. By contributing to this cause, Allstate agents can strengthen their relationship with the local community, build brand loyalty, and help improve the overall quality of life in Louisiana.

There are multiple ways to get involved, including direct donations or contributing alongside fellow agents through the National Association of Professional Allstate Agents (NAPAA) GoFundMe link: **https://gofund.me/ad2bd425.**

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Exclusive*focus*

National Association of
Professional Allstate Agents, Inc.

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

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Here's What Your Peers Are Saying...

"I want to extend my appreciation to NW Preferred. From the time we met through the process of obtaining a credit line, **they made me feel like family**. They made me feel as if **I was their number one priority throughout it all**. I look forward to the building of a prosperous relationship."

Kevin Perry – Allstate Agent, TX

"I just wanted to let you know that I am more than happy with the treatment I have received from NW Preferred regarding my TPP loans. I have actually had a few, and they have all been completed seamlessly. **They are a superstar when it comes to needing any type of TPP loan**. I will definitely be a repeat customer as well as refer NW Preferred to many of my fellow agents."

Andee McNabb – Allstate Agent, OR

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