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Exclusivefocus

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

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and Find the Right Fit**

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Boy, Have Things Changed!

DEBE CAMPOS-FLEENOR, NAPAA President



ties; I felt like a wide-eyed young woman who had lived as Pollyanna. I thought it was a breach, but, as all of you agents know, the word “Exclusive” has a new definition in the world of Allstate.

About one year later, I found that Allstate was being sold by independent agents in my city without any concern for the “Exclusive” title. Two years ago, my best friend’s son signed up with SelectQuote Insurance in California. He is also an Allstate agent, except he is working for Select and can also sell other companies in 48 states.

The incremental changes that Allstate has made throughout the years have not been beneficial to the Agents;

we have been adversely affected the most. Many agents’ books have decreased in value due to the compensation changes. Now, we are unable to sell our books. When I look back, I wonder if I should have leaped out of the pot a long time ago. Sadly, the good hands were not there for agents.

Debe Campos-Fleenor is the current President of the NAPAA board of directors, with one year remaining in her term. She started with Allstate in 2002 as an LSP. Debe started her own agency in 2004 and became a NAPAA member soon after that. She has served the board of directors as Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-president and two terms as President. Debe lives in Tucson, Ariz.

Editor’s note: After sixteen years as agency owner, Debe closed her Allstate office on June 30. She represented the Company for nearly nineteen years was recognized repeatedly for her work with the Allstate Foundation and the Purple Purse campaign. She will continue to serve as President of NAPAA’s board of director until her term ends in May per NAPAA’s bylaws. Starting June 2021 it will be the first time in 15 years that Debe will not be serving on the board of directors.

As I was cleaning my office, I found my old recruiting marketing material. Reading the Allstate promises reminded me of the proverbial story of the frog in the boiling pot. In this story, the frog is placed in a pot of water and the temperature is raised so gradually that he does not recognize the danger he is in until the water is boiling around him and it is too late to escape.

The recruitment brochure states: “Building a Business as an Allstate Exclusive Agent.” “Exclusive” has two definitions: 1. excluding or nor admitting other things. 2. restricting or limited to the person, group or area concerned.

I, and thousands of potential agents, took the scary first step into the proverbial pot by signing up as Exclusive Agents. We took out loans, borrowed from family, cashed in 401(k)s and sometimes quit corporate jobs with guaranteed paychecks to become business owners.

How did I miss that Allstate was raising the temperature? How could I have known it had veered off the path promising business ownership and the opportunity to sell as retirement security?

I remember the first time I heard that some independent agents could sell Allstate insurance in small, rural communi-



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from the executive director



How Did We Get Here? And Here We Go!

TED PARIS, NAPAA Executive Director

The past year has been a difficult one for agents. In reviewing my notes from 2019, I was reminded of the following articles published in *Crain's Chicago (Illinois) Business*:

Sept. 13, 2019, "Will it be war? Allstate and agents square off yet again," by Steve Daniels, which details Allstate's encouragement of agents to participate in the Integrated Services Solution.

Sept. 17, 2019, "How Allstate is messing with success," by Joe Cahill

Nov. 11, 2019, "Allstate angers agents with sudden pay cut," by Steve Daniels

Nov. 26, 2019, "Agents' opinion of Allstate takes dramatic drop," by Steve Daniels

Crain's Chicago Business was not the only media outlet covering the growing issues between Allstate and the agency force. Since last fall, Allstate has increased surveillance of the agency force and there have been more articles, none of which are positive nor paint a rosy picture of the relationship between Allstate and the exclusive agency owners.

In January 2020, Allstate began sending out termination letters to agency owners for failing to achieve Agency Business Objectives (ABO). Though The Company announced new requirements to and increased enforcement of the Agency Business Objectives (ABO) in April 2019, many agents did not believe or understand the consequences since the ABO program has been around for a number of years without active enforcement.

In addition, it seems that a larger number of agency owners are being terminated for "cause." When agents are terminated for cause, they lose their agencies in 90 days and they no longer receive any commissions after the day they are told to close the doors. Plus, if they earned bonuses, they are required to repay them. In a five-minute phone call, an agent's world can be turned upside down. No notice, no buffer, no nothing!

Rest assured that neither NAPAA nor I condone any wrongdoing. Agents who lie, cheat or steal should be terminated and possibly for cause. Unfortunately, some would say The Company is targeting agents. There are reports that agents are being secretly monitored for any misratings regardless of intent, receiving phone calls from attorneys to discuss the misrating and then, months later, being terminated on the spot.

Everyone makes mistakes; however, to be terminated in such a manner should require intent of wrongdoing. What ever happened to monitoring, training, or working together to ensure compliance versus effectively saying "you are out of here"? And, then, if terminated for cause, Allstate is reporting agents to

their State Departments of Insurance, which may cause those agents to lose their insurance licenses.

Because of these actions, the members of NAPAA and a large of number of non-member agency owners want to take action. They want someone on their side. They want Allstate to stop many of these actions from occurring. They want The Company to work with us and not against us. The agents want to feel respected and to be treated fairly. Agents want to feel valued. After years and years of trying to have open and honest discussions with Home Office, we are left with only one option. That option is to take legal action to force the Company to listen to our concerns. As such, we have hired outside legal counsel to determine an appropriate path to take. We do not want to, but we are not being given any other option. You might need to buckle up—it might be a rocky ride for a while.

Ted Paris 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 owned two agencies in west-central Indiana. While at Allstate, Ted served on the North Central Regional Advisory Board, and earned numerous awards. He has been the Executive Director for NAPAA since 2017.

Editor's note: NAPAA's board of directors have recently hired an outside legal firm to study the possibilities of taking legal action against Allstate. We, and the majority of the agents we represent and talk to regularly, feel strongly that Allstate's recent changes and their announced plans called Transformative Growth Program is violating the spirit of the Exclusive Agent Agreement. The changes to R3001 Supplement, the EA manual, and the Agent Standards is adversely affecting current and future agency owners. We have tried many times to communicate our concerns without success. Our only option is to seek a legal remedy.

We have already notified Allstate of our impending action against them. Allstate has retained outside legal representation as well. We are raising funding at www.napaausa.org to be able to have the dollars necessary to take the legal action to conclusion. I would hope that if you haven't made a donation that you might consider doing so. If you have donated and want to add to that amount, that would be appreciated. For donations of a \$1,000 or more we are including 2021 membership in the donation. BTW, donations and/or membership lists are highly confidential. We do not disclose them.



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4 Forward-Thinking Reasons to Support Women-Owned Business

BARBARA J. PROVOST, EdD; Founder, Purse Strings, LLC

This article originally appeared on <https://pursestrings.co/>. It is reprinted here with the kind permission of the author.

Believe it or not, women-owned businesses are a vital part of the economy, making up approximately 40% of all privately-held firms, and employing more than 9 million people, according to the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO). Women are the rising entrepreneurial stars of our economy, generating trillions of dollars of revenue per year. Just last year, the U.S. was named the top country for female entrepreneurs by the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs.

But there are always two sides to every story, and women entrepreneurs continue to be underrepresented and face obstacles that their male counterparts do not. For example, women are much more likely to face a lending gap, being offered loans that are, on average, 31% smaller than those offered to male-owned businesses. They also experience significant bias when it comes to media reporting, being featured in only 5% of economic news stories, according to The Global Media Monitoring Project.

Despite the adversities, women-owned businesses continue to drive substantial economic growth, paving the way for the future female entrepreneurs, and shaking up the traditionally seen male-owned economy. There really are a number of reasons why we should be making conscious decisions to support women-owned companies, but these are our top five.

Women are Better at Building Customer Relationships

In the traditional sense, women are often

perceived as the more nurturing and empathetic gender, often being portrayed in roles like nursing and childcare. But the truth of the matter is, empathy is required in all industries, from teaching to construction. In order for any business to do well out there, the owner and employees must be able to connect and communicate with their customers, allowing them to feel valued and appreciated. And research says that women exceed in this arena. Because women tend to be better at multitasking and more empathetic than men, they tend to find common ground with their customers more quickly, looking for solutions to meet the initial problem and help their clients feel whole again.

Another great reason women are more successful in customer service is that, in a wide range of industries, women are the primary customers. They know what people are looking for and how they want to be treated, giving customers a different experience than what they're used to having.

Women are Incredibly Innovative

When it comes to penetrating new economic markets, growing a company from the ground-up, and keeping organizations relevant in today's ever-changing world, innovation is absolutely critical. Today's entrepreneurs must be adaptable while continuously providing creative solutions for their consumers. From brand-new products and processes to imaginative marketing approaches and business practices, organizations today must constantly be bringing innovation to the market. And, though they may not own quite as much of the market as men,

women consistently show that they are just as innovative.

Research has revealed that, despite the existence of an innovation gap, women entrepreneurs continue to put their innovative ideas into practice just as much as their male peers. There actually are no real gender differences when it comes to implementing creativity into action, with approximately 8 in 10 female entrepreneurs implementing a product or service innovation in their business.

Women-Owned Companies are Under-Funded

While most people are aware of the gender pay gap, more attention should definitely be brought to the fact that businesses owned by women receive significantly less financing than those owned by men. In fact, less than 3% of all venture capital in the U.S. goes to female founders, and they make up only 4% of all commercial loans. The reason for these drastic differences in funding is thought to be due to underwriting bias, different mindsets, and outright sexism.

Not only do lenders seem more hesitant to trust women business-owners with larger amounts of money, but they also ask them questions that are more negative than the ones they ask men and are taken much less seriously. Some sources have even discovered that women are only about half as likely to request funding from third-party lenders, and this could be because they are 20% less likely than their male peers, to be approved.

4 FORWARD-THINKING
continued on page 13.

Did the rules get changed on you?
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CRAIG PRETZINGER, 3 Agencies, Insurance Dudes Podcast, Agency Vault



Agency Operators get tired, Agency Owners get wealthy. Over the course of the last few years in my agencies, we have worked hard to create systems and processes to track and measure activity and results, with the ultimate focus on developing a machine that would allow for an injection of capital to deliver predictable results.

It is easy to lose sight of the big picture and get mired in the day-to-day weeds that come with agency ownership. With so many moving parts and ever-changing goals, technology and company vision, being an Insurance Agent can be a white-knuckle roller-coaster ride if you are not properly prepared to execute a master strategy for your agency.

Like many of the agents I have had the pleasure to help and serve over the years, the beginning of my career was a test of physical and mental fortitude. I dove in full throttle, working long hours, learning too much information and completely rewiring my skill sets. For almost

two years I floundered. I could not keep a staff member.

My frustration levels were through the ceiling. My number one skill, it seemed, was to put out fires and be “super-busy” all day, with little to no results to show for it. What premium we had would migrate away to cheaper carriers, as I was constantly cancelling policies and doing damage control. A few years in, we started to gain some traction and, with the help of a few key personnel, we managed to hit Inner Circle, which filled the coffers and provided the much-needed breathing room that was needed to start investing in various marketing strategies.

Although we had hit Inner Circle, the challenges that plagued the agency for the first few years resurfaced, and we entered into another period of struggle. I learned the valuable lesson that the fall from the top is a tough one because, from the top, most everything can be lost. This became a very dark time in my personal and business growth. Without going too

deep into that darkness, I will say that instead of turning to God, I turned to alcohol and found myself in a terrible place where there seemed no exit.

Now, over five years later, I have made significant changes to my business practices and my personal life. On the Insurance Dudes podcast, I have gained tremendous, actionable insights from incredible entrepreneurs, marketers and agents from all over the world. I also have five years without booze under the belt.

One of the most important things I have learned during this time is to develop systems to hold people accountable, so I function as an agency owner rather than the agency operator.

When we opened the third location, I knew a couple of things were non-negotiable: First, I could not write business. I had to help my agents master this skill. Second, I knew that I had to increase effectiveness by learning the marketing phone number so I could funnel my agents quotes without making them dial the new leads. Third, I had to get the best producers, so I needed to stop being cheap.

Oozing the confidence and vigor of a twenty-something, we went hard and followed the process of buying tons of internet leads, calling them using a specific and deliberate dial campaign (trackable and measurable) with the outcome of maximizing contacts even before we actually opened. I had properly planned to prevent painfully poor performance. I had a team, I had a manager, I had agents and they were ready to rock on day one.

We knew that if our agents called a quoted lead enough times, they would eventually close the deal; however, we also learned that they had to get better at

closing the leads on that first call. I started spending a lot of time training the telemarketers to get better at overcoming all the objections they'd hear from leads (I already got a quote, I'm not interested, that's not me, I already bought, etc. etc.). We determined that the front end of the sales funnel was the most challenging part, with the most resistance, and we had to maximize our contacts. With our contacts hovering in the 12%-15% range, each and every touch was critical.

I also kept pumping up my team and letting them know they were doing great. I told them as long as they had the following metrics, they would be successful: 4 hours of talk-time and 10 quoted households. With these two activity goals met, and about 30 days to ramp up before opening, I knew I could coach even the most timid telemarketer to be successful.

As the team honed their skills and became better at selling and the leads became more seasoned, we hit our all-time best 234 items and \$123,000 in premium. We have continued to grow our results topping 300 items in June, with \$150,000 premium. Building our machine up to these results took laser beam focus on many peoples' parts, which made it impossible for me as an agent to play "operator." The beauty of our system is that we have been able to create momentum, and when we have setbacks or lose that momentum, we can see exactly where in the sales funnel we are losing that momentum: is it dials (telemarketer efforts), contacts (lead quality), transfers (telemarketer efforts), quotes off transfers (producer efforts), or sales (producer efforts). With the click of a mouse from anywhere in the world, I have instant information on how we are doing at this moment, compared to any other time period.

For a free checklist on building your own telemarketing team and creating your own machine, visit <https://www.theidudes.com/optin1596994223415> and download it for yourself.

Craig Pretzinger is an experienced agency owner with a demonstrated history of working in the insurance industry. He is skilled in agency ownership, client development, acqui-

sition, and retention with property & casualty Insurance. As of August 2020, Craig had co-hosted and published 189 podcast episodes of the Insurance Dudes Podcast with Jason Foltman. This podcast leads the industry for entrepreneurial agency owners from both captive and independent channels, focusing on marketing, sales, hiring, training. He also created

a coaching, training, and recruiting platform with Tony Robbins Sales Director Neal Tricarico. He has been recognized as a strong business development professional with a Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) focused in Top 10 Program, Entrepreneurship/Entrepreneurial Studies from the University of Arizona, Eller College of Management.

4 FORWARD-THINKING continued from page 10.

Women Entrepreneurs Often Outperform Men

Despite the fact that men seem to own more businesses (more than 75% of businesses are owned by males), and have had the opportunity much longer, than women, female business owners seem to generate more revenue and create more jobs than those owned by their male counterparts. Some data even suggest that women are more effective leaders, with their startups significantly outperforming those owned by males, and many of their companies making the ranks as some of the most valuable organizations in the country.

Some of the reasons why women seem to outperform men in the leadership sector are due to their higher levels of emotional intelligence and seemingly inborn negotiation skills. Women seem to value relationships more than "winning", or simply doing business and, in the long run, catering to the human side of business comes out on top.

Final Thoughts

Up until now, women haven't really been given the opportunity to hold leadership positions or launch their own startups. But, now that they can spread their wings and pour their creativity into these new avenues, consumers are beginning to expect something new. Female entrepreneurs truly bring a new, but very much necessary level of innovation, creativity and empathy into the business world, and they are doing exceptionally well.

Unfortunately, due to years of suppression and blatant sexism, most female business owners must claw and fight for everything they earn. From securing funding, to simply being taken seriously, women are absolutely shaping what it means to be a business owner in all industries. And, because of their dedication to the customer, their continued innovation, and their commitment to hard work, we should all be seeking out new ways to support these female trailblazers.



*No stranger to hard work and challenges, the Founder of Purse Strings LLC, **Barbara Provost**, has leveraged her strong experience, active research, and continuous data gathering activities, to solve a problem. Barbara found that women are consistently overlooked by insurance and financial institutions, to the tune of leaving a possible 14-trillion dollars of untapped sales on the table. Not only is this buying power being ignored for lack of tailoring to women, this powerful demographic is underserved and under-planned for their financial future. With that sole purpose in mind, Barbara developed expertise on what these institutions need to reach and engage women, creating the first empowerment, education, and training tool to earn the vast spending power of the female dollar.*

In addition to Purse Strings, Barbara Provost is President of Provost Counseling Inc. She and her team have decades of experience working with insurance and financial organizations developing training programs that make learners competent and confident in the work that they do.

She believes, "When those who work within organizations are able to perform their roles at top performance – the whole organization is successful."

Thinking of Going Independent?

Know What YOU Want and Find the Right Fit

BEN GRIFFIOEN, Firefly



Firefly Agency, where I work, is contacted by thousands of agents each year who want to learn more about going independent. Most of those agents are captive, and although many of them truly want to make a change, some agents simply want to learn what else is out there even though they are happy where they are.

Most of their questions fall under two categories:

- Would I actually be more successful as an independent agent? and
- What is the best way for me to become independent?

The answers to both questions are different for everyone.

The first depends on how you get your leads and if independent rates truly are lower. The second depends on what you want to get out of the independent experience.

How Do You Generate Leads?

To answer the question, “would I be more successful as an independent agent?”, we should first turn to your marketing methods. How you get prospects and how you sell will go a long way in determining whether you should stay captive or not.

For example, I recently spoke to a captive agent who had several locations and was buying more leads each month than most agents buy in a whole year. He could only afford to buy all of those leads because of the marketing dollars his carrier gave to him. If he went independent, he would lose those dollars and his leads would fall dramatically. In his case, staying captive was absolutely the right call.

Another captive agent told me that she enjoyed representing a well-known insurance brand. Let’s face it: State Farm, Farmers and Allstate are far more recognizable brands to consumers than

the vast majority of independent carriers. The agent I was speaking to did not know if she could succeed selling lesser-known companies, so staying captive was the move for her.

On the other hand, I have spoken to agents who generate all their leads on their own. One agent worked with mortgage brokers but missed out on too many sales because her rates were too high. This is a great example of where becoming independent could be a very profitable move. If you are getting leads from referral networks and sell yourself to clients on working with you more than the company you represent (making YOURSELF the brand), being independent would likely be a long-term win.

Your ability to generate your own leads is the single most important indicator to knowing if becoming independent can work for you.

Are Independent Carrier Rates Truly Lower?

If you know you can get leads on your own, your next step would be to determine if independent rates really are better than what you can offer as a captive agent.

This is easy to do. Go to an online rater and quote yourself. I would recommend CoverHound or Zebra, where you can get your quotes online, without talking to an agent. You could also quote a few family members or friends to make sure that the rates you got are not anomalies. The rates for independent carriers are the same for all agents, so the quotes you see would be the same you would be able to sell if you were to go independent.

If your marketing ability and rates both point to success as an independent

agent, your next question is:

How Do You Actually Become an Independent Agent?

Have you ever bought a car without having an idea of what you want? Imagine how overwhelming it would be for you to go to a car lot not even knowing if you wanted a sedan, a truck, or maybe even a van or a sports car! You would save lots of time if you at least knew what body style you wanted. You would save even more time, and help avoid buyer's remorse, if you researched beforehand and knew the year, make, model, approximate mileage and appropriate price range of the vehicle you wanted.

This same principle applies to going independent. There are aggregators, clusters, networks, franchises, brokers and agencies all offering different services. You also have the option of trying to go independent without joining any groups. Instead of trying to digest all the information from each outlet, figure out what you want first!

What Do YOU Want to Get from the Independent Experience?

If you are seriously considering independence, do this:

Pick up a pen and write down everything that you dislike about your current setup. List everything that you want to leave behind and problems you want to avoid.

Then jot down everything that you like about your current setup that you would ideally like to maintain.

Finally, rank each of those items in order of importance to you. This should paint a relatively clear picture of what you want.

Some agents want to have the highest commission split possible, even if that reduces the number of carriers that they have. Others want the best profit-sharing program. Some agents want direct appointments with as many carriers as they can get so they can win more of the accounts that they quote. Then there are agents who hate production requirements and want to avoid the pressure of losing a carrier if they do not write enough premium with them.

Like a confident, well-researched car shopper, when you know what you want,

you will avoid being swindled or sold into a ride you did not really want. You will know the questions you need to ask and will quickly be able to determine when a company is not a fit, or is just what you are looking for. When you make your decision, you will avoid buyer's remorse and you will be able to grow your business with a smile on your face.

There are thousands and thousands of agents and dozens of potential choices you can make. No one model is going to be the best fit for everyone.

Making the decision to go independent is a life-changing move. Independence is

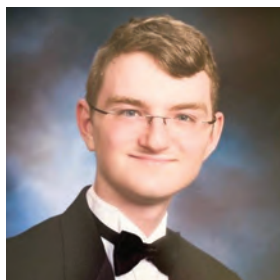
not for everyone, but if you determine that you should make the change, take the time to be sure you know what you want. If done correctly, you could be asking yourself why you did not make the change sooner!



Ben Griffioen works at Firefly answering questions agents have about going independent. He loves helping agents find the right fit for their needs, even if that means pointing them to another company. He loves insurance and hopes to help others enjoy it as much as he does.



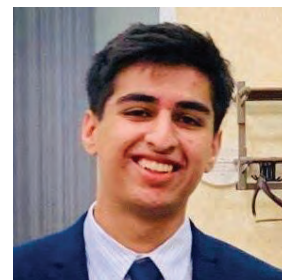
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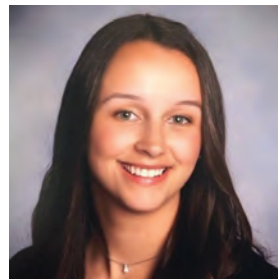
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Inflection Point

Moving from Transactional to Relational Business

TROY KORSGADEN



This article originally appeared on <https://www.availleadership.org/>. It is reprinted here with their kind permission.

In the business world, an inflection point happens at a critical moment when a situation calls for new thinking and a different strategy. I believe that this is that moment for virtually any organization in any industry that you might find yourself in. Whether you're leading a business, a non-profit or a ministry, previous assumptions about the way we do things are no longer accurate. If we don't see the need to change—and change now—many of us will lose those with whom we are engaging, and perhaps even lose our businesses or organizations.

The world has rapidly changed over the past decade—we can see it happening all around us. People have taken control of their consumption patterns across all industries and markets. Retail was the first to become affected by this paradigm shift. However, no industry is

immune to the encroachment of digital services on its customer base. And, although we must deal with the reality that virtual engagement is the new norm, we should not fear it. Why? It will never take the place of what a human can offer: a relationship based on trust, guidance and transparency. A relationship that is built on what I call the “Discussion Partner” model. Even though my model was developed for the insurance industry, I have come to believe that its principles are applicable to virtually any organization.

To thrive in today's environment, it is necessary that we move our organizations from a transactional model into a relational model. The nature of whatever we do as an organization will always require some transactional services. However, we need to change the perspective of what the people we serve see in “the front of the house” versus what we do in “the back of the house.” Don't assume your constituents know what you are do-

ing for them. Transparency goes a long way in building trust and lasting relationships with your people.

Today, people engage with those they know and trust. They do more business with someone they think of as a “Discussion Partner.” This is someone they can come to for guidance and advice without the threat or worry of being “sold” something. In a couple of clicks anyone can find anything they want to know about any industry.

Even your community has figured that out. Your “customers” today are not coming to you for information they can easily find themselves on the internet. They are coming to you for your expert advice, opinions and recommendations based on their individual needs. They are coming to you for an open dialogue. Developing authentic relationships with those you serve is more important than ever before.

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We want to create a seamless ecosystem for those we serve. We're going to put our community first in everything we do. And when we do, we will watch our organizations thrive and grow like never before!



Troy Korsgaden is President of Korsgaden International in Visalia, CA. He is an international insurance carrier consultant, industry main-platform speaker, representative trainer, and agency consultant, as well as the author of six books. He can be reached at troy@korsgaden.com.



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Strategies for Managing Remote Employees

Paychex

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While working away from the office may offer various opportunities to employees, it's important that businesses think strategically about how best to develop and manage a remote workforce. It may also be top-of-mind as companies consider ways to implement work from home (WFH) policies to some or all of their staff members in response to the recent coronavirus outbreak.

Remote work setups offer benefits for employees and employers alike. Working from home may offer staff significant work/life balance opportunities, such as improved focus on projects and elimination of commute times. For businesses, they can reduce costs (e.g., expenses related to utilities, janitorial services, office supplies, or even mortgage and lease arrangements) and help maintain a healthy workplace when viral illnesses are at their peak.

No matter the circumstances that have employers considering a remote workforce policy, implementation often doesn't come without challenges. Maximizing these benefits while navigating potential pitfalls requires a clear strategy, the right infrastructure, and a close eye on both culture and human resource management. If you're planning to evaluate your current WFH policy or anticipate having remote employees, best practices can help guide you through the process.

Set clear expectations and document policies

Successfully allowing your employees to work remotely starts with establishing clear parameters. No matter the circum-



stance for considering a WFH policy, it's important to set and communicate expectations for remote employees from the beginning, including:

- Which positions may be eligible to work from home;
- Guidelines around hours of availability;
- Job responsibilities; and
- Performance goals.

A remote arrangement or WFH policy should also address how to properly track overtime, communication frequency, and data security best practices.

When a manager takes time to discuss the expectations about working offsite, it sets a precedent for clear and open communication. This is critical to effectively managing remote employees. This conversation should be ongoing, whether the setup is permanent or only for a period of time.

Evaluate your technology

Technologies that help employees collaborate and connect can be essential for

managing remote employees. As such, your IT strategy may need to evolve to accommodate this. Consider hardware investments such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets. A good rule of thumb is for workers to test-run these devices before starting to work from home, so as to make sure they can connect to the internet and any job-specific internal networks while away from the worksite.

It's also just as important to leverage cloud-based software systems and collaboration tools that make it possible to have conference calls, host webinars, work on documents simultaneously, engage in video chat, and participate in a way that can help increase productivity and build relationships.

Virtual communication options such as Microsoft OneNote, SharePoint, Slack, OneDrive, Yammer, and Google Hangouts allow employees to share knowledge, encourage conversation, and enhance meetings while staying connected with their supervisor, team, and company. Providing technical training to instruct remote employees and their managers on virtual tools and resources can encourage use.

Outline how supervisors can stay visible without micromanaging

Managers need to maintain communication with their teams and have visibility into work output. In a remote work setup, managers may need to check in more regularly with employees, but this could be perceived as micromanaging. It may be worthwhile to talk with supervisors before employees start working from home to discuss how to keep teams focused and productive when they're working remotely.

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Create human capital management infrastructure

HR software can help facilitate collaboration across the company, allowing managers and staff located in other offices to easily share resources with remote employees.

From an HR perspective, companies can take a variety of steps to improve their ability to manage and serve a remote workforce. Cloud-based HR software can give employees self-service access to a range of different applications such as:

- Time and attendance reporting
- Benefits enrollment
- Information management

A flexible human capital management infrastructure can make it easier to successfully serve a remote workforce, while potentially delivering an outstanding HR experience.

Promote culture and information sharing

When your team is dispersed, it's important to have a clear plan for promoting culture, disseminating knowledge, and communicating values. Tools such as an employee handbook and regular communications from leaders can help convey that information. This may include facilitating regular meetings, company-wide discussions, and forums.

Provide meaningful learning and growth opportunities

Knowledge-sharing is also critical when explaining key performance indicators for job evaluation. Feedback and follow-through on the remote employee's performance is critical to productivity and accountability.

Look for opportunities for the employee to evolve and develop in their role. A

learning management system (LMS) is an ideal way to administer, document, track, report, and deliver educational resources, training programs, and opportunities to all employees. An LMS not only allows employees to learn when it is most convenient for them, but it allows for anytime, anywhere access on any device — a notable benefit for offsite workers.

Consider remote employee engagement and teambuilding activities

In the absence of face-to-face contact with colleagues and managers, remote employees could feel forgotten, disconnected, or unmotivated. Teambuilding activities can play an important role in engaging and nurturing a sense of camaraderie, and can help workers stay productive and positive.

You may also want to consider activities based around health and wellness to help keep employees engaged and connected. In a recent Paychex survey of in-office and remote employees, only 22% of in-office respondents said their work environment positively impacted their fitness level, and just 42% of remote respondents said the same. Initiatives such as team-based step-counting contests or fitness challenges can be organized and tracked remotely to include all workers, regardless of location. This can be especially impactful if employees struggle to fit in physical activity around their work schedules.

When a business has remote workers, a combination of clear communication, effective technologies, and efficient collaboration tools must be part of the equation. A dedicated HR professional can guide you through each of these steps, and help make sure the company and remote employees are set up for continued success.

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Overtime Rules and Your Agency

DIRK BEAMER, ESQ

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, old fashioned “wage and hour” debates (e.g., “What is a fair minimum wage?” and “How much unemployment should someone get?”) have dominated Capitol Hill and state legislatures. These debates point to a logical reality: in times of economic turmoil, employers and employees may find themselves in conflict over their respective pieces of a shrinking pie. Given that reality, agency owners need to examine their current practices to make sure they are not exposing themselves to employee claims for alleged violations of the nation’s wage and hour laws. That examination should include analysis of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act’s (“FLSA”) overtime requirements and how those requirements have been implemented in the agency.

FLSA Establishes Overtime Rules

Generally speaking, FLSA requires employers to pay employees time and a half for any hour over forty worked in a work week. Sounds simple, right? But legions of regulations and court decisions prove that it is anything but. First, one has to determine if the worker is in fact an employee or an independent contractor. (Independent contractors are generally ineligible for overtime.) Next, one must analyze the numerous “exemptions” to FLSA’s overtime rule and decide if the employee fits within one of them and is, therefore, “exempt” from the rule. Finally, if a worker is in fact an employee and is in fact eligible for overtime pay, one faces the potentially complicated task of calculating that overtime pay.

FLSA Applies to W-2 Employees, not 1099 Independent Contractors

The independent contractor versus em-

ployee debate will be familiar to anyone who regularly reads this magazine. For at least 20 years, captive agents have waged battle with their carriers over this issue. As I write, groups of Farmers agents, Allstate agents, and American Family agents are litigating some version of this debate. Ironically, while agency owners often feel misclassified as independent contractors by Farmers or Allstate, some nonetheless continue to categorize their own workers as 1099 independent contractors. While there may indeed be unique fact patterns and circumstances warranting this treatment, agency workers will most often be classified as W-2 employees.

Certain Exemptions Apply and Exempt Employees are not Overtime Eligible

If one assumes an agency’s workers are employees, an examination of their “exempt” versus “non-exempt” status must follow. A full-scale examination/explanation of each exemption exceeds the scope of this article. But at least five relevant exemptions warrant consideration here: (i) the outside sales exemption, (ii) the commissioned retail sales exemption, (iii) the administrative employee exemption, (iv) the executive employee exemption, and (v) the highly compensated employee exemption. Depending on the employee’s duties and compensation, any one of the five could apply. For example, if an agency maintains multiple locations and pays someone a six-figure salary to manage one or more of them, that employee likely falls in either the executive employee or the highly compensated

employee exemption. In contrast, someone without significant management responsibility more likely falls into one of the other three exemptions ... or is not exempt at all.

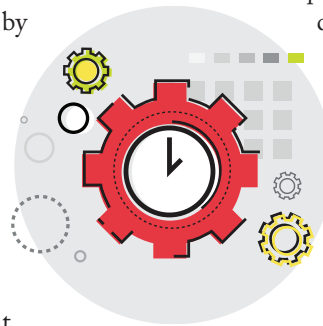
The Outside Sales Exemption

The outside sales exemption covers an employee: “(1) whose primary duty is [making sales] and (2) who is customarily and regularly engaged away from the employer’s place or places of business in performing such duty.” The old-fashioned traveling salesman fit neatly into this exemption. However, in the day of internet leads and call centers,

it will be much harder to show that a licensed producer is “customarily and regularly engaged” away from the primary place of business.

The Administrative Employee Exemption

The administrative employee exemption is arguably the most debated and most misapplied. Oftentimes, one hears “administrative” and thinks “clerical.” For FLSA purposes, the two are not synonymous. To fall within this exemption, an employee must be: “(1) compensated on a salary or fee basis at a rate of not less than \$684 per week,” (2) engaged in office or non-manual work “directly related to the management or general business operations of the employer or the employer’s customers,” and (3) required to “exercise discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance” as part of his or her primary duties. A properly compensated employee with sufficient responsibility and



autonomy may fall into this exemption. Support staff who only service or quote customers arguably do not.

The Commissioned Retail Employee Exemption

The commissioned retail employee exemption has received renewed attention in light of a recently revised rule from the Department of Labor that eliminates reliance on historic lists of qualifying retail establishments. Technically, the new rule does not change the exemption. Practically, it implies that the Department will view the list of industries to which the exemption applies more broadly. Time will tell how this plays out in specific industries, but one certainly can advance the argument that historic property and casualty insurance agencies serve a “retail” purpose, i.e., they operate as the end distribution point for the sale of insurance products to the consuming public. If that is true, their employees may be exempt from overtime provided they satisfy the following three conditions:

- the employee must be employed by a retail or service establishment;
- the employee’s regular rate of pay must exceed one and one-half times the applicable minimum wage for every hour worked in a workweek in which overtime hours are worked; and
- more than half of the employee’s total earning in a representative period must consist of commissions.

To fully unpack these three conditions requires more discussion than the scope of this article allows. But broadly speaking, the exemption requires that the employee earn one and a half times the state or federal minimum wage (whichever is higher) in any week that he or she works more than forty hours. And it also requires that the employee earn more than half of his or her pay from commissions. If the courts agree that insurance agencies are indeed retail establishments, then the exemption would seem to apply to a commission-based sales producer earning at least time and a half the minimum wage for each hour worked.

Conclusion

Wage and hour rules are complicated, and the penalties for misapplication can

be severe. Agency owners should review the rules carefully ... ideally in consultation with their legal and tax professionals ... to determine what opportunities do and do not exist to avoid the additional expense of overtime compensation and whether eliminating overtime will harm employee retention or morale.

The information and suggestions provided here should not be construed as legal advice or an endorsement from NAPAA or its attorneys or accountants. NAPAA expressly disclaims any such advice. NAPAA recommends that agents consult with their professional advisors before taking any action that could affect their tax or legal statuses.



Dirk Beamer has served the National Association of Professional Allstate Agents 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.

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.



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Get Off Your Plateau

JUSTIN EGGAR, Chief Executive Officer, Quantum Assurance

It was December 31, 2017. Instead of celebrating the New Year, I was sitting on my sofa, racking my brain and trying to understand why I felt empty. Like I was not having an impact. Like everything I was doing did not really matter at the end of the day.

I had just won an award with a captive carrier. My agency had written millions of dollars of new business as a start-up in the five months since we had launched in Texas. The feedback I was receiving made it clear that we were hitting all the goals and awards we could possibly hit, times ten. So, why did I feel like there was something greater for me? And why, despite all the accolades, did I believe I was fumbling and missing the mark?

In the harsh glare of that moment, I realized I was fulfilling someone else's goals instead of my own. And frankly, those goals were only a fraction of what I needed to achieve to know I was accomplishing something of value in life.

In hindsight, I now see I was stuck on a plateau. I was not going downhill, but I also was not growing. By growing I mean being stretched and forced into that uncomfortable state where you do not know if you can accomplish something or not, so you grow and adapt and get better.

I was not raised an entrepreneur. In truth, I was raised outside of a village in the Fiji Islands way out in the South Pacific. Not over in the areas where the wealthy expats lived, but quite literally downstream from a village on the outskirts of Suva, the capital of Fiji. It was a good life, and my parents and family were amazing, but when you spend most of your time playing in waterfalls and taking a small boat out to the islands—you do not exactly become goal oriented. Life is quite literally a massive plateau,



even though it is a good one.

Later, I joined the U.S. Navy and served during 9/11. During this time, I received promotions, awards, and served in Iceland and Italy. But, every step of the way, I was obeying orders and following someone else's goals. I never had to dream up something larger than myself and become something greater than what I was yesterday.

So, imagine my surprise, on that New Year's Eve sixteen years later, when I realized I was making great money, winning awards, and still feeling as meaningless as ever.

When things are going your way—when you are hitting goals and getting pats on the back, when things are easy—that is a moment you need to stop and determine whether you are riding a plateau. Because if so, you are settling for less than your best.

Here is a truth that might surprise you: if you have massive goals of doing something big, of making an impact on the world in a way that others cannot, of creating a legacy that lasts—you are not good enough to accomplish that today. If you were good enough, you would have already accomplished it.

I am not saying that statement in judgement of you. The reality is that I am not good enough for what I want to accomplish either. One of the many

things you and I have in common is that we have the ability to step back, notice the plateau we are on, and determine a path forward to give ourselves the greatest chance of making a difference. Where you are today does not have to dictate where you are going to end up. You can get to where you want to go. You can create the difference you want to see in your life.

So, how do we get there?

1. **Acknowledge** if you are on a plateau or in a state of complacency. I understand that it is hard, because in the moment this place feels great. For a while. Until it does not.

2. **Choose** an audacious goal, something big that you want to hang your hat on. Let me assure you, you can do this now. This is not a static thing and it can and will change as you grow. So, take a day or two and wrap your head around this. You do not need more time than that to decide on a better path than you are on today.

3. **Decide** this is the time to burn the ships. Complacency is an anchor that feels like it keeps you in calm water, but it also keeps you from crossing the sea of life and getting to where you need to be. This step is often the hardest. Burning the ships, deciding you are ready to act, and committing to your course is one of the hardest yet most meaningful steps you will ever take.

4. **Execute.** I have seen thousands of agents take the first three steps and get this last one wrong. Do not go back and think through everything you have decided to do time and time again. (If you have ever struggled to act and move forward with your goals, this is the point

PLATEAU

continued on page 27.

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Top Ten Reasons an Insurance Agency Should Outsource Payroll

CHARLES J. READ

1. Compliance

As an insurance agent, you understand the importance of being compliant. An outsourced payroll service provider is continuously upgrading and improving its ability to provide the best service for you.

It upgrades its software and systems regularly. This may be multiple times a month or even in a week if the law is in flux as it has been in 2020. The payroll provider company, of course, has to keep up with the changes in the laws of all 15,000 plus payroll-taxing entities as they happen. A payroll outsourcing company must be able to print out any updated form as needed, or it will have to do it by hand. This is a chore it does not want to undertake with many clients to complete them for.

2. Avoid Penalties

Occasionally everyone misses a deposit or filing deadline, forgets a form, or otherwise makes a mistake that results in a penalty that the agency has to spend a great deal of time trying to resolve and usually ends up paying anyway. The IRS alone issued more than thirteen billion dollars a year in employment tax penalties in 2019. 40% of small businesses are levied with a penalty every year.

Outsource payroll service providers greatly minimize the chance that your agency will pay any penalties or interest due to missed deposits, late filings, bad calculations or other clerical and computational errors on your payroll taxes. If a payroll outsourcing company makes a mistake, it is responsible for the research and costs. A good outsourced payroll company should deposit your payroll taxes and file all your payroll tax reports – on time, every time. After all, it is not processing taxes for

just one company; it is filing for hundreds or thousands of companies.

3. Protection from Check Fraud Artists Who Could Raid your Bank Account

When you use a outsource payroll service provider to process your payroll, you can reduce the number of checks that you write substantially. This not only lowers your accounting costs by reducing the size and complexity of your bank reconciliation; it can also reduce your banking fees and the opportunity for checks to fall into the hands of check fraud specialists.

4. Take Advantage of Tax Credits that You May Not Even Know Exist

An outsourced payroll company should have the ability to check to see if your company or location makes tax credits available for hiring some or all new employees. This varies widely from State to State and location to location. It is tough to keep up on all of the available credits unless you are in the business.

5. Upgrade Privacy for You and Your Employees

When you outsource payroll, you actually increase your security and privacy. All the reports are computerized and encrypted. No reports left around for people to see. Your outsourced payroll service provider should have the ability to restore all your old files to a new computer for you if the existing one is compromised in any way. With direct deposit and employee self-service, there are no paychecks or paystubs to be left in the wrong place for the wrong person to see. As the boss, you can control who sees what if anything,

6. Take A Vacation

With an outsourced payroll service provider that is cloud-based, you can input the payroll from any internet-connected computer in the world. We have a client who submits payroll via the Starbucks Wi-Fi at the beach in Hawaii twice a year (pre-COVID). You can have someone else submit the payroll and then you can check it from anywhere. You have the option to submit early or just have the payroll company replicate the previous payroll. It is like having a payroll staff without having to pay for it.

7. Call on Payroll Tax Experts at No Charge

Your outsourced payroll service provider should have CPAs on staff to answer your technical questions. Payroll specialists, FPCs, and CPPs are great, but sometimes you need that CPA! If you have to talk only to a call center or a clerk, then you are not getting the service you are paying for. An outsourced payroll company should have employment tax experts on staff to advise you and to be able to advocate for you to the IRS and the States. This includes such things as knowing you may have to report 1099 workers as New Hires for child support garnishments.

If you would not go to court without an attorney, why would you ever talk to the IRS without a CPA? Or have a CPA do it for you? Our firm has every client execute an IRS “Form 2848 IRS Limited Power of Attorney.” This form authorizes a CPA, an attorney or an Enrolled Agent subject to IRS Circular 230 requirements to represent your agency and advocate for you with the IRS. There are similar forms for each state.

With this form in place, an outsourced payroll company can deal with the taxing authority directly for you. It knows the law, regulations and procedures that are required to follow and can make them toe the line. In many cases, it may have the experience to be more knowledgeable than the IRS employee it is talking with on your behalf.

In this time of COVID, it may be of particular importance to have an expert in your corner. The law has changed in the following ways already and more is coming:

- Paycheck Protection Program loan and of course the documentation to prevent having to repay it.
- Paid sick leave and Expanded family and medical leave under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act.
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act deferral of employer share of employment taxes.

8. Save Time

No checks to print. No tedious filings; monthly, quarterly annually. Never miss a deposit again. No answering IRS and State letters concerning employment taxes. You do not have to keep up with tax or software updates. You do not need to keep up with changes in tax or employment law. You do not have to become a payroll professional. Your outsourced payroll service provider should have them on staff. It will keep up on the changes and advise you if there is something you need to do. It will advise you when the I9 changes and you need to throw out the old. No calculating net pay and taxes. No filling out tax forms. No remembering to make tax deposits timely.

9. Save Money

Your outsourced payroll service provider has current software always available at no additional cost. There are no costly tax updates to pay for, sometimes multiple times in a year. There will be no penalties for small oversights. You or your staff will need less time and training to keep up with changes to payroll and tax laws. It offers you economies of scale on everything from paper, checks and envelopes, to banking and direct deposit fees. All of this saves you time and money.

Everything that lessens your exposure to fraud saves you money. Everything that increases privacy without you having to do anything can save you money.

10. Peace of Mind

If you have read this far, one bonus reason to use a outsourced payroll service provider is peace of mind. No worries about payroll. No sleepless nights of the IRS boogeyman watching over your shoulder. You can concentrate on running and growing your agency and book of business and have one less thing to worry about.



Charles Read is a CPA and the Founder and CEO of Get-Payroll in Lewisville, TX, where he has provided full-service payroll and payroll tax services since 1991. GetPayroll helps small to medium-sized businesses across the U.S. with direct deposits, debit card loads, printed checks, payroll deposits, reports and

tax filings, year-end Forms W-2, and employer-employee website portals. Charles is an accomplished senior executive and entrepreneur with more than fifty years of financial leadership experience in a broad range of industries, as well as a licensed CPA. In addition, he is also a US Tax Court Non-Attorney Practitioner, which enables him to represent clients in the US Tax Court without being an attorney. He is the author of three e-books: Starting a New Business: Accounting, Finance, Payroll, and Tax Considerations, Small Business Short Course (Employees Book 1), and The Little Black Book of the Beauty Biz, Volume 1. His latest book The Payroll Book: A Guide for Small Businesses and Startups will be published by Wiley in the summer of 2020. Charles is also an accomplished speaker and has been featured on Fox Business News, Biz TV Texas, New York City Wired, Dallas Innovates, and many more. In addition to his executive career, Mr. Read is a decorated United States Marine Corps sergeant and a combat veteran of the Vietnam War.

PLATEAU continued from page 24.

where many falter.) Every day, commit to taking action and the next day keep moving forward. If you do this you will make a difference, and you will absolutely move towards your goal.

5. **Believe.** This is a hard one. When you have been kicked time and time again and you are butting your head against a wall, the failure to believe in yourself and what you are doing is what allows you to settle. To give up. To stop moving forward towards your destiny. As entrepreneurs and creators, to create something worthwhile often means we just have to keep our hand in the fire a little longer. Fight that voice inside your head that is okay with you settling if it means getting out of the pain in the moment. Believe in what you are doing and never allow yourself to give up.

The harder you work at this the more likely you will find yourself to be the right person in the right place at the right time for opportunity to come along. That is truly how we get off the plateau and achieve big things. By working hard and focusing on something greater, we align ourselves with opportunity that comes along and we are ready to take action when we see it. The reality is that you know that. What I have said is not anything you have not heard before. There is not a silver bullet in any of this. Figure out what you want to do, do it, and do not settle along the way.

Over the years I have seen plateaus many times. I have felt the soul-sucking awareness of not being focused on something larger than myself. On the other hand, I have also felt the incredible highs of breaking through those plateaus and growing to the next level.

At Quantum Assurance we have a leadership group that has been in your shoes and made the leap into the unknown. We created our 1099 Quantum Agency Opportunity for people who want to stretch themselves and make a difference. I believe that agency owners are an unstoppable force when given the right resources and support. If your current career is holding you back, we are here to serve as the bridge to help you step off of your plateau and towards the next step of seeing your goals become a reality.



What to Do if Employees Refuse to Return to Work

Paychex

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Employers who closed or downsized their businesses because of the COVID-19 pandemic may be anxious to reopen. They may be recalling or rehiring employees furloughed or laid-off. Moreover, many employers have received loans made available under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and want to maximize their ability to seek forgiveness of those loans by restoring employees to their active payrolls.

Employers will need to review their compliance obligations under applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, and executive orders related to reopening. Employers should also consider establishing written health and safety protocols, which may be required under certain state and/or local laws, before returning workers to the workplace.

The enhanced unemployment benefit dilemma

Employers may be extending offers to employees currently receiving more in unemployment insurance (UI) benefits than they will be paid when reinstated because of the additional \$600 per week made available to them through July 31, 2020 under the CARES Act.

Employers may be left wondering whether they will be able to staff their businesses because employees may reject job offers, preferring to remain on enhanced UI benefits for the time being. Employers who received PPP loans worry that rejections of their job offer may derail their efforts to restore their workforces to pre-furlough levels, and in

turn, sidetrack their ability to optimize their loan forgiveness opportunity. Let's take each of these two issues in turn.

Scenario 1: Employee collects UI benefits despite receiving comparable job offer

Although there are reasons that would enable an employee to reject a job offer and continue to qualify for UI benefits in various states, an individual's preference for receiving the enhanced UI benefit is not one of them. In order to continue qualifying for UI benefits, an individual must certify on a weekly basis, among other things, that they are available to work and have not received a job offer for "suitable" employment.

Intentionally making false statements in a UI benefit certification may constitute civil or criminal fraud. Consequently, an employee rejecting a job offer must respond truthfully and accurately or face serious consequences. Many states and the federal government have promised to address anticipated fraud cases.

Scenario 2: Protected reasons an employee who rejects a job offer can be eligible to receive UI benefits

An individual's mere preference for receiving the enhanced UI benefits is not a protected reason to reject a job offer. The following are examples of reasons an employee may have for rejecting an employer's job offer and permit the individual to continue to be eligible to receive UI benefits:

Employment Must be Suitable

An employee might reject a job offer and continue qualifying for UI benefits if the job is not "suitable." What might make a

job from which someone was furloughed just a month ago unsuitable today? First, a job might be unsuitable if, among other things, an employer hasn't taken reasonable steps to promote a safe workplace or let employees know about those steps. Employees have a protected right to work in a safe environment.

Although an employee's unreasonable fear of contracting COVID-19 in the workplace may not be sufficient grounds for rejecting a job offer and continuing to be eligible for UI benefits, an employee's reasonable concern for their safety might be. State unemployment agencies will be even more likely to find protected cause if the individual rejecting the offer is within the population at high-risk of becoming seriously ill if they contract COVID-19 and the employer failed to mitigate the risk. Employers should consider developing safety plan before recalling workers that is well-thought out, documented, and communicated to employees before, or along with, the written job offer.

Establish and document a health and safety protocol

Ensure your health and safety plan accounts for any federal, state, or local requirements and/or guidelines, such as those developed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Your plan should be tailored to your specific workplace and industry and provide a means by which to consider accommodations for high-risk employees who need, or request, accommodations on a case-by-case basis.

RETURN TO WORK
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How to Keep Your Best Employees with a Better Retention Strategy

Insperty Staff



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A retention strategy isn't in every business's HR arsenal.

But it should be.

You worked so hard to get the right people in your organization. Why wouldn't you work just as hard to keep them?

Having an outdated or ill-conceived retention strategy, however, is just as bad as not having one at all.

Here are some ways to make sure your business's retention strategy is performing as well as the people it's trying to keep in the building.

One size doesn't fit all

The first mistake businesses make regarding their retention strategy is having just one. You don't have cookie-cutter employees – that would be creepy, right? – so you shouldn't have a cookie-cutter retention strategy.

It stands to reason, then, that the key to crafting an effective retention strategy is individualization. Employee motiva-

tion can be sparked a hundred different ways, and it's your job to find out how to start those fires.

Additionally, learning what really gets your employees engaged in their work helps you uncover ways to build trust and, most importantly, loyalty.

Yesterday's motivation vs. today's workforce

Everyone knows somebody who worked for the same company for decades. Today, those occurrences are becoming rarer and rarer. We live in the age of the "career consumer," where people switch jobs more frequently in search of a satisfying position.

Employees in today's workforce – especially Millennials or members of Gen Y – want to know their work means something. They aren't bean counters, and it's not necessarily about the money.

A February 2014 Aberdeen report found the top reason employees stay with an organization is by being challenged and intrigued by their work (48 percent); a competitive benefits package came in fifth (25 percent).

Challenges exist in every organization,

but start-ups and small businesses have a built-in advantage. By attracting top talent during those extremely demanding first few years, employees can grow with the business and are engaged in seeing it succeed.

No recognition, no retention

If you think a competitive salary and benefits package is enough to keep your best people, you're using a bone-stock retention strategy. And that's no way to win the race for top talent.

Recognizing and rewarding high performers is necessary, but it doesn't have to be pricey to be effective. Consider low-cost options, including:

- Gift cards
- Preferential parking spots
- Travel deals
- Telecommuting opportunities
- Extra days off
- Early release

Remember: When it comes to recognition, the gesture itself is often what counts most. Something as simple as a jeans day could score you serious "cool points."

Opportunity knocks (whether you want it to or not)

While you'd love to keep your ace employees in their roles forever, you also know that's not possible. These high performers are looking for career advancement, and you should be facilitating it.

If your A-players are so valuable, you'll want to keep them in the organization. Impact players make an impact no matter where they are in the org chart. This is especially true – and easier to pull off – in a small business. The company grows and people get moved around, but they're

still in the office and can be highly effective mentors.

And keep in mind that if you don't let your high performers take the reins, somebody else will. If a promotion isn't in the cards right now, just be honest with them. They'll respect that because, if you've been communicating with them effectively, they respect and trust you.

Give them more responsibilities in their current role. Let them spearhead a project. Find a way to continue building that confidence while keeping them engaged in their work and, therefore, keeping them in the building.

Managers make a monumental difference

Retaining employees means creating an environment they enjoy being in every day. That environment is dictated mainly by the manager or supervisor they report to. How many people quit simply because they dislike their manager?

According to the Aberdeen report, interaction with a direct manager is the No. 1 driver of employee engagement. Managers are the gatekeepers between the business's main objectives and the individual work that helps meet those objectives, which makes this relationship crucial to the company's success.

The key is taking the effort to get to know your employees personally. Send out a fun questionnaire to find out what makes them tick, what interests them. That'll clue you in to what you should do to motivate and reward them.

Spending quality time with your staff

One-on-one meetings provide the ongoing communication necessary to create a positive work environment. They're also a great way to enforce or adjust performance goals, address needs, and dole out morale-boosting praise.

Try leaving the office for these quick checkups with your direct reports. Grab a coffee and just chat. Check out the photos of their kid's birthday party. Ask about their vacation plans.

Those few minutes will go miles when it comes to building loyalty and motivating your staff so you can get them to step up when you need their

extra effort. When something happens and you have to rally the troops, they'll rise to the challenge.

And all the hard work put into your retention strategy will be rewarded – with hard work from your employees. Insperity has been helping organizations

manage and retain their best people for nearly 30 years. Learn how we can help your business do the same.

Did you know Insperity has a program specifically for Agents? Visit www.insperity.com/agency to learn more!

RETURN TO WORK *continued on page 26.*

Consider scheduling a virtual employee meeting before job offers are extended to discuss your health and safety plan as well as employee concerns. Guidance on establishing workplace health and safety plans should be considered.

Other protected reasons

Many states have expanded the grounds that may give an individual protected reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic to reject a job offer and continue receiving UI benefits. For example, some states have issued guidance that if individuals reject job offers because they must care for their child due to COVID-19-related school or child-care closings, that individual may be eligible for continuing benefits.

An employee also might have potential eligibility for protected leave through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to care for a child whose childcare or school is closed for COVID-19-related reasons.

Reasons for acceptable refusal will vary by state, so employers should check with their state's UI website.

Make written job offers and document responses

Making job offers in writing and documenting any rejections of those offers has never been more important. Consider including a description of your health and safety plan in the offer letter and the additional steps that you are taking to provide a healthy and safe workplace.

If an employee rejects your job offer because of workplace health and safety concerns, gain an understanding of the employee's specific concerns and review whether any accommodation is required or could be made that is reasonable and addresses the employee's concern. Document the rejection or the individual's failure to report.

Employers should advise the State Employment Agency if an employee rejects a job offer or fails to return to work. If you decide to report an employee's rejection of a job offer to the State Unemployment Agency for investigation, you will likely need to provide the documented job offer and rejection.

Employers with PPP loans

Employers with PPP loans hoping to restore their workforce to pre-furlough levels are also concerned that rejections of job offers will reduce their loan forgiveness opportunity. The SBA and U.S. Treasury Department recently indicated, however, that rejections of an employer's good-faith job offer (and the impact on the employer's workforce restoration effort) will not result in a reduction of the employer's loan forgiveness opportunity; but cautioned that employers must be able to provide documentation of the job offer and rejection. Employers should make sure to retain copies of the written job offers and documentation of rejections of those offers.

Looking forward

As you get your business back to full strength, you might discover additional challenges or have more questions. Paychex provides resources, tools, and FAQs to help your efforts. Plus, you are encouraged to consult with your financial or legal advisors as you prepare to re-open.



Adapting to Change

Providence Bank



2020 has brought on unprecedented challenges. Insurance agents have had to pivot their business plans in ways we have not seen before. Many agents have transitioned from working in office settings to working from home while continuing to service their clients. Agents have had to manage changes to their books as a result of declining income, unemployment of their policyholders and premium deferrals made by many insurance companies. With all the economic and workplace changes, it is the agencies that are adapting quickly that are surviving and continuing to grow.

Adapting to unplanned changes can create costs that your agency might not

be prepared for. As some agencies continue to work from home and others slowly move back into the workplace, it is important to have a strategy in place to help both employees and customers transition into a new normal.

Some things to consider:

Does my office space provide a safe working environment for my employees?

Do I have the technology resources to have employees continue to work from home and how do I monitor their productivity?

Am I effectively communicating reopening plans to my customers?

How am I going to pay for the chang-

es that are necessary to keep my agency moving forward?

As you start to reopen your doors, ensure you have a plan in place to help both your employees and clients feel safe and welcome. You may need to increase your spending to maintain a higher level of sanitation throughout your office space. If your employees feel safe at work, they can take better care of their clients. You might have to temporarily or permanently create a new office layout to allow for social distancing between employees or when meeting with a client.

Many agents have found that their employees have been able to maintain productivity while working from home. Some are moving to keep much of their workforce at home to allow for reduce fixed overhead costs. In a recent survey, many agents concluded that although productivity remained high, there is a need to upgrade their phone and computer systems to ensure efficient employee access to customer records and communication.

Effectively communicating during these times is key to not only keeping clients but gaining new ones. Now, more than ever, people are looking to see how businesses reacted to the changing environment. Make sure you are communicating through your various marketing channels how your agency has adapted to the changes, supported both employees and clients during the pandemic, and how your plans for reopening are going.

Unfortunately, the changes you have endured or need to make may cost you precious working capital. Those expenses can add up quickly but are necessary to create a new normal in your office. Accessing a working capital loan or line of credit to help cover these costs, whether short term or long term, can alleviate the additional stress on your agency.

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Where to Look for Low Cost Leads

ROBYN SHARP

If you want to grow your agency this year you are going to need LEADS. But with reduced commissions, big corporate changes and a pandemic with no end in sight, it can be hard to find those leads. It is easy to call up a lead company and put in an order, but they can come with a hefty price tag and less than stellar results. So where to turn? Here are seven ideas to get you started.

1. Facebook! You are probably using Facebook now, but are you using it in a lead-generating way? If you are only sharing posts to your agency page, then it is not enough.

First create a post with a specific offer like “Get a quote today and if we cannot beat your current rate, we will send you a \$10 Walmart gift card.” Or “Get a home insurance quote by Friday and we will enter you into a drawing to win a \$25 restaurant gift card.” It could be any kind of offer; you just want to say something beyond “Get a quote.” Give people some incentive!

You could post this on your personal page if you have quite a few friends. You could also post it on your agency page and create an ad which shows it to people in your city! This is usually extremely inexpensive and helps you reach a lot of new people. You could ask your staff members to share it too!

2. Referrals! Referrals lead to great clients; you already know this. But are you actively seeking them out? Make sure you have a referral strategy in place. Start by creating a small reward each time someone refers a friend (this could be \$5-\$10). In our agency, we give a \$10 Walmart gift card. (Remember, to check your state rebating laws.)

Then, make a flyer that explains your referral program! Put a copy in each New Business packet and in any outbound

mail. Do not forget to mention the referral program when closing a new sale. You could make some postcards about your referral program and send it to new clients two weeks after they start their policies, just as another reminder.

The goal is to EXPECT a referral from every new client.

3. Reach out to your network. While most networking events are on hold right now due to the pandemic, it does not mean that business has stopped! Who do you know that could refer business your way? Check in with loan officers, real estate agents and car salespeople in your online and real-life network. Remind them of why they should send referrals your way! One good referral partner can send a steady stream of low-cost leads!

4. Sell more to your current clients. Current clients already trust you and believe in your business. Use email, text and mail to reach out consistently to cross-sell new lines of business.

Work on collecting X-dates so you are ready to quote when your client’s other coverage is up for renewal. Build relationships and use multi-policy discounts to your advantage. I have found that many people do not really realize how much 10% or 15% adds up. Rather than give a percentage savings, run the endorsement and tell them an actual number! You will save \$256 per year if we insure your home also! Much more motivating than a generalized percentage.

5. Win back clients. Run a list of clients who have left your agency in the past year or two. Start following up with them (in multiple ways – letters, phone calls, emails, etc.). Ask to quote their business!

6. Figure out how to get in front of your ideal client. Where are you the MOST competitive when it comes to rates? Married couples who own a home? People over 50?

Do you have amazing rates on motorcycles or term life insurance? Can you beat any company on landlord policies? Is your home policy more competitive in certain ZIP codes or with a particular style of home? Find a solid niche and work it in every way possible!

There is no reason to spend marketing dollars in places that will not convert.

How can you reach this group in large numbers? Join a certain association? Send mailouts in a particular neighborhood? Put your focus on growing this niche above all others. The leads will pay off!

7. Use email marketing. Email is an inexpensive way to reach a lot of people. Now direct mail can have higher response rates, but it is going to require some investment. Email, however, lets you reach hundreds to thousands of prospects quickly and efficiently.

Create an email newsletter and reach out to clients each month. Include a special drawing or incentive to get them to pay attention to your newsletter if necessary!

You can also collect email addresses from each new quote and consistently reach out to follow up. Put a reminder to email them each month or again at the X date. While it may not generate a ton of leads up front, you will be building a database that will work for years to come.

Marketing is one of the biggest expenses for any agency. Many forms of marketing can pay off with big rewards, but they can require a big investment too. Hopefully these suggestions will give you some fresh ideas on where to prospect for leads when you need to control costs.

Robyn Sharp is the owner of Mega Agency Marketing and an independent insurance agency in Arkansas. Visit AgencyUpdates.com to learn more about how to use social media to get leads and grow your agency!



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Connecting with Clients: Socially and Virtually Refreshing your Network

SCOTT STARS, Oak Street Funding



Some people will tell you we are more connected than we have ever been before, thanks to technology such as cellphones and social media. It is a safe bet that you are connected to many clients through Facebook®, LinkedIn®, Instagram®, and other platforms.

But is your digital network a real network? By that, we mean do you truly have relationships with your online “friends” and “connections”? There is a big difference between pressing a “like” on a photo

of someone’s child and actually knowing the child’s name and age.

The Impersonal Way to Stay in Touch

As we become more dependent upon digital channels to keep in touch with the important people in business and our personal lives, we replace deep connections with superficial relationships. We may say we have 462 friends on Facebook, but how many of them would we choose to

confide in or invite over for dinner?

When it comes to our business connections, digital networks make it easy for us to believe we are doing a good job of staying in touch. If we are honest with ourselves, we know a comment on a social media post pales in comparison to an in-person conversation, a phone call or in today’s environment with the pandemic – a face time call or Zoom meeting with the cameras on! That is why it is so important for us to make the effort to socially refresh our networks by taking time to surround ourselves with clients, prospects, and colleagues even if it is at a social distance of six feet or virtually.

Networking is Not What You Think

Perhaps you think we are describing what has come to be called “networking” – those uncomfortable efforts to walk into a roomful of strangers, exchange business cards and stammer through strained conversations in the hope that they might lead to a new client relationship. True networking is less about meeting new people, and more about constantly and meaningfully staying in touch with your clients, prospects and colleagues.¹

The most effective networking grows out of developing genuine relationships with others, regardless of the reason you are trying to connect with them. It is far more than an awkward exchange of business cards. Instead, it involves reaching out, either in person when the time is right or virtually for now and treating the other person as a friend and engaging in a conversation that will deepen the relationship.²

Attitude is Everything

The key to effective networking is the at-

titude you bring. If you begin with a real interest in people and what is going on in their lives, and a genuine curiosity rather than an aggressive, mercenary focus on growing business, you will actually accomplish more.³

By setting out to build a handful of friendships instead of a lengthy contact database, you will be able to accumulate quality contacts rather than a large quantity of low-value names and emails. People who network effectively rarely begin the process by talking about business or themselves. In fact, the most effective networkers do very little talking. Instead, they listen. They ask questions and get the other person to talk about themselves. Most people enjoy doing that. Go into initial conversations with a plan to not talk about business (unless the other person encourages you to do so). If you show a genuine interest, you will have plenty of future opportunities to use your sales skills.

The Psychology of Trust

When you want to build lasting connections with other people, whether your goal is friendship, business or romance, you need to establish a sense of mutual trust. When people feel that others will not attempt to deceive or damage them in any way, they are more willing to connect at a deeper level. Psychologists identify four critical factors in establishing trust between people:

- Sharing a common set of values and a respect for the other person's differing values.
- Developing integrity through degrees of honesty, consistency and predictability.
- Having a sense of mutuality, in which both parties can rely upon the other.
- Creating a sense of commitment that there is a purpose for the relationship.⁵

In simple terms, when we begin to establish any kind of new relationship, we want to be confident that the other person is kind, ethical, has the ability to make the relationship work and behaves in ways that are comfortable and predictable.⁶

Building Trust

As an ethical businessperson, you are no doubt seeking to build relationships

– business and social – that embody this kind of trust. While much of that comes back to the personal integrity you and the other party exhibit, there are some strategies you can use to foster that kind of trust, whether you are meeting someone in person, over the phone or in a virtual meeting:

- Ask insightful questions that give the other party an opportunity to share meaningful information. When someone has a genuine interest in us, we are more likely to trust them.

- Choose thoughtful questions that demonstrate curiosity and show that you focus on more than surface issues.

- Give them your full attention. People can tell whether you are really listening to what they have to say. Maintain eye contact, if applicable, do not interrupt and ask follow-up questions that show you heard what they were saying.

- Did you notice that all those strategies involve saying less and listening more? That is not a coincidence.⁷

One of the best ways to build trust is to do the kind of networking that has no obvious benefit for you. That involves introducing people to each other when they might benefit from the connection. For example, if you know someone who mentions she is planning to sell her home, and you know a realtor you trust, connecting the two of them will help both parties – and they will see you as a helpful individual who is acting outside of your own self-interest.⁸

Reaching Across the Generational Gaps

One challenge in networking these days is the reality that there are several generational groups in the workforce, and people from these different groups often struggle when it comes to connecting with each other. By knowing this and taking the lead in creating connections across the generation gaps, you will be better able to build a strong social network.

In particular, Baby Boomers and Gen Xers benefit when they reach out to Millennials and the Gen Z groups. Developing these connections can strengthen their careers and potentially build business, while giving you the satisfaction of helping others who are earlier in

their own careers. Plus, it is likely those younger contacts will return the favor.

A great strategy for networking with younger colleagues or prospects is making a point to introduce them to other people you know. Before you make the introduction, share some information about that person, so they find it easier to start the conversation. If you know someone who would be a great mentor for the younger person, or who might be able to share knowledge or contacts that would be beneficial, introduce them. The younger generation want to build their own networks too, so your efforts demonstrate your respect for them and helps build long term trust.⁹

Building your social network by focusing on others is a particularly effective and satisfying strategy. It may involve more work than pressing the “like” button on social media, but in the long run, it will have a profound effect on both your business and your personal relationships.

Scott Stars is a sales leader for Oak Street Funding. With experience in providing more than \$120 million in insurance industry loans, Scott truly understands insurance agency businesses and their unique capital needs for acquisition funding, debt consolidation, succession planning and working capital. Scott has successfully led sales organizations in highly competitive environments and has developed growth strategies specifically for insurance businesses. He can be reached at scott.stars@oakstreetfunding.com.

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404.233.5650
Asking Price: \$600,000
PIF: 1740 | Premium: \$2.8 Million
Great retention (auto 88.89 first year/ total PP&C Retention 81.43) and loss ratio 38.64.

S Atlanta

SAMM Business Marketing - Seller Rep
855.306.8627
Asking Price: Negotiable
Premium: \$2,600,000
Broker representative. Contact SAMM Business Marketing at 855-306-8627 to start the process.

Columbus

The J. Smart Agency, Inc
706.561.6833
Asking Price: \$550,000
PIF: 1500 | Premium: \$2,582,058

Dalton

Todd Love & Associates, Inc.
Asking Price: \$1,500,000 OBO
PIF: 3138 | Premium: \$4,960,000
Loss Ratio 31.8%. Retention 90.43%.

IDAHO

Boise

Bronco Insurance
208.850.3640
Asking Price: \$569,000
PIF: 2380 | Premium: \$2,150,000
Inner Circle, National Conference winner last 3 years. 5 LSPs. Owner will carry a portion of the sale.

Chubbuck

Orthel Agency, Inc
208.220.3992
Asking Price: \$290,000
PIF: 1369 Premium: \$1,400,000
Agent retiring after 23 years. All furnishings and equipment included.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Jim DeFrancesca
847.275.4499
Asking Price: \$390,000
PIF: 1350 | Premium: \$1,888,000
The sale is just for the book of business.

Chicago

Sanfanello Insurance Agency, LLC
312.575.0086
Asking Price: Negotiable
PIF: 1,130 | Premium: \$1,050,000
Buyer has an option to combine with existing book on Northside of Chicago or Evanston, IL.

Inverness

Skeels Allstate Agency
847.754.5149
Asking Price: \$975,000
PIF: 3360 | Premium: \$4,021,000
Over 90% retention rate with 79% of the clients being multi-line. Wealthy client base.

Lake Forest

Allstate/North Shore Insurance Group
ericeckenstahler@gmail.com
Asking Price: please email to discuss
PIF: 2230 | Premium: \$3,450,000
Great cash flow opportunity in amazing town. 94% retention and 170 AES.

Lincolnshire

Exume-Bitoy Insurance Agency
847.219.7682
Asking Price: Please contact for price
PIF: 2.5 | Premium: \$799,214
This book is 90% personal lines with approximately 10% commercial lines. Good loss ratio and retention.

Palos Heights

Cynthia Saving
708.828.0611
Asking Price: \$108,000
PIF: 400 | Premium: \$568,082

Agencies for Sale

INDIANA

Frankfort & Lafayette
Scott Scales Agencies (2)
 76.414.3600
 Asking Price: \$600,000 | \$380,000
 PIF: 3941 | Premium: \$4,241,000

Greenwood
The Mike Young Agency
 317.507.6780
 Asking Price: \$850,000
 PIF: 2745 | Premium: \$3,549,903
This is a 33-year multiple award agency. Retention, ACES and loss ratio are very good.

Indianapolis
The Franke Agency, Inc.
 317.359.8271
 Asking Price: \$1.1 million
 PIF: 3400 | Premium: \$3.2 million
Established 25-year agency. Great retention low loss ratio. All staff will remain including financial rep.

Merrillville
Allstate Agency
 c.kosior@sbcglobal.net
 Asking Price: \$100,000
 PIF: 545 | Premium: \$620,000
Turnkey operation. Dual monitors, desktops, VOIP phones, wireless headsets, and desks included.

Noblesville
Kainrath Insurance Agency, LLC
 317.385.3907
 Asking Price: \$1,325,000
 PIF: 3393 | Premium: \$4,500,000
Allstate designated 'Premier Agency.' Furniture, equipment, and staff remain. Agent is retiring.

West Lafayette
Matt Kopf Agency
 765.426.2477
 Asking Price: \$549,000
 PIF: 1990 | Premium: \$2,270,000
35-year book of business, 2 licensed staff, 3 computers, 3 VOIP Phone systems, and furniture.

KANSAS

Wichita
The Wurfel Agency
 316.518.2148
 Asking Price: \$550,000
 PIF: 1035 | Premium: \$1,730,000
 18-year-old scratch agency. 2nd agency in Olathe will be for sale within next year so owner can retire.
Date Posted: March 13, 2020

Agencies for Sale

LOUISIANA

Alexandria
Windi Attales Agency
 318.201.1786
 Asking Price: \$575,000
 Premium: \$2.050 Million
Tenured Book of Business with high visibility. 88% retention rate; 35% LR; 2018 Circle of Champions.

Lafayette
Ronnie Dressel Agency
 337.981.5211
 Asking Price: \$800,000
 PIF: 1321 Premium: \$2,589,198

Lafayette
Mattie O'Brien Agency
 337.706.9110
 Asking Price: \$315,000
 PIF: 490 Premium: \$890,000
Agent is moving and is eager to sell.

St. Martinville
Ronnie Dressel Agency
 337.981.5211
 Asking Price: \$1,200,000
 PIF: 1580 | Premium: \$3,510,405
30-year agency. Has about 300,000 in brokered premium.

MAINE

Biddeford
Daniel Wright
 207.283.9141
 Asking Price: \$420,000
 PIF: 2013 | Premium: \$2,300,000

MARYLAND
Burtonsville
Twain Insurance Agency, Inc.
 301.793.0089
 Asking Price: \$650,000
 PIF: 1781 | Premium: \$2,800,000
92% net retention, 40.78% LR

Ellicott City
T.W. Bole & Associates
 703.395.7050
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 PIF: 3124 | Premium: \$4,500,000
20+ year Agent. Licensed: MD, VA, DE, WV. Location Available. Rent/Buy, Turn Key.

Gaithersburg
Fryer Insurance
 301.417.2944
 Asking Price: \$450,000
 PIF: 1414 | Premium: \$2,100,000
Can finance 50%

Gaithersburg
Bolten-Osborne Agency
 301.948.6081
 Asking Price: TBD
 PIF: 3360 | Premium: \$3,700,000
93% Retention, 34% Loss Ratio.

Agencies for Sale

Nottingham
Donna Magsamen Inc
 410.256.5500
 Asking Price: \$275,000
 Premium: \$1,103,496
Established office been at this location for 30 years. Area is growing, new home and families moving in.

Pasadena
Accessible Insurance Agency
 410.627.5799
 Asking Price: \$985,000
 PIF: 2475 | Premium: \$3,772,076
Agency was started in 1985, staff has over 30 years of experience in this agency.

Rockville
Barbara L. Dean Agency
 301.309.0801(o) 301.706.8100(c)
 Asking Price: TBD
 PIF: 1440 | Premium: \$1,950,000
39-year Rockville agency with 91% retention and 31% LR on prime location. Agent available as LSP.

Salisbury
Fred Pastore, Inc
 410.860.0866
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 PIF: 937 | Premium: \$1,390,965
LR 40.8%, Retention 88.7%. High traffic location. Agent will stay on as LSP.

MASSACHUSETTS

Longmeadow
Maxine Bernstein Agency
 413.531.9480
 Asking Price: \$130,000
 PIF: 254 | Premium: \$340,556
This sale is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to purchase a rising agency under an ECP contract.

Somerville
Brasil Insurance Agency
 781.718.4811
 Asking Price: \$450,000
 PIF: 1,800 | Premium: \$2.1 Million
Full ECP eligible multiple award winning agency. 32% loss ratio. 89% retention.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis
Lois A Castaneda Agency – Allstate
 612.267.2800 or 612.871.6830
 Asking Price: \$350,000
 PIF: 1,145 | Premium: \$1,412,000
31 Year Agent Retiring. 90% Retention, 35% LR. Downtown in walking distance.

Minnetonka
Weatherly Group Inc
 763.210.1020
 Asking Price: \$85,000
 PIF: 400 | Premium: \$580,000
ECP agency, motivated seller.

Agencies for Sale

Bloomington
Tallman Allstate Agency
 612.720.7392
 Asking Price: \$1,500,000
 PIF: 330 | Premium: \$5,200,000
Top performing agency in MN over last 6 years. Very good cash flow/retention/location. Owner moving.

MISSISSIPPI

Biloxi
Ernie Chaffin Allstate Agency
 228.243.4609
 Asking Price: \$250,000
Enhanced premium available for this agency. 94.5% retention. Brokered book available.

MISSOURI

Columbia
Wobig Insurance Group
 573.999.3893
 Asking Price: \$725,000
 PIF: 1694 | Premium: \$2,300,000
 Long time agent retiring. Excellent location in downtown area with great parking!

Fenton (St. Louis)
Scott Foelsch Agency, Inc
 636.861.9360
 Asking Price: \$310,000
 PIF: 933 | Premium: \$1,419,000

Joplin
Trujillo Inc
 417.624.4916
 Asking Price: \$225,000
 PIF: 1400 | Premium: \$1,255,623
34-year agency. Price includes custom made furniture and all office equipment.

Springfield
Jennifer Posey Agency, LLC
 417.827.8909
 Asking Price: \$675,000
 PIF: 2053 | Premium: \$2,765,702
Allstate Book Size: \$2,657,027. Agency has been in same location 30+ years.

MONTANA

Billings
Rowe Insurance Agency Inc.
 406.652.2510
 Asking Price: \$325,000
 PIF: 950 | Premium: \$1,300,000
2007 scratch agency, agent retiring. Excellent long-term customer base. 90% retention, 75% HHB.

NEBRASKA

Omaha
Floyd Brown
 402.630.3105
 Asking Price: \$425,000
 PIF: 1476 Premium: \$1,540,000
Close to 100k in Ivantage earned Premiums @ 10% renewals.

Agencies for Sale

Agencies for Sale

Agencies for Sale

Agencies for Sale

NEVADA

Las Vegas

The Phoenix Agency
702.468.9916
Asking Price: \$80,000
PIF: 4049494 | Premium: \$485,357
Willing to negotiate on price.

Las Vegas

Cox Family Insurance
702.778.2222
Asking Price: \$331,663
PIF: 1209 | Premium: \$1,489,931
Agency is located in busy building with good foot traffic. Home to many Golden Knights and LV Raiders.

NEW YORK

Albertson

Adam Cohen Agency Inc
516.382.2282
Asking Price: \$895,000
PIF: 1960 | Premium: \$3,600,000
30-year agent retiring. Retention 94.5%. Loss ratio 45%.

Brooklyn

SAMM Business Marketing - Seller Rep
855.306.8627
Asking Price: Negotiable
Premium: \$3,400,000
Broker representative. Contact SAMM Business Marketing at 855.306.8627 to start the process.

Brooklyn

The Johnson Agency
703.713.2471
Asking Price: \$1,000,000
PIF: 2250 | Premium: \$4,000,000
33-year old book. Retention 94%. 2019 Income: \$382,000. Must sell in 90 days as per Allstate contract.

East Setauket

William I Goble
631.655.9028
Asking Price: \$380,000
PIF: 808 | Premium: \$1,650,000
90% retention rate 64.37% multiline. Will finance 34-year plus, owner wants to retire.

Garnerville

Steven Vitiello
845.216.0319
Asking Price: \$1,200,000
PIF: 2466 | Premium: \$4,468,858
Well established 48+ year multiple award-winning agency. Retention 93.87%. Loss ratio 39.07%.

Lake Grove

Albert D'Andrea Agency
631.495.7335
Asking Price: \$1,350,000
PIF: 2262 | Premium: \$4,434,897
33-year old agency with exceptional opportunity for growth. Turn key operation and paperless.

Nassau County Border

Allstate Agency
516.281.6061
Asking Price: \$1,500,000
PIF: 3262 | Premium: \$5,404,148

Newburgh

Allstate Agency
845.702.5656
Asking Price: Negotiable
PIF: 3012 | Premium: \$4,632,000
36-year agent. 93.6% retention ratio. Serious inquiries only.

New City

David M Brand Agency, Inc.
914.393.1723
Asking Price: \$1,300,000 Negotiable
PIF: 2703 | Premium: \$4,421,788
15-Year multiple award-winning agency. Retention 92.95%. Loss Ratio 42.29%. 66% Bundling.

Niagara Falls

T.A. Passero Agency, Inc.
716.297.5000
Asking Price: \$800,000
PIF: 3,054 and 4,077 IIF P&C plus 376 ALR PIF | Premium: \$3,555,766
41-years in the business and time to retire.

Oakdale

Christopher Brauer Agency
516.474.0826
Asking Price: \$750,000
PIF: 1593 | Premium: \$3,041,000
Number of Staff: 1
Retention 91.82%. Loss ratio 37.63%. Brokered and flood commission \$8,700. Paperless & turnkey.

Plattsburgh

Ruscio Agency
518.229.0178
Asking Price: \$325,000
PIF: 1695 | Premium: \$1,800,000
Motivated to sell. Moving south to retire.

Port Jefferson Station

Peter J Castagna Insurance Agency
631.902.8933
Asking Price: \$900,000
PIF: 1,420 | Premium: \$2,870,000
LR 30.80%, Retention 92.03%. 35-year agent retiring.

Port Jefferson Station

Mark S Jones Insurance Agency Inc.
631.219.5928
Asking Price: \$850,000
PIF: 1,539 | Premium: \$3,264,633
Well-established 35+ year agent. Current retention 93.6, loss ratio 36.59%, multi-line 67.87%.

Selden

Robert B Randell Agency
631.258.4108
Asking Price: \$1,200,000
PIF: 2119 | Premium: \$4,500,000
Plus vantage and brokered business
30 year plus agency. 92.69 retention, 36.09 loss ratio, 62.29 bundling and life goals at 10x PIF.

Suffern

Dean Gentile Agency LLC
845.642.3637
Asking Price: \$1,150,000
PIF: 2900 | Premium: \$4,400,000
Premier agency fantastic book of business for sale. Bundle 67%. Retention 92.41%. Loss Ratio 45%.

Queens

SAMM Business Marketing - Seller Rep
855.306.8627
Asking Price: Negotiable
Premium: \$3,700,000
Broker representative. Contact SAMM Business Marketing at 855.306.8627 to start the process.

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte

Allstate Agency
704.564.1015
Asking Price: \$500,000
PIF: 1780 | Premium: \$1,903,000

Concord

The Rouse Agency
980.257.6398
Asking Price: \$175,000
PIF: 335 | Premium: \$353,810
Book of business is still on ECP, perspective buyers have opportunity for new business and renewals.

Davidson

The Chester Agency
516.375.5243
Asking Price: \$445,000
PIF: 1448 | Premium: \$1,650,000
89% retention with very little non-standard auto. Loss Ratio 24MM 37%. \$53,000 in ALR PCs in 2019.

Greensboro

Edward Johnson Agency
336.601.3385
Asking Price: \$216,000
PIF: 970 Premium: \$1,041,594
35-year agent looking to retire. 89.98% Retention Ratio, 41.89% 12mm Loss Ratio.

Raleigh

North Raleigh Agency
northraleighagency@gmail.com
Asking Price: \$325,000
Premium: \$1,330,000
90% retention. 37% loss ratio. licensed staff that are open to transition with the sale.

OHIO

Amherst

The Caco Agency, Ltd.
440.541.4273
Asking Price: \$450,000
PIF: 1836 | Premium: \$2,091,000
32 year agent, 90.71 retention, 30.37% 24mm loss ratio 71.03% multi line, great EFS relationship.

Dayton

Allstate Agency
937.340.1225
Asking Price: \$500,000
PIF: 1983 Premium: \$2,151,000
Retention rate approx. 90%. Adjusted paid loss ratio approx. 36%. Agency appointed in Ohio & Michigan.

Mansfield

Allstate/Bindner Insurance Group
614.403.0921
Asking Price: \$305,000
Premium: \$1,400,000
Great Office Location

Maumee

Pauley Insurance Services
419.277.8361
Asking Price: \$70,000
Premium: \$107,000
Could not maintain ECP curve post COVID shutdown, or get new hires licensed. Rare ECP availability.

Norcross

The Dargani Agency
404.376.3157
Asking Price: \$375,000
PIF: 1186 | Premium: \$1,634,000
Going for a great price. Please call for more details.

OKLAHOMA

Tulsa

C. Jeff Farquhar Agency
918.369.5111 (o) 918.289.8752 (m)
Asking Price: \$730,000
PIF: 1440 | Premium: \$3,000,000
Retention 88%. Loss Ratio 37%. Annual Revenue \$303,000 average plus bonuses.

Agencies for Sale

Agencies for Sale

Agencies for Sale

Agencies for Sale

OREGON

Eugene
Swanson Insurance Corp
 541.521.5282
 Asking Price: \$280,000
 PIF: 1539 | Premium: \$1,290,520
28-year turnkey agency; Agent is retiring. 11-2019 Metrics: Net Retention is 89.13, PIF-1539.

Beaverton-Aloha
Allstate Agency
 503.550.0501
 Asking Price: \$525,000
 PIF: 1978 | Premium: \$2,300,000
2 LSPs. We have been hitting agency bonus for the last 7 years. Agent retiring. Serious buyers only.

Salem
Hager Allstate Insurance Agency
 503.949.6601
 Asking Price: \$144,300
 PIF: 658 | Premium: \$780,000
Great opportunity for the right agent looking to expand or LSP looking to branch out on their own.

The Dalles
Big River Insurance LLC
 503.703.6628
 Asking Price: \$449,000
 PIF: 1367 | Premium: \$1,519,000
Great location in the Columbia River Gorge with a perfect office location selling to both OR & WA.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia
Advantage Gold Insurance Associates LLC
 215.464.9979
 Asking Price: \$120,000 Negotiable
 PIF: 551 | Premium: \$783,631
May also purchase 1/2 ownership (half the price).

Philadelphia
D Lewis Insurance Agency
 215.356.9217
 Asking Price: \$1,200,000
 PIF 2995 | Premium: \$4,850,000
Loss ratio 44%, retention 90.7, office location/building available for purchase at a later date.

Robinson Township
Kocak Agency
 412.787.5141
 Asking Price: \$275,000
 PIF: 1090 | Premium: \$1,451,336
Current EA is willing to stay as LSP for short transition period to assist with retention.

Wyncote
Alex Schwartz Agency
 570.351.5242
 Asking Price: \$260,000 (Negotiable)
 PIF: 800 | Premium: \$1,500,000
Price negotiable. Lead system, warm introduction to customer base, and referrals. Turn key business.

SOUTH CAROLINA

York County
SAMM Business Marketing - Seller Rep
 855.306.8627
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 Premium: \$2,800,000
Broker representative. Contact SAMM Business Marketing at 855.306.8627 to start the process.

TENNESSEE

Chattanooga
Allstate Insurance Company - Phil Downey Agency
 423.894.9595
 Asking Price: \$355,000
 PIF: 1170 | Premium: \$1,552,463
92% rent. 26.4% L/R. 22+ year agent retiring. Purchased from 33+ year agent that started in sears.

Columbia
Mike Baltzer Agency
 931.381.6800
 Asking Price: \$325,000
 PIF: 1129 | Premium: \$1,536,747
I have been an agent with Allstate for 40 years and my retention ratio is 91.55%

McMinnville
Newby-Murray Agency
 931.473.2626
 Asking Price: \$425,000
 PIF: 1160 | Premium: \$1,600,000
Retention 5 year 88.34%. Loss ratio 28.05%.

TEXAS

Arlington
Lezlee Liljenberg Agency
 817.999.2463
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 Premium: \$1,250,000

Austin
Holley Insurance Agency
 512.942.9169
 Asking Price: \$550,000
 PIF: 1366 | Premium: \$2,172,592
Retention over 87%. Loss ratio 31.57%. A great book of business, it has been around for a while.

Cypress, Houston
Allstate Cypress, TX
 832.567.0906
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 PIF: 4045 | Premium: \$8,600,000
89% retention, great opportunity. High % of clients have been with agency 45+years. Top 10% in Nation.

Dallas
SAMM Business Marketing - Seller Rep
 855.306.8627
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 Premium: \$4,500,000
Broker representative. Contact SAMM Business Marketing at 855.306.8627 to start the process.

DFW
SAMM Business Marketing - Seller Rep
 855.306.8627
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 Premium: \$5,500,000
Broker representative. Contact SAMM Business Marketing at 855.306.8627 to start the process.

East Coast
Texas Allstate Agency - 2 Locations
 928.445.1144
 Asking Price: \$3,500,000
 Premium: \$10,331,270
\$10.3M book of business operated out of two locations. 89% retention. Gross Commissions \$1.1 million.

Killeen
SAMM Business Marketing - Seller Rep
 855.306.8627
 Reduced Price: \$850,000
 Premium: \$3,400,000
Broker representative. Contact SAMM Business Marketing at 855-306-8627 to start the process.

Magnolia
Marty Nelson
 281.989.6825
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 PIF: 2121 | Premium: \$5,300,000
25-year established agency. Fast growing area with lots of growth opportunity.

Mansfield
Lezlee Liljenberg Agency
 817.999.2463
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 Premium: \$4,400,000

Mesquite
SAMM Business Marketing - Seller Rep
 855.306.8627
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 Premium: \$2,300,000
Broker representative. Contact SAMM Business Marketing at 855.306.8627 to start the process.

Plano
The Tedesco Agency LLC
 972.985.5515
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 PIF: 1574 | Premium: \$3,362,207
Asking for closing date to be as soon as possible.

San Angelo
SAMM Business Marketing - Seller Rep
 855.306.8627
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 Premium: \$2,900,000
Broker representative. Contact SAMM Business Marketing at 855.306.8627 to start the process.

UTAH

Centerville
Wayne L Woolston
 801.292.9814
 Asking Price: \$600,000
 PIF: 1706 | Premium: \$2,223,723

WASHINGTON

Bellingham
State Street Insurance Richardson Agency Inc.
 360.676.1822
 Asking Price: \$325,000
 PIF: 1504 | Premium: \$1,634,000
*written \$1,612,000 EP
 42-year agent retiring. Agent owns building and could consider selling location separately.*

Kennewick
Whitney Insurance Group & Financial Services, Inc.
 509.735.3456
 Asking Price: \$238,000
 PIF: 1239 Premium: \$1,391,799
Services Washington and Oregon, located on the state border. Fast growing area with lots of growth opportunity.

WYOMING

Casper
Hepner Agency Inc.
 307.259.9792
 Asking Price: Negotiable
 PIF: 2,700 | Premium: \$3,600,000
23-year agency. 32 years' experience among staff. Great retention and L.R. Agent retiring.

NAPAA Leadership

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Tucson, AZ

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110 Horizon Drive, Suite 210

Raleigh, NC 27615

919-573-5025

919-459-2075 (fax)

www.napaaUSA.org/Feedback



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

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

NAPAA's Mission Statement

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

NAPAA's Goals

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

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

Our General Goals:

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

**For more information,
please visit
www.napaaUSA.org**



Fall 2020

this issue of

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- *Security of franchise laws to protect your investment in the agency*

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confidential meeting in your area:

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