

The NAAFA Report

Spring 2026

ALL INSURANCE SALES GROUPS

The young need the wisdom of the old.

The old need the eagerness of the young.

The tech-resistant need the skill of the tech savvy.

The Policy amateur needs the council of the Policy Expert.

WE ALL NEED EACH OTHER TO GROW.

ANY COMPANY THAT DOES NOT REALIZE THIS IS DESTINED FOR FAILURE.



SHOULD BE WELL BALANCED!

NAAFA, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose goal is to educate, communicate, and assist in eradicating all potential workplace harm and danger for our members. Most members are active or former agents of American Family Insurance Company, and all have a common goal of attempting to better the relationship between themselves, their clients, and the companies they work for.

Contact us at www.NAAFA.com, or NAAFAwest@comcast.net, or 763-208-0924.

NAAFA, Inc.
P.O. Box 578
Circle Pines, MN 55014

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Helping agents make it to the green.



Stuart Smith Insurance Agency commercial account manager Cole Smith and Smart Choice State Director Matt Milnor.

For this independent insurance agent and former college varsity player and tournament competitor, partnering with Smart Choice was a hole-in-one. As a third-generation independent insurance agent, Cole knows placing coverage for commercial accounts can be tricky. While other agents might turn down those clients, Cole finds a way to help them by leveraging the Smart Choice network.



"I know some of Smart Choice's competitors, they have a pay-to-play model that involves giving them a bunch of money up front. That might be worthwhile if those networks offered access to more carriers and better options, but from what I have seen, that's simply not the case. Some of them also have stipulations that can harm agencies - for example, requiring them to meet quotas or pay money back."



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Inc. Magazine has selected Smart Choice as a Power Partner award winner every year since the program's inception four years ago -- as a company devoted to providing agencies with the tools and resources they need to start, run, and grow their businesses. Smart Choice was the only insurance network to be recognized.

**Inc.
Power
Partner**
2025



From the NAAFA President's Desk.....

I hope you are ready for this because this is not a thumb-through-flip-the-page issue. Not only do we have several articles geared specifically to new agents, but we also have several articles geared to the long-time, more experienced agents. Another big difference in this issue is that we are including a lot of statistical articles such as *AmFam Corporate Salaries*, *AmFam's Financial Standing*, *AmFam's Rating*, *The 10 Largest Insurance Companies in the U.S.*, and *AmFam's Shifting Portfolio*, just to name a few. Get ready because you will want to pull out your rocking chair and get ready to read this issue over several sittings. Devour it entirely but just know that won't be possible all at once. *We have color coded in beautiful GREEN fonts the articles that are geared specifically to the newer agents while we portray in BLUE fonts the articles geared to the more experienced agents.* The rest of the articles pertain to all of us.

NAAFA wishes to welcome *new* members. And we also wish to thank our many faithful members. We simply would not exist without you. Do call our NAAFA office if you have any questions or comments. (763-208-0924)

Your NAAFA President

CONTENTS AT A GLANCE

TITLE	Page #
Who We Are	4
Why Join NAAFA	5
The Real Truth about Beneficiary Payouts	9
Gaslighting	10
It's called, Covering your Butt!!	11
Accomplishing Great Things at Any Age	12
Six Surefire Secrets for Agency Success	14
Are You Changing with the Times	18
AmFam's Shifting Portfolio	23
AmFam's CEO & Corporate Board Salaries	24
Is it Corporate Greed	27
What Captive Agents Should be Evaluating Right Now	28
The Dangers of QUOTAS	30
So, Do You Really Think AmFam Trusts its Agents	31
Wright Beamer Law Firm's Great Advice	32
American Family's Financial Standing	33
AmFam's Ranking	36
The 10 Largest Insurance Companies in the U.S.	38
I Don't Need No Stinkin' Insurance Agent + Turbo Tax Notice	40
Is Your Home Being Targeted for a Break-in	41
Is Relocation in Retirement for You	42
Finding Your Insurance Niche ASNOA	44
21 Insurance Sales Tips for Young Agents	46
Did You Know	49
Vietnam, Civil Rights, an AmFam Insurance Agency	51
At What Point Do Most New Captive Insurance Agents Fail	52
Man Charged w/DWI while Driving Lawnmower on Road	53
Look at All the Class Actions..and All for the Same Reason	54

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The NAAFA Report.....



WHO WE ARE

NAAFA, Inc. is a professional organization established to promote education and communication for and between both active and non-active American Family agents. NAAFA is the vehicle whereby agents can express their opinions openly and without judgment. Our desire is to be a vital active group who is interested in sharing experiences, knowledge, and recommendations with other agents, always encouraging, listening, and growing in ways that not only benefit the agents, but their businesses and customers as well.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

NAAFA, Inc. shall strive to provide professional fellowship by dedicating its activities to encouraging the highest degree of ethical service both to our members and to the insuring public. NAAFA, Inc. will support the strictest adherence to the integrity of its members as professional insurance agents. We will promote professional conduct, protect confidentiality, and protect the legislative interests of our members through awareness and understanding of the issues facing the independent contractor insurance agent in the American society.



SUPPORT NAAFA PAINLESSLY



The most painless way you can pay NAAFA membership dues is by the **monthly EFT method**. Most people do not miss the \$25.00 a month (\$13.00 if retired) that NAAFA deducts from the account of your choice around the 20th of the month. Some agents add an extra \$5 or \$10 a month to be donated to the NAAFA Database Website (NDW) Fund or the Member Enhancement Fund (NMEF). It's all so easy. Open your account now by sending your check for \$25.00 (\$13.00 if retired) to:

NAAFA, PO Box 578, Circle Pines, MN 55014.

IF YOU HAVE MOVED, please inform us of your **CHANGE OF ADDRESS!!**

Contact us at: (763)208-0924
Or mail us at: NAAFA, Inc.

Email us at: NAAFAwest@comcast.net
PO Box 578, Circle Pines, MN 55014



Directly to Members...Directly from NAAFA is NAAFA's direct and fastest informational pipeline to our members. Check www.NAAFA.com often for members-only updates. (Password needed.)

The NAAFA Mailbox in the NAAFA Report lets you **sound off**. NAAFA never identifies you unless you ask to be identified, but we must know your identity, or we will not post your message. If you want your message read or heard, send it to naafawest@comcast.net. This is your VOICE!

NAAFA, Inc. DISCLAIMER

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WHY JOIN NAAFA?



Sometimes agents ask themselves, “*Is it worth it to become a member of NAAFA? What will I get out of it? Will I get into trouble with the company if I do?*” Let us remind you that you’re the loser if you don’t join NAAFA. Our eagle emblem reminds us that as members, we are wise as eagles. Here are some of the benefits of NAAFA membership:

- Access to a network of business professionals, i.e. board members, agents who’ve ‘*been through it before,*’ agents from other agent associations, accountants, etc.
- Access to industry information via our website (www.NAAFA.com)
- Opinions on agents’ contracts
- Safety tips for agency transition (when and if it becomes necessary)
- Attorney referrals
- Access to updates on legal cases of Agents vs AmFam
- SECA Kit tax guide and access to accountants with experience. Just knowing how to properly file your termination benefits is worth thousands of dollars. Assistance when there is an inquiry.
- Assistance at termination and the guidance in getting started in the independent world, should you desire to do so.
- Information regarding “do I need legal assistance?”
- Access to NAAFA’s document library
- Access to member-side of www.NAAFA.com
- Access to legal opinions when necessary
- Assistance with important documents needed in case of a trial

NAAFA, INC. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I, the undersigned, hereby apply for membership in NAAFA, Inc. (National Association of America’s Finest Agents) and I certify that I will always uphold and support the mission and goals of the organization to the best of my ability.

*NAME _____ *HOME ADDRESS _____

*CITY _____ *STATE _____ *ZIP CODE _____

*Cell _____ Office Phone _____

*Personal Email _____

*SIGNATURE _____ *Date _____

*This information is required

DUES: Active-annual \$300 | Semi-annual \$154 | EFT Active \$25
Non-AmFam Agent annual \$156 | EFT Non-active \$13

DONATIONS: SECA Kit \$500 _____ NDW Fund _____ NMEF Fund _____

PAYMENT OPTIONS: **Check** Payable to NAAFA, PO Box 578, Circle Pines, MN 55014

EFT: Active send check for \$25 | Inactive AmFam Agent send check for \$13

Credit Card: www.NAAFA.com, click JOIN NAAFA tab & pay by Credit Card or Electronic Check

[Membership dues & donation records are kept strictly confidential. Dues and donations are not deductible as a charitable contribution. Annual dues may, however, be deductible as a business expense.]

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PO Box 578
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Email: NAAFAwest@comcast.net
Website: www.NAAFA.com

GUIDELINES FOR SECA KIT AVAILABILITY

**To all members and their accountants:
THE CONTENTS OF THE SECA KIT ARE CONFIDENTIAL!**

The SECA Kit was updated on January 15, 2021, but updated MEMOs regarding tax issues are issued annually. *We will be updating the 2021 version of the SECA Kit this summer (2026).* In fact, we are planning a SECA Kit for each of the last three contracts, the 1993, the 2019, and the 2014 contracts.

NAAFA will post on www.NAAFA.com when the new SECA Kits are ready. Those with active memberships who have received kits in the past should contact the NAAFA office to receive the updated kit. The success of this kit has been invaluable. As most of you know, the SECA Kit is just one of the benefits of being a NAAFA member. Any members who leave American Family (and qualify for Termination Benefits) should have the Kit *before* filing their taxes the first time. Understanding how and why you file as you do could save you thousands of dollars in penalties and fines by the IRS.

At issue with NAAFA has been the fact that some agents wait until *after they retire* to join NAAFA and ask for the Kit. NAAFA feels that members deserve the benefits of the Kit only if they have supported NAAFA for a number of years. We want to encourage agents to support NAAFA during their active years with the company. We need your support. It costs NAAFA hundreds of dollars and hours of time to produce and update the kit. It is only fair that NAAFA be reimbursed for this expense by your loyalty and longevity.

As a result, NAAFA asks for a donation of \$500 for the Kit unless a member has had 3 full years of continuous (no lapse) membership. After the three full years of membership, the Kit is free. A new member (whether active or retired) would pay the first year's active membership rate (\$300) up front, and then the kit would immediately be available for the donation of \$500. Or the new member who pays dues either *monthly* or *semi-annually* would have to wait until the beginning of the second year to become eligible to receive the Kit after donating \$500. You must have a personal email address to receive the SECA Kit. SECA Kit donations are non-refundable.

One of our biggest concerns is the confidentiality of our SECA Kit. Occasionally we hear of agents who beg NAAFA members to give them a copy of the SECA Kit. We are extremely thankful that for the most part, our members are faithful in honoring this confidentiality. We have stated over and over that the contents are confidential and must only to be shared with our member's personal accountant. We have also stated to the accountants that they are only to use the SECA Kit if given to them by a NAAFA member agent. In most cases, accountants have honored the confidentiality of the kit.

**REMEMBER, THE NAAFA SECA KIT IS A
PROPRIETARY DOCUMENT
AND OUR ATTORNEY SUGGESTS YOU
TREAT IT AS SUCH!**



As a NAAFA member, you deserve all the benefits of being a member, and the Kit is just- one- of- them.

JOIN **NAAFA** TODAY! URGE OTHERS TO JOIN **NAAFA**!! LET'S ALL BE PREPARED!

THE NAAFA MAILBOX

(Now isn't that about the prettiest NAAFA Mailbox
you've ever seen??)

NAAFA MAILBOX Letter #1

Subject: Praises for Mary Kate and NAAFA

Received 3/24/25 from Robert Mickelson (Name used with permission)

Hello NAAFA,

Hope you are doing well! Busy no doubt! Just had the *best* meeting with Mary Kate...first one. We are fortunate to have her work on our behalf - and you, of course.

Thanks again!

Editorial comment: For those who don't know who Mary Kate is, she's the author of our SECA Kit and on staff with the Haga Kommer Accounting Firm in Spring Lake Park, MN. Contact NAAFA if you want her direct contact information.



MAILBOX LETTER #2

Subject: Please remove me from your mailing list

Hi NAAFA:

I appreciate all you do and after spending 2 hours devouring this NAAFA Report, I'd like to change my request and ask you to keep me on your mailing list. Independence has been such a great change. It's so good to *actually own my agency*. There are more challenges now than ever, but I get to meet it head on as the real agent/owner with many options/companies and not as a puppet for a captive-heartless company. The best thing that ever happened to my business was to part ways with AmFam 11 years ago. What a blessing, even though it hurt so at the time.

You do such a nice job keeping this relevant - excellent material.

Thanks for all you do, and I hope you're doing well.

Name withheld

MAILBOX LETTER #3

Subject: Associations in and around AmFam

NAAFA recently received the following from an active AmFam agent. He said his email was going to describe some of the 'associations' that American Family is endorsing. Hmm...interesting! Wonder if they'll ever endorse NAAFA. Our opinion is that any organization that helps its members become more successful is itself successful. Here is what the agent said:

“This is what has been happening at American Family lately. I believe there were two predecessor associations before Korsgaden. First there was AFBOA which we're told signed up 1500+ members. This first organization launched telling AmFam agents they could join for free. Next, if these new members wanted any of the advertised benefits, they had to pay \$400 to join a second association (The Agents First Alliance) and that allowed them to buy (among other

Continued next page

things) health insurance and long-term care insurance (I believe). Now it seems that second association has closed because it appears they joined this Korsgaden group. I see there is a Farmers agent involved (maybe the owner??) and several former AmFam people. Just thought you'd like to know about this. **Still think NAAFA's the best.**

Name Withheld

MAILBOX LETTER #4

Subject: Follow the Email Trail!!

Email trail starts here:

March 26, 2025

Just wanted to let you know our business policy went up 10%. Guess that isn't too bad, however, we have had no claims.

March 30, 2025

Hey,
10% is good. My truck premium just doubled....damn American Family...I am shopping...1st time in 35 years.

March 30, 2025

Are you kidding me? Doubled? Unreal!

March 30, 2025

Yep...doubled...why????
Because they canceled my Homeowners policy...why???...Fire area....Town Class 5...California fires killing anybody in a fire area...A**h***'s I don't hate anybody...but do AMFAM....my agent wouldn't even return my calls....goodbye 30 year friendship.....

Anonymous but guaranteed true!

MAILBOX LETTER #5

Subject: Do you have \$500,000 in retirement?

Hi NAAFA,

I know you have often suggested we have 15 to 17 times our annual expenses saved up before we even think of retiring. I sort of shrunk up when you told me that. But I was dinging around with AI the other day and guess what he said? Here it is...

“Around 7% to 9% of American households have \$500,000 or more in retirement savings, though this varies by age, with older groups more likely to reach this milestone; for example, about 9% of households overall had over \$500k saved in 2022, while a specific analysis found only 7.2% had reached that level as of late 2025. While averages are higher (e.g., over \$500k for ages 55-64), medians are lower, showing that many have significantly less, making \$500,000 a notable achievement.”

Then AI hit me with some more numbers. Here it is....

How many Americans have \$1,000,000 in retirement savings?

“Only a small percentage of Americans, around 3-4%, retire with \$1 million or more in retirement accounts, though estimates vary slightly. While many people aim for this "magic number," the reality is that most retirees have significantly less, with the average savings for households aged 65-74 being much lower, around \$609,000 (average) or \$200,000 (median) in retirement funds.”

Gosh, I don't know what to think? Can you imagine that very many AmFam agents have \$500,000 in the bank when they retire? Let alone how many have \$1,000,000?

AmFam's got to lower those rates so I can make some more money before I go.

Name Withheld

www.NAAFA.com

The *Real Truth* about Beneficiary Payouts Your Spouse/Survivor will receive at your Death

NAAFA has dealt with this issue several times in the past, but we have felt a great need recently to update our information and advice on the subject of 'what an agent's beneficiary gets if the agent dies'. Many agents have a misconception of just what happens, how it happens, and when it happens until our office goes over it, hopefully before the agent retires. In the following article, we try to cover some of the issues active agents

Nobody wants to think about losing a mate. It's sure to be a dramatic change in the survivor's life. Many agents don't really prepare their survivors for what is to come, leaving them vulnerable and lost. One of the most important things couples can do to prepare (God forbid) for that inevitable day is to do some good estate planning.

Do you have a will and/or a trust? That should be number one on your list of to-dos. Everyone needs a will, at the very least, and it would be good to do it earlier rather than later. Having a *revocable living trust* keeps the settlement of your estate out of the probate courts. Things can be settled much quicker and the value of your estate kept out of the public's view. A trust usually cuts down drastically on legal expenses at the time of death. Do contact a reliable estate planning attorney who can create the trusts for you and your spouse. It is wise to get a quote beforehand for how much the attorney will charge to complete your trusts. Let your family know where your trusts are kept and what attorney is handling it. NAAFA always says, "BE PREPARED."

NAAFA has heard from several spouses of deceased agents. There seems to be a couple of issues these survivors bring up to this office. We believe all agents should explain exactly what their survivors will receive. But what we actually find is that agents are lacking in understanding of actually how much their survivors will receive should they die before receiving all their termination benefits. Let's talk about a couple of the issues:

- 1) Your contract says *the company will pay you, over a 10-year period, the amount of your renewals at the time your contract ends. If you die during that 10-year period, the company agrees to pay your beneficiary the **present value** of this 10-year obligation.* Now many agents think "present value" simply means what's left of your termination benefits at the time of your death. NOT SO! **Present value** actually refers to an accounting formula whereby the company decides to **reduce** the remainder to be paid in a lump sum because they can no longer earn investment income on your benefits. For many years, the company used a 5.9% interest rate in this formula. **The higher the interest rate, the less the beneficiary gets!** After a successful write-in campaign by NAAFA members a few years ago, the company agreed to re-evaluate the interest rate quarterly and set it according to what's current. NAAFA appreciates that AmFam made this adjustment.
- 2) The second great hardship on survivors is the fact that AmFam pays the balance of Termination Benefits in *one lump sum*. Initially, this sounds good, but what a

single payment does is push the widow/beneficiary into a much higher tax bracket for the year the lump sum was received. For example, let's suppose the termination benefit balance left at the time of death was approximately \$225,000. American Family will reduce that amount to about \$185,000 by using the present value formula. Uncle Sam comes along and takes about \$50,000 to \$60,000 more for taxes. This leaves the widow with about \$125,000 or about half of what she thought she was going to get.

NAAFA has suggested many times that it would be kind to any agent's survivor to have a choice about whether to take the death benefit payout in a **lump sum or to take it in 2 or 3 "yearly" payments**. Dividing the death benefit over 2 or 3 yearly payments would drastically reduce the amount of taxes due the IRS. It should be noted that the 1993, the 2009 and the 2014 contracts all call for a *lump sum payout to beneficiaries* even though the agent's payout period varies from contract to contract.

This office has empathized with several widows over the years who had depended upon this money to live on. Many of them worked in their husband's (wife's) agencies themselves. It's sad that these faithful spouses are treated the way they are. In fact, it's shameful. But about the only one who can do anything about it is American Family.

You may already know that there has been another class action recently filed regarding the amount the beneficiary receives at the time of an agent's death. It is the **Princeton Bojar v AmFam** case. The original summons was approved on 2/12/2026 and now the case will move forward through the courts. Note: Only agents under the 1993 contract who qualify for lifetime benefits can be part of this class action. For more information, visit Message #156 on the member side of www.NAAFA.com in the Directly to Members...Directly from NAAFA column.

We know AmFam can easily make this payout change. It would simply require a short amendment to each of the contracts, something they've done several times over the years. Since the number of agents who are within that 10-year beneficiary payout period is so great right now, this suggestion is more important than ever. If the company could just see fit to honor their agents, this would be a good way to do it. **Please do your part to encourage the company to make these changes....and do it soon!** 🙏

Submitted by NAAFA Board Members



GASLIGHTING...Would you recognize if it were happening to you?

The effects of gaslighting on you can cause you to think you are worthless, crazy, unable to make good decisions or make good choices, question your own sanity, and even wonder what's real or not. Over time, the gaslit person could become unable to function, withdraw, lose all confidence in oneself.

A gaslighter will tell you your memory of events is wrong. Gaslighters make you feel everything is your fault, including how the gaslighter is acting toward you. Gaslighters tell you you're overacting, too sensitive, too insecure.

Eventually, gaslighters can make you lose interest in your work because you're not as good at it as you used to be. You apologize to your gaslighter even though you don't think you've done anything wrong. And yes, eventually, unless you do something about it, you could find yourself simply withdrawing into a corner.

Without going too deeply into *why* a person gaslights, it is good to recognize that particularly in the world of sales, people might gaslight you to take over your position. They might want you 'gone.' Or they might enjoy seeing others laugh at your ineptness. Gaslighters love to blame others. They love to inflict emotional pain...it gives them a feeling of power, of control.

So, what is a person supposed to do about it if they suspect they are the victim of gaslighting? First of all, you need to be sure. The Cleveland Clinic has a useful quiz you can take to help you determine if what you are going through is truly gaslighting. Click here to take the quiz: <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/gaslighting-quiz>

For now, here's just a few ideas that might help you identify and even avoid being trapped by gaslighters.

- 1) ***Don't let yourself fall into their trap.*** Dr. Chivonna Childs says that "A fire cannot burn if there's not fuel." "They can't fight if there's no one to fight with." 'It takes two to tango' as the saying goes, so first try letting the gaslighter know he's guilty of the act. It will startle him. Bullies usually only pick on people who allow the bullying. Saying, especially in front of others, "Wow, are you trying to gaslight me?" Some therapists advise simply leaving the scene, but before you do, it's advisable to call out their gaslighting, letting them know they are *not* going to get by with it.
- 2) ***Turn the tables*** and suggest the gaslighter get some help. You might just be doing this person a favor as it is noted that often those guilty of gaslighting don't realize it. A therapist can help the gaslighter figure out why he's gaslighting, something that may have happened to him in the past.
- 3) Make it a habit of ***'taking care of yourself.'*** Many of us dread the thought of exercising, but some kind of a regular exercise regime can do a lot to get your endorphins going. Chair exercises are becoming more popular all the time, and you can do them at home or even in your office. Do some deep breathing, learn to laugh, especially with a good friend. Even dark chocolate can release endorphins. Exercise and be happy!
- 4) And above all, don't let lapses discourage you. Gaslighters love to see you giving up. To them, it means they've won the game. You can win this gaslighter game and your gaslighter needs to know it. Learning the techniques to "turn their gas lines off" will enable you to emerge the winner! YEAH!! ✂

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/gaslighting>

It's Called, "Covering your Butt!!"

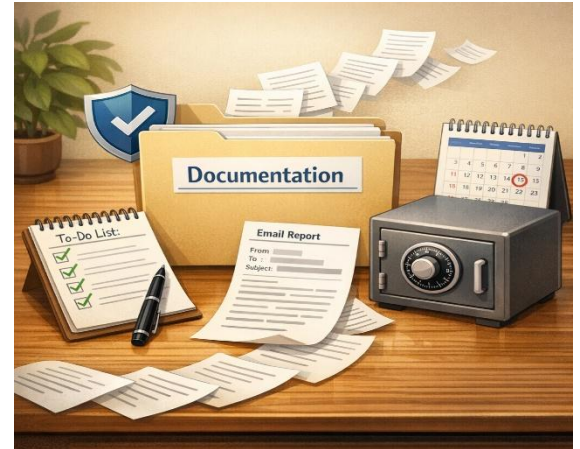
Submitted by NAAFA Board Member

Scenario Examples:

- You were promised 1000 transfer policies by your district manager, but it didn't happen. Can you *prove* you were promised these policies?
- You are being accused of something you know you didn't do. What should your response be?

One of the first things a sharp new insurance agent learns is to **document everything**. Just how do you do that? Well, there are several ways. Here are a few:

- 1) First, develop a file for safe keeping such as a fireproof safe. Amazon sells many in a range of prices. Categorize carefully so you can locate quickly what you're looking for.
- 2) Record, record, record! Visit the member side of www.naafa.com, *Miscellaneous Items of Interest*, and then "*Tape Recording Laws by State*" to see recording rules for all states. Some states are "only one needs to know" and others are "all parties being recorded must be informed." Know what the rules are for your state. And then abide by them.
- 3) SpyGuy.com. This website sells the most unique recording paraphernalia and other equipment that might be useful. For instance, how to know if you are being recorded or observed. Visit it today.
- 4) Get what's promised either in writing, in an email, or record it being said.
- 5) Follow up email, phone conversations, or meetings with an email outlining what was discussed. If your memory of a situation is different from what the presenter said, then you need to get that in writing for clarification purposes.
- 6) Have specific dos and don'ts in your own life. In other words, I'd never do that or I always do that!! Make good habits a habit. Always practice ethical behavior. Always act professionally. Learn to listen!
- 7) Don't make fast decisions. Respond with "let me think that over" or "I'll call you tomorrow with my decision."
- 8) Don't get defensive with any accusation. Defensiveness implies guilt! If the criticism has some truth to it, however, acknowledge it, followed by "I can see how you might feel that way."
- 9) Be careful with your tone of voice. If you are calm but your accuser is not, explain that "I'm willing to talk, but I need for us to be respectful of one another." Set boundaries. Then have the discussion.
- 10) Although it might be difficult, learn to limit your interaction with any accuser. Continuing such a relationship tends to escalate the situation.



NAAFA membership is made up of many mature, experienced, and successful agents. If you are a newer agent, seek out those experienced agents and try to adopt one of them as your mentor. Most are willing to share their experiences with you and are honored to be considered your mentor. What a great learning experience. 🦋

Companies tell agents what the company **WANTS** you to know.

Your Association tells you what you **NEED** to know.

JOIN NAAFA TODAY!

ACCOMPLISHING GREAT THINGS AT ANY AGE

Is it possible?

WHICH OF OUR GREAT FOREFATHERS WAS OVER 70

WHEN THEY ACCOMPLISHED GREAT THINGS?

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) was 70 when he signed the Declaration of Independence. He was 79 when he became Governor of Pennsylvania.

Anna Mary Robertson Moses (Grandma Moses) started her professional painting career at age 76, becoming a beloved and prolific folk artist.

John Glenn became the oldest person to travel to space at age 77.

Colonel Harland Sanders launched Kentucky Fried Chicken at age 65, at a time when he was financially broke. By 73 he was a global icon.

Frank Lloyd Wright peaked in architecture in his 70s.

Pablo Picasso at 87 created 347 engravings in a single year.

Peter Mark Roget began compiling his famous thesaurus at age 70, publishing Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases in 1852.

Winston Churchill was age 77 at the beginning of his second term as British Prime Minister.

Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first black President when he was 77.

Paul Siromoni, after retiring, pursued his PhD and received his doctorate at age 90.

Laura Ingalls Wilder published her first book at age 64.

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE WHO ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS

BEFORE THE AGE OF 30?

Alexander the Great conquered vast lands from Greece to India by the age of 18.

Albert Einstein published 5 groundbreaking papers on relativity at the age of 26.

Joan of Arc convinced French leadership to grant her a military role at 17, leading her country to crucial victories.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart composed his first symphony at age 8.

Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Italy by age 26.

George Washington was a land surveyor in his teens. At 22 as a Major in the U.S. Military, he led an attack on the French that triggered the Seven Years' War. He was made commander of all Virginia troops at age 23, was elected to the House of Burgesses at age 26 which launched his political career. He didn't become President until he was nearly 60 years old, however.

John F. Kennedy became US President at age 43.

Betsy Ross designed the American flag at age 24.

Continued next page



The moral of the story here is that creativity and great accomplishments can happen at any age.

It does seem that in today's world, the credibility of people over the age of 60 is greatly diminished. With many, it is a mindset, and as a result, such individuals look at senior aged people as stupid, unimportant, and worthy only to be ignored. It's sad because we can definitely prove that great things were accomplished by people over the age of even 70, as noted above.

Let us not ignore, however, the accomplishments of the very young. Technology today is conquered most often by people under the age of 20. Why? Because they have grown up in the modern electronic world. They have had constant exposure to it, they have adapted to it, they have developed skills and brought forth new ideas in a field that is totally foreign to those in the 40-and-up age bracket.

Recognizing that we need people of all ages, wouldn't it be a great idea to recognize and praise the skill of people of all ages? At NAAFA, we recognize the importance of younger agents who have sometimes been brought in to run very large agencies. But we also recognize the

importance of mature and more experienced AmFam agents. It is our opinion that American Family really needs agents in all age brackets. *It is not the age that determines success, it is the attitude and drive of each individual.* Often customers will seek out agents they feel they can relate to. They look for agents who can understand and respect their own personal needs. A wise company will seek to employ a good cross-section of agents if it wants to maintain its success.

What in the world is happening at American Family? Why are so many senior aged agents leaving American Family? Do younger agents wish to learn from these senior aged agents? What can senior aged agents learn from the younger ones? Should the seniors be advising these younger agents? Is there a concern in Madison about the state of mind of the agency force? Does it even matter to them?

NAAFA is making a whole-hearted attempt to attract the attention of the younger agents. Why? Because we not only feel we have a lot of knowledge and experience we'd like to share with them, but we know they have a lot of information and knowledge they can share with us. For years, some AmFam management people were advising the newer/younger agents to stay away from senior agents. They were also advised to stay away from NAAFA. Why?

We at NAAFA believe most people capable of running an agency are also capable of looking at both sides of any issue and determining which side is correct for them. We also believe it is wrong to "hide the other side" from people. A good education in all issues enables us to make wise decisions. Wise decisions are the basis of all successful businesses. Don't hide the truth from me and I won't run from it. We all need the TRUTH. It is the TRUTH that sets you free. (John 8:32) Young agents, NAAFA can help you know the truth by exposing you to both sides of the issues. JOIN TODAY. ✂



IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING YOUR ACCOUNTANT!!

NAAFA has a reference list (for our NAAFA members) of accountants who have had experience in preparing taxes for retired American Family agents, but we'd like to add more accountants to the list. As you know, active agent taxes are filed much differently than retired agent taxes are. PLEASE, if your accountant would like to be placed on our list, then please forward your accountant's name, address, phone number, email address or website. There would be no advertising charge to your accountant because this list will only be available to our NAAFA members.

Please note that on the member side of www.NAAFA.com, we have such a list of attorneys, and our members have commented often about how glad they are we provide this list. Send accountant information to: NAAFAwest@comcast.net or NAAFA, Inc., PO Box 578, Circle Pines, MN 55014.

6 Surefire Secrets for Agency Success

SMART CHOICE

The key to agency success shouldn't be kept secret. Everyone who owns an agency – or who's even thinking about doing so – should know the best ways to win clients, fuel growth, and achieve profitability. The problem? Even though some agency owners have cracked the code, they're not passing it on. How else can you explain the fact that so few agencies are doing the six things they need to do to achieve profitable growth? Some agencies stick with one or two of these strategies, but to maximize success, you must consistently execute all six.



Secret #1: Never Stop Learning

As an insurance agent, you're not just competing against other captive and independent insurance agents – you're also competing against direct-to-consumer insurance websites that make it easy for your prospects to buy their own coverage.

Why should policyholders come to you for their coverage needs? Because you're an expert.

You know the ins and outs of insurance and can help your clients protect their assets. From making personalized policy recommendations to giving a heads-up when industry trends may spell trouble, you've got your clients' backs.

Simply being licensed to sell insurance is just the starting point – not a guarantee of success. The more you know about insurance and risk management, the better positioned you are to help your clients. Show your clients that you deserve their business by pursuing ongoing education.



THERE ARE THREE MAIN PATHS TO EXPANDING YOUR KNOWLEDGE.

- **Traditional Degree Programs** You don't need a college degree to sell insurance, but it doesn't hurt. A degree earns you respect, which helps you earn clients. If the degree is in a relevant field, it will also help you do your job better.
- **A bachelor's degree in risk management** provides a solid foundation for an insurance career. Many colleges and universities offer this degree, although it's sometimes called a bachelor's in risk management and insurance. It may be a BA or BS. According to the University of Colorado Denver, their program can help you "to become a leader in identifying, analyzing, and managing risks that organizations face daily." St. John's University says its program "teaches students the skills necessary to master the financial, legal, and economic theories at the heart of corporate risk management."
- **A master's degree in business administration (MBA)** is another great option. While this degree is not geared toward insurance specifically, it can help insurance leaders learn strategies to run their businesses more effectively. An MBA may also help you better understand the needs of the commercial clients you serve – and the MBA designation may look especially impressive to them.

Specialized Insurance Education While a degree program gives you foundational knowledge, specialized insurance education gives you the in-depth knowledge you need to succeed. In most cases, continuing education is necessary to comply with state licensing requirements. However, agents may want to go beyond these basic requirements by expanding into a new line or tackling an emerging risk. In those cases, a short program will help you move forward with confidence.

- **The Institutes Designations** provide a wide range of programs that will help you advance your career, including the well-respected CPCU designation.
- **IRMI** offers extensive professional development and certification opportunities.
- The **Big "I" Virtual University** provides training designed for insurance professionals, whether they're new to the industry or highly experienced.

Industry and Niche Market Trends In addition to formal education, it's important to keep up with current news and industry trends. Otherwise, you may miss key developments that put your clients at risk. This will also give you the insights you need to make smart business decisions that will help you grow your agency.

You'll learn a lot by reading articles, downloading white papers, watching videos, and participating in events:

- Stay apprised of insurance rate trends by downloading the latest reports from CIAB and reading the Market Barometers by MarketScout.
- Get the latest insurance news by subscribing to e-newsletters from insurance publications, such as the Insurance Journal.
- Follow insurance industry publications on your social media channels.
- Attend industry webinars for more in-depth information. There are many options, including from AM Best, NAIC, and The Institutes.
- Subscribe to news sources within your focus industry niches – like trucking or nonprofits, for example. This will help you stay on top of breaking developments, and your clients will be impressed that you know what's happening in their industries.

Secret #2: Continuously Generate New Leads

Growth requires lead generation, which is the process of building interest in your business to create a constant pipeline of potential clients. There are multiple ways to approach lead generation, including the following.

Purchase Leads You can buy leads from vendors like EverQuote. When you pay for leads, it's important to consider the quality of the lead as well as the price. Poorly vetted leads may come cheap, but they'll be a waste of your time and result in few sales.

Optimize Your Website with Local SEO When people buy insurance, they may go online to explore their options. To capture this market, you need a well-designed, informational website that leverages search engine optimization (SEO). In particular, you should focus on local SEO – both because insurance products are highly localized and because trying to target a national audience will put you up against too much competition. Local SEO involves using keywords that are relevant to your location as well as using customer reviews and a Google Business Profile.

Stay Active in Your Local Community and on social media When you're active in your community, by sponsoring a local team, volunteering at the food bank, or participating in the Chamber of Commerce, people start to recognize your business name. If you encourage them to follow you online, and you consistently post to your social media feeds, you can maintain top-of-mind awareness with these community members throughout the year. When these buyers have a need, they will be more likely to reach out to you.

Build Relationships with Centers of Influence A center of influence is a business that complements your own, such as an accountant, a realtor, a car dealership, or a financial planner. These are informal reciprocal referral relationships – meaning you tell your clients about them, and they tell their clients about you. A personal recommendation is a powerful way to instantly earn trust with prospective clients.

Engage a Local Ad Agency An ad agency can help you create an effective marketing plan. Although this is an investment, it should lead to a good return by helping you achieve local brand awareness. When evaluating ad agencies, carefully consider the types of support they offer. Some ad agencies provide a wide range of services, while others offer more specialized support.

Secret #3: Maintain Low Overhead Costs

Low overhead is a secret that many agency owners often overlook. Once agency owners experience some success, they often rush to upgrade their office space or to expand their number of locations. Sometimes these moves pay off, but in many instances, they result in thin profit margins. After all, the higher your expenses are, the harder you must work to earn a profit. Plus, if your operating expenses are too high, you may lack the flexibility to take advantage of opportunities. With this secret in mind, here are some tips to help you keep your overhead low.

Hire Judiciously Employees can quickly increase your overhead with salaries, benefits and payroll taxes. Before making a new hire, make sure your cashflow can easily cover the added monthly costs. Ask yourself if there is any other way to get the support you need. For example, if you need bookkeeping, HR or marketing help, is there an outsourced option that would be a cost-effective alternative to hiring an employee? If you need an insurance agent or an executive, would a 1099 consultant, or a fractional executive make more sense than hiring a full-time employee? Sometimes, hiring is the best decision, provided you've done your due diligence and explored all your options.

Buy and Lease Cautiously Whether you're leasing office space and vehicles or buying office equipment, always consider a variety of options before making a selection that will lock you into higher overhead costs for years to come. Will a swanky office location really be pivotal to your growth? Do you need to spend \$100,000 on office furnishings, or would the \$60,000 option be sufficient? In the heat of the moment, the most luxurious option often seems essential. Two years later, when that expensive choice is eating into your overhead, you might wish you had made a different decision.

Leverage Existing Contacts for Lead Opportunities Sometimes it makes sense to buy leads to grow your business. But, before you hand over your hard-earned dollars, see how many leads you can gain through networking. Leads that come through local contacts,

such as your existing clients or centers of influence, are especially valuable. These individuals may be more likely to do business with you if they're referred to you by someone they already know. Put yourself out there and see what you can find.

Avoid Unnecessary Fees If you decide to join an insurance network or a professional association, be cautious of the fees involved. These relationships can pay off if the fees aren't excessive. Some networks charge startup fees, monthly fees, and exit fees. Avoid committing to these types of arrangements – hold out for a flexible, no-fee option.

Tap into Group Savings Opportunities If you need technology, HR, or marketing services, be sure to check with your insurance network or professional association to see if they've already vetted solutions and negotiated a membership price. Avoid reinventing the wheel. Talk to others and select tried and proven partners – preferably with group savings opportunities.

Secret #4: Choose a Smart Location

Where you set up shop may have a huge impact on your agency's long-term success. Size isn't the only thing that matters. It's true that there will be more opportunities in a large city. However, there will also be more competition. In addition to size and prospective competitors, take a close look at the area's population trends.

• **Is the city growing rapidly?** Perfect! There will be lots of people who have just moved into the area and need homeowners' insurance. There will also be lots of people who are opening up new businesses and need commercial insurance.

• **Is the city in decline?** A declining population means you won't have a lot of new opportunities to sell personal or commercial insurance. Your client list may shrink over time, no matter how hard you work. To make matters worse, agencies that are already established will likely have already claimed the business that currently exists.

BEST COUNTIES FOR POPULATION GROWTH

These counties experienced the greatest numeric growth between July 1, 2023, and July 1, 2024, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- Harris County, Texas: +105,852
- Miami-Dade County, Florida: +64,211
- Maricopa County, Arizona: +57,471
- Collin County, Texas: +46,694
- Clark County, Nevada: +44,586
- King County, Washington: +43,398
- Cook County, Illinois: +40,095
- Broward County, Florida: +34,686
- Montgomery County, Texas: +34,268
- Tarrant County, Texas: +32,793

WORST COUNTIES FOR POPULATION GROWTH

These counties experienced the greatest numeric decrease between July 1, 2023, and July 1, 2024, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- Shelby County, Tennessee: -3,379
- St. Louis City, Missouri: -3,077
- Hinds County, Mississippi: -2,542
- Orleans Parish, Louisiana: -2,466
- Clayton County, Georgia: -1,677
- Humboldt County, California: -1,629
- Yazoo County, Mississippi: -1,579
- Caddo Parish, Louisiana: -1,567
- Pinellas County, Florida: -1,431
- Santa Cruz County, California: -1,29

Secret #5: Leverage Local Support from a National Network

Sometimes, it's good to be local. Other times, it pays to have the resources of a national organization. As an independent agency, you can have the best of both worlds by drawing on local support from a national network.

A network with a nationwide presence will offer the following:

Superior Carrier Access Many agents join networks because they need carrier access, however not all networks are created equal. A large, nationwide network will likely open the door to a broader range of markets. This means you can give your clients the best options – which will help you win and retain business.

“Over the past eight years, Smart Choice has continually expanded our network of carriers and market partners, strengthening our value proposition. As the market has hardened in the last two years, agents have increasingly turned to us for support” -Hank Stonesifer Smart Choice Territory Manager, Florida.

Leverage When Dealing with Carriers Accessing carriers is only half the challenge – you also need to negotiate the best deals. Individual agents often don't have the leverage they need to negotiate, and small or regional networks might not be much better.

“Being part of a network like Smart Choice gives us a significant advantage. There's real power in numbers. For instance, at the national level, we've been able to negotiate better deals and secure benefits that individual agents might not access on their own. The strength of our brand also helps when dealing with carriers.” -Kurt Van Sickle Smart Choice State Director, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho

Support for Expanding into Additional States Even if you start out in just one state, you may decide to expand into other states later. Regional networks may be unable to grow with you, but a national network will continue to provide support no matter how big you grow. With the right network support, expanding into new states may be easier than you think. Hundley Batts Jr., president at HB2 Insurance Services, runs his insurance agency out of his home – but, thanks to network support, this doesn't limit him. "I write all over the country, thanks to Smart Choice," he says.

Valuable Support A large, national network will offer the resources your agency needs to grow, but it's the local team members who will make sure you actually receive those resources. Having a regional contact is critical to ensure you don't get lost in the shuffle.

"Ultimately, the freedom that Smart Choice offers is unparalleled. You have the autonomy to grow your business in all 50 states, and the support to compete effectively." -Mike Miller Smart Choice State Director
"What's unique about Smart Choice is how we support our agencies, setting us apart from the competition. We help agencies increase revenue, whether by aggregating dollars, negotiating better commission rates, or offering backend incentives. But, it's more than just that – market access and the hands-on support from our team are key differentiators. We act as consultants for your agency without the added cost." -Chris Reisdorf Smart Choice State Director

Secret #6: Tap Into Mentor Resources

As your agency grows, you will undoubtedly encounter new challenges. Even agents with decades of experience may need support as they tackle new lines or take on particularly difficult accounts. That's why it's essential to have mentors you can lean on for support.

Mentors help in two critical ways. First, if you know you have mentors who can help, you're more likely to take on new challenges and grow your agency. Many agents avoid the excess and surplus market – or even all commercial lines – because they feel intimidated by it. Mentors can provide the support you need to push yourself. Second, when you decide to take on new challenges, mentors can give you the guidance you need to succeed. Whether you're trying to place difficult accounts or avoid problems, mentorship is invaluable.

There are several ways to access mentor resources:

- Affinity Associations: If you're a member of affinity associations like LAAIA and NAAIA, see what resources are available. If you're not a member, this may be a reason to join.
- Retired Agents: Agents who have retired may be willing to share their secrets to success now that they no longer have to worry about competition.
- The Small Business Administration: The SBA offers business mentors and other resources designed to help small businesses thrive.
- Recent Graduates: Mentorship goes both ways. Consider recruiting recent graduates or establishing internships for students currently studying a bachelor's in risk management. You could offer hands-on insurance industry experience while gaining insights into the latest risk management principles.
- Your Network: Your network should offer local support teams made up of experienced former agents and carrier reps. Take full advantage of the opportunities available to you! Look for state-based meetings that offer training and carrier introductions.

"What I enjoy about Smart Choice is the opportunity to assist individuals in achieving their dreams. I find fulfillment in applying my expertise to support them as they establish and operate successful businesses. Witnessing their progress and knowing that I've played a part in their achievements brings me deep satisfaction." -Tony Davis Smart Choice State Director, Tennessee

"Every day, we help agencies solve problems – from finding coverage for specific clients to guiding them through complex situations. For example, I recently helped an agent understand why a client's inspection issue was affecting their account and walked them through the solution." -Chris Reisdorf Smart Choice State Director.

What's Standing Between You and Your Next Level of Success?

Now that you know the six secrets to agency success, it's time for action. Smart Choice is a no-fee, nationwide network dedicated to helping independent insurance agencies thrive. More than 10,000 independent agencies and 120 carriers have made the smart choice to partner with us. [Learn more about becoming an agency partner.](#)

Smart Choice® <https://www.smartchoiceagents.com/>

Your independent insurance agency network

Smart Choice is a network of over 10,000 independent agencies and more than 120 carriers. Collectively our agency partners represent more than \$12 billion in written premiums. We're the fastest growing agency network in the nation for a reason - we put our agency partners first. Grow your book of business, increase your revenue, and be able to put your own clients first by partnering with Smart Choice. ✂

ARE YOU “CHANGING WITH THE TIMES?”

(Comments by NAAFA Staff)

There’s no doubt that times are changing. Are you capable of changing with the times? Should you ‘change with the times’? Well, this is a huge question. One might suggest your answer would depend upon your age. It does appear that younger people adapt easier. Perhaps that’s because they aren’t yet cemented into a certain behavior and set of standards. They’re still growing, still learning.

But it appears that from about middle age (whatever that is??!!) it becomes harder and harder

to adapt to these rapid changes we see occurring in the workplace.

The following article from Carrier Management (permission granted to reprint) gives some interesting viewpoints and much of it is documented by surveys and trends they have analyzed. We thought you might be interested because much of the article pertains to the insurance industry so that’s why we have decided to spend some ink on it.

Future of Jobs Report 2025

Fastest growing and declining jobs by 2030



↑ Top fastest growing jobs	↓ Top fastest declining jobs
1 Big data specialists	1 Postal service clerks
2 FinTech engineers	2 Bank tellers and related clerks
3 AI and machine learning specialists	3 Data entry clerks
4 Software and applications developers	4 Cashiers and ticket clerks
5 Security management specialists	5 Administrative assistants and executive secretaries
6 Data warehousing specialists	6 Printing and related trades workers
7 Autonomous and electric vehicle specialists	7 Accounting, bookkeeping and payroll clerks
8 UI and UX designers	8 Material-recording and stock-keeping clerks
9 Light truck or delivery services drivers	9 Transportation attendants and conductors
10 Internet of things specialists	10 Door-to-door sales workers, news and street vendors, and related workers
11 Data analysts and scientists	11 Graphic designers
12 Environmental engineers	12 Claims adjusters, examiners and investigators
13 Information security analysts	13 Legal officials
14 DevOps engineers	14 Legal secretaries
15 Renewable energy engineers	15 Telemarketers

Note: The jobs that survey respondents report the highest and lowest net growth (%) by 2030.

Source: World Economic Forum. (2025). *Future of Jobs Report 2025*.

Today we are seeing many senior aged insurance agents leave the industry. We are asking why. Are they being encouraged by the companies they work for to leave? Why does American Family, at the present time, insist on replacing departing agents only with young, inexperienced people?

Well, frankly, we can think of several reasons: AI is definitely being used to replace the tasks that had been done previously by humans in the insurance industry. The insurance company wants to get rid of the '93 contract holders because that contract is costing the company too much money. (Over age 60 you get lifetime benefits.) Another reason is that younger agents can be molded into the shape or form the

company wants. The more mature agents often won't swallow today's workplace rhetoric. Although the more mature sector of the agency workforce has tried to adapt to digital communication, it has been difficult. The younger sector has no adjustment at all because they grew up with it.

Well, we could go on and on here, but the bottom line is people are being laid off in nearly every industry. We hear about "reskilling" and "upskilling" but it's easy to think that industry is just using such words to pacify or ease the discomfort of those workers who are feeling the squeeze right now. And for some, it just ain't working! We still say, be informed. Listen to your elders. And elders, listen to your younger counterparts. We can all learn from each other. *

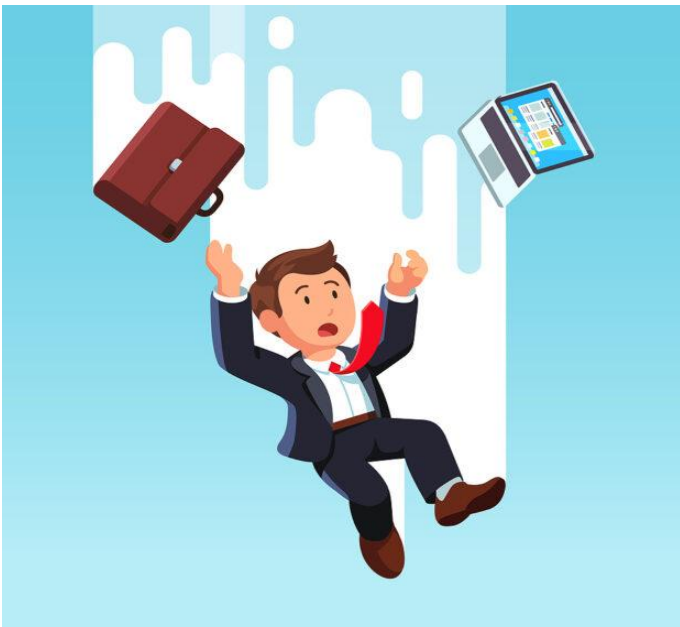
[*Please note that NAAFA is responsible for emphasizing and highlighting certain sections we feel might be of particular interest to our readers. Now, please read the following article.]

Future of Jobs: Claims Adjuster Among Fastest Declining Professions

<https://www.carriermanagement.com/features/2025/01/22/270842.htm?bypass=4734bf4a83b58f17dabe2a42b1ec7398>

January 22, 2025, by [Susanne Sclafane](#)

Insurance claims adjusters have something in common with postal clerks, cashiers, administrative assistants and graphic designers. These jobs all rank among those in the greatest decline over the next five years, a new report says.



The ranking, included in the "[Future of Jobs Report 2025](#)" published by the World Economic Forum early this month, doesn't say specifically why the job grouping "claims adjusters, examiners, and investigators" landed 12th among jobs that will experience the fastest net percentage decline by 2030, and 15th among those that will have the biggest decrease in real terms over the same period.

In general, however, the report, drawing information from a survey of over 1,000 executives in 22 industries and 55 economies representing more than 14.1 million employees, points to technological advancements, economic pressures, demographic shifts and geoeconomic tensions as key factors reshaping industries and professions worldwide.

As a result of the technological and other macro trends, [the Future of Jobs 2025](#) report estimates that "labor market churn"—new job creation and job displacement combined—will amount to 22 percent of formal jobs existing today. More specifically, by combining respondents' job growth and decline expectations with hard data on global employment collected by

the International Labor Organization, the report reveals that there will be 170 million new jobs across the studied industries and geographies, equivalent to 14 percent of today's total employment figure of 1.2 billion formal jobs. Fast-growing jobs include "big data specialists," "fintech engineer" and "AI and machine learning specialists."

Overall job growth is expected to be offset by the displacement of 92 million current jobs, or 8 percent of total employment across industries and countries.

For the *insurance industry*, the market churn figure is similar to the overall figure—19 percent—according to a two-page summary of survey and analysis information specific to the “insurance and pensions management” industry.

Aside from claims adjusters, other insurance industry jobs listed as declining in the report included “statistical, financial and **insurance clerks**,” ranking 19th among fastest declining by 2030, and “**insurance underwriters, valuers and loss assessors**,” which came in 23rd.

Closely associated with insurance, “risk management professionals” ranked among the careers for which jobs created will exceed jobs displaced. **A job category titled “sales agents and brokers” is also listed among those that will experience growth (in the single digits) over the next five years.**

Although not specific to insurance, some tech-related job titles held by insurance industry professionals— “data analysts and scientists” and “Internet of Things specialists”—are among the 15 fastest growing, according to the WEF report.

Key Trends Driving Workforce Changes

Across industries, surveyed executives—chief executive officers, chief strategy officers, chief people officers and chief learning officers of leading global firms—expect “broadening digital access” to be the most transformative trend for their organizations, with 60 percent expecting it to alter their workforces by 2030.

For the “insurance and pensions management” industry, the percentage is higher, with 73 percent also selecting the macrotrend “broadening digital access” as one that will transform their business.

(Editor’s Note: Analysis for just insurance apart from pension management, or for just property/casualty, is not available in the WEF report. The next closest industry segment is “financial services and capital markets,” for which survey results about macrorends identified as drivers of job disruption are similar. For brevity, throughout this article, CM will refer to the “insurance and pensions” industry as “insurance.”)

While the “digital access” trend is the top trend selected by executives in insurance and other industries, insurers ranked two economic trends—inflation and slower economic growth—as the second- and third-most transformative trends impacting their workforces. While the rising cost of living was also the second-ranked trend for other industries, only half of all executives saw it as a main driver of change, while two-thirds of insurance executives did.



Drilling down on the perceived labor force impact of nine specific technologies, executives across industries said that artificial intelligence (AI) and information processing technologies will likely have the biggest impact, with 86 percent of respondents expecting these to transform their business by 2030.

Insurance executives likewise rank AI as the top technology set to disrupt their workforces. In fact, the expectation that AI will be transformational is nearly unanimous within the insurance industry, with 98 percent identifying AI. The only industries with higher percentages of employers saying AI will drive internal transformation were technology services (99 percent) and telecommunications (100 percent).

Comparing results for the insurance industry to those of other industries throughout the report, it is evident that the insurance executives surveyed have been leaning into technology to a greater degree—and they expect to continue to do so in the future.

In contrast to other industries, 44 percent of work tasks in the insurance industry today are performed by humans working together with technology. Across all industries, people combine with technology to perform just 30 percent of work tasks.

Going forward, while all sectors are expected to see a reduction in the proportion of work tasks performed by humans alone by 2030, they differ in the share of this reduction projected to be driven by automation vs. augmentation.

Insurance leads the automation trend, with 97 percent of insurance industry employers planning to accelerate automation of processes and tasks, compared to 82 percent across all industries.

By 2030, humans will still collaborate with technology to handle 44 percent of work tasks in the insurance industry. But tasks performed by technology alone will nearly double—to 31 percent in 2030 from 16 percent in 2025, driving a corresponding drop in tasks accomplished by humans alone, which will fall to one-quarter of industry tasks.

Top Skills: Today and 2030

The insurance industry also stands apart from other industries in terms of what its leaders view as core skills for their workforces today and what will be important five years from now.

Currently, human attitudes and cognitive skills—attributes such as resilience and adaptability, analytical thinking, curiosity, leadership and creative thinking—are viewed as the most important by insurance industry executives.

Resilience tops the core skills inventory for insurers, with 94 percent of executives viewing this as

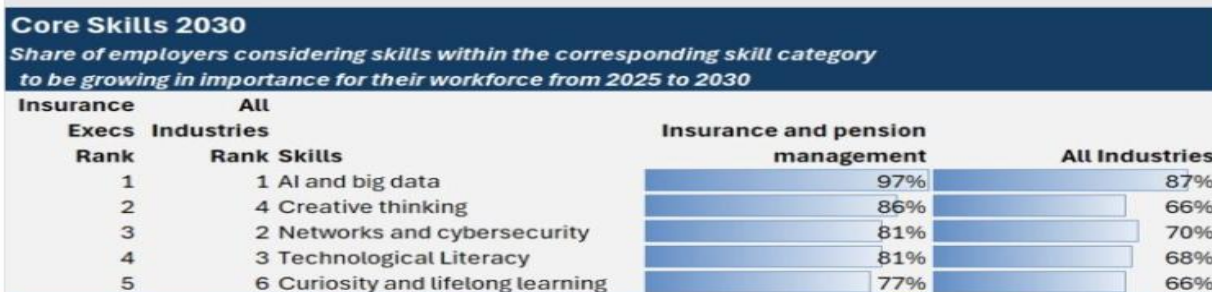


Source: World Economic Forum Future of Work 2025 Report
<https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/>

core—27 percent more than other industries. The percentages of insurers identifying another self-efficiency trait, curiosity, and the other cognitive and management skills as core skills are all 20-30 percentage higher than other industries.



Source: World Economic Forum Future of Work 2025 Report
<https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/>



Source: World Economic Forum Future of Work 2025 Report
<https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/>

With tech-related skills—AI, technological literacy and network security—moving up the insurance industry skills inventory for 2030, analytical thinking and resilience move off the list of top 5 core skills. But creative thinking rises up to become the second-most cited future core skill, with 86 percent of insurance

employers believing that creativity will remain a core industry skill in the future. (Resilience ranks sixth, selected by 72 percent for 2030.)

Upskill or Replace

On average, workers across all industries can expect that two-fifths (39 percent) of their existing skill sets will be transformed or become outdated over the 2025-2030 period, an online digest of the nearly 300-page report says.

“Skill instability,” however, has slowed compared to previous editions of the Future of Work report, from 44 percent in 2023 and a high point of 57 percent in 2020 in the wake of the pandemic. “This finding could potentially be due to an increasing share of workers (50 percent) having completed training, reskilling or upskilling measures, compared to 41 percent in the report’s 2023 edition,” the report states.

Still, “skill gaps are categorically considered the biggest barrier to business transformation by Future of Jobs Survey respondents, with 63 percent of employers identifying them as a major barrier over the 2025-2030 period.” Reacting to the problem, 85 percent of employers surveyed across all industries plan to prioritize upskilling their workforces, with 70 percent of employers expecting to hire staff with new skills.

While more than three-quarters of insurance industry employers likewise plan to hire to gain new skills, insurers are leaning into upskilling and automation more than employers in other industries in order to react to megatrends.

Workforce Strategies 2025-2030		
Share of employers surveyed planning to adopt stated workforce strategy		
Strategy	Insurance	All Industries
Accelerate the automation of processes and tasks	97%	73%
Upskill workforce	91%	85%
Hire staff with new skills to meet emerging business trends	76%	70%
Augment the workforce with new technologies	N/A	63%
Transition existing staff from declining to growing roles	N/A	51%
Reduce staff with skills no longer relevant	N/A	41%

Source: World Economic Forum Future of Work 2025 Report
<https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/>

Within the insurance industry, “while 42 percent of employers predict talent availability at the point of hiring to worsen, the industry is strongly focused on upskilling and reskilling: 91

percent of employers plan to upskill their work-force to adapt to evolving needs,” the report says. As a result, 82 percent of executives in the insurance industry expect talent development to improve in the next five years, the report says.

With respect to specific skills needed to embrace AI-related opportunities, however, insurance companies anticipate hiring individuals with skills to work with AI much more than other industries. While 62 percent of executives across industries identified hiring as an AI-ready strategy, 91 percent of insurance industry executives did.

Reskilling and upskilling existing talent to work more effectively with AI is the most anticipated strategy across industries—identified as a strategy by 77 percent of all executives. That’s the second-most popular strategy for insurance industry organizations, identified by 85 percent of insurance industry executives.

Note: In addition to survey responses, research collaborations and data partnerships with ADP, Coursera, Indeed and LinkedIn resulted in data and analysis that complemented the survey findings, the report says.)

HERE ARE SOME FIGURES YOU MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT.....

Did you know that the average annual pay for insurance agents in the US in 2025 was \$60,000 - \$61,000?

Did you know that **top earners** in the insurance agent field make over \$130,000?

Did you know that the Top-Paying States according to 2025 Data were:

New York:	\$108,960
New Jersey:	\$106,910
Illinois:	\$105,150
Minnesota:	\$100,750
Massachusetts:	\$100,590

Did you know the Top-Paying Companies were:

Platinum Supplemental Insurance:	\$94,000
State Farm:	\$88,000
Geico:	\$71,000
Farmers Insurance Group:	\$68,000
Allstate:	\$60,000

Did you know that according to the U.S. BLS, the number of insurance agent jobs in the US in 2024 was 568,800? Note: 2025 numbers are not available due to the government shutdown.

The industry is facing a talent shortage, with approximately 400,000 positions needing to be filled in the coming years due to the high average age of agents (approximately 46 years old). [Agent Methods]

[Be sure to visit the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and AI Overview for more information].

AmFam's Shifting Portfolio: Stability, Strategy, and Agent Consequences

Have you been noticing what American Family has been doing lately? Have these moves had any impact on you? Are these purchases and sales just part of doing business? Should you be concerned about your company's stability? It's good to know the facts before you decide.

Main Street **sold** its renewal rights for Surety and Fidelity bonds to Nationwide in February **2026**.

American Family **sold** direct nonstandard auto insurer The General, January **2025**.

Main Street **sold** its personal lines to Safeco Insurance, November **2024**.

American Family **bought** Ameriprise Insurance in April **2019**, and rebranded it as CONNECT.

American Family **merged** with Main Street in **2018**, providing AmFam Enterprise with **4000 independent agents**

American Family **bought** Homesite Group in **2013**, and along with The General, these companies provide AmFam with a **direct P&C market** in 46 states.

American Family **merged** with AssureStart in **2013**, providing AmFam with a small-business type insurance that is sold over the internet.

American Family **bought** The General in **2012**, a direct marketing company.

And now some of our thoughts on the matter!

American Family started making buying and selling moves in about 2012. In looking at the company's history, we tried to figure out which moves were positive for AmFam's captive agents. As close as we could tell, AmFam appears to have about 2,384 active captive agents at this time. Main Street has about 4,000 independent agents. It seems the rest of the companies under the AmFam Enterprise sell directly.

Agents have noted for several years that the direct and/or independent agents are in direct conflict or competition with the captive agents. For instance, rates through CONNECT have consistently been cheaper than rates the captive agents have. Commercial policies, for the most part, can only be sold through Brokerage where commissions are split between Brokerage and the agent.

There has been concern lately about just why AmFam sold The General, why Main Street sold its personal lines to Safeco, and why Main Street sold its renewal rights for Surety and Fidelity bonds to Nationwide. All these events have occurred since 2024.

CBS news reported that in the past 4 years, there has been a surge in layoffs, especially in tech, retail, and government-related sectors. In 2025 alone, over 1.1 million jobs were cut in the U.S. www.Wartracker.com reports that at least 39,574 U.S. companies have been recorded as having laid off workers in the past 4 years.

As agents, we may never know the real reasons for AmFam's Enterprise moves. AI seems to feel these moves are AmFam's way of improving underwriting results, lowering ratios, and showing a stronger equity position, all of which strengthen their financial standing. AI may be right but moves such as this don't always benefit the workers. In our case, the captive agents have definitely been affected.

Agents know they are affected when rates are high and the company decides to put them on a quota. The pros and cons of quotas are discussed in this issue titled *The Dangers of Quotas*. Either agents meet these quotas or they receive a 6-month notice. For 1993 contract holders, this means almost certain termination. Not meeting certain levels in AmFam's 2026-point system means lower commissions. Lower commissions mean lower termination benefits. This is why we are seeing so many agents turning in their resignation notices.

Are these retiring agents being replaced? We expect they are, but of course, these newer agents will be signing a different contract. The 2014 agent contract does not obligate American Family to so much in termination payments because that contract pays out over 5 years. There are no life-time benefits. It seems evident that AmFam is secure financially, but do remember that your termination benefits, no matter which contract you have signed, are NOT PROTECTED by anything other than the good faith promise of American Family. ☹

AmFam's Top 10 CEO Officers — 2025, 2024, 2023

NAAFA, Inc. does not guarantee the reliability of these corporate numbers.

For more specific reliability, please check OCI Records: OCIRecords@wisconsin.gov

Name / Title	Year	AmFam Ins	AmFam Mutual S.I.	AmFam Life	AmFam Connect P&C	AmFam Connect	TOTAL
William Westrate <i>Chair & CEO</i>	2025	\$3,106,913	\$2,761,532	\$373,161	\$1,219,571	\$34,889	\$7,496,066
	2024	\$2,309,856	\$2,067,750	\$245,244	\$890,711	\$26,428	\$5,539,989
	2023	\$1,156,670	\$1,099,763	\$139,085	\$469,053	\$11,903	\$2,876,474
Telisa Yancy <i>Enterprise President</i>	2025	\$1,444,706	\$1,284,105	\$176,519	\$567,097	\$16,223	\$3,485,650
	2024	\$905,581	\$810,664	\$96,148	\$349,205	\$10,362	\$2,171,960
	2023	\$684,642	\$650,958	\$82,325	\$277,636	\$7,045	\$1,702,606
Peter Settel <i>Ent Chief Strat & Tech Officer</i>	2025	\$1,394,455	\$1,239,440	\$128,763	\$410,844	\$11,753	\$3,185,255
	2024	\$2,115,191	\$1,893,489	\$224,576	-0-	-0-	\$4,233,256
	2023	\$991,132	\$942,369	\$99,624	\$130,361	\$3,308	\$2,166,794
Troy Van Beck <i>Ent Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer</i>	2025	\$1,093,468	\$971,913	\$131,333	\$424,224	\$12,279	\$2,638,217
	2024	\$695,376	\$622,491	\$73,830	\$268,146	\$7,955	\$2,290,628
	2023	\$551,778	\$524,631	\$66,349	\$223,757	\$5,678	\$1,372,193
Jessica Stauffacher <i>Chief People Officer</i>	2025	\$945,305	\$840,220	\$113,537	\$371,065	\$10,615	\$2,280,742
	2024	\$766,709	\$686,347	\$81,404	\$295,653	\$8,771	\$1,838,884
	2023	\$650,504	\$618,500	\$78,221	\$263,793	\$6,694	\$1,617,712
Tracy Schweitzer <i>Enterprise Chief Administrative Officer</i>	2025	\$945,305	\$840,220	\$113,537	\$342,747	\$4,806	\$2,302,888
	2024	\$600,717	\$537,753	\$63,781	\$231,644	\$6,873	\$1,440,768
	2023	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
David A. Graham <i>Chief Investment Officer</i>	2025	\$771,918	\$686,108	\$92,713	\$303,005	\$8,668	\$1,862,981
	2024	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
	2023	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Jeffrey Swalve <i>President, Agency</i>	2025	\$1,459,435	\$1,297,197	\$175,288	-0-	-0-	\$2,931,920
	2024	\$1,126,402	\$1,008,340	\$119,594	-0-	-0-	\$2,254,336
	2023	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Ben Wright <i>Chief Underwriting Officer</i>	2025	\$608,243	\$540,628	-0-	\$294,560	\$8,427	\$1,485,996
	2024	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
	2023	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Bradley D. Burke <i>Chief Information & Technology Officer</i>	2025	\$739,404	\$657,208	\$68,276	\$217,848	\$6,232	\$1,685,676
	2024	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
	2023	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-



“It’s tough work, sitting at the top.”

“They take home meager salaries, if you don’t count the stock options, bonuses and private jets.”

[AI Overview]

AmFam's Corporate Board of Directors — 2025, 2024, 2023

NAAFA, Inc. does not guarantee the reliability of these corporate numbers.

For more specific reliability, please check OCI Records: OCIRecords@wisconsin.gov

Name / Title	Year	AmFam Ins	AmFam Mutual S.I.	AmFam Life	AmFam Connect P&C	AmFam Connect	TOTAL
Mark Afable <i>Former WI Ins Commissioner</i>	2025	-0-	-0-	\$7,086	\$23,157	-0-	\$30,243
	2024	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
	2023	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Christine Cumming <i>Retired 1st VP & CEO, Fed Res Bank of NY</i>	2025	-0-	-0-	\$3,409	\$11,142	-0-	\$14,551
	2024	\$64,510	\$61,336	\$7,757	\$26,160	\$664	\$160,427
	2023	\$90,000	\$142,000	\$11,750	-0-	\$-0-	\$243,750
Londa Dewey <i>CEO, QTI Group</i>	2025	-0-	-0-	\$7,821	\$25,560	\$-0-	\$33,381
	2024	\$64,510	\$61,336	\$7,757	\$26,160	\$664	\$160,427
	2023	\$90,000	\$142,000	\$11,750	-0-	-0-	\$243,750
Leslie Ann Howard <i>Retired Pres & CEO United Way Dane Co</i>	2025	-0-	-0-	\$7,086	\$23,157	-0-	\$30,243
	2024	\$58,573	\$55,691	\$7,043	\$3,753	\$603	\$138,202
	2023	\$81,000	\$127,800	\$10,575	-0-	-0-	\$219,375
Idalene Kesner <i>Dean Emerita, Ind Univ School of Business</i>	2025	-0-	-0-	\$7,754	\$25,342	\$725	\$33,821
	2024	\$64,510	\$61,336	\$7,757	\$26,160	\$664	\$160,427
	2023	\$88,500	\$139,633	\$11,554	-0-	-0-	\$239,687
Rakesh Khurana <i>Danoff Dean, Harvard College</i>	2025	\$64,559	\$57,382	\$7,754	\$25,342	\$725	\$155,762
	2024	\$62,330	\$55,797	\$6,618	\$24,035	\$713	\$149,493
	2023	\$58,573	\$55,691	\$7,043	\$23,753	\$603	\$145,663
Michael Knetter <i>SR Adv of Inv & Bus Dev, U of WI Foundation</i>	2025	\$64,402	\$57,651	\$6,838	\$24,834	\$737	\$158,448
	2024	\$65,697	\$62,465	\$7,900	\$26,641	\$676	\$154,462
	2023	\$91,800	\$144,840	\$11,985	-0-	-0-	\$163,379
Tonie Leatherberry <i>Former Deloitte Partner/CEO Amplify Advisors</i>	2025	\$57,622	\$51,583	\$6,118	\$22,220	\$659	\$142,335
	2024	\$58,573	\$55,691	\$7,043	\$23,753	\$603	\$138,202
	2023	\$81,000	\$127,800	\$10,575	-0-	-0-	\$145,663
Cory Nettles <i>Founder-Managing Director, Generation Growth Capital</i>	2025	\$57,622	\$51,583	\$6,118	\$22,220	\$659	\$142,335
	2024	\$58,573	\$55,691	\$7,043	\$23,753	\$603	-0-
	2023	\$81,000	\$127,800	\$10,575	-0-	-0-	-0-
Rosa Rios <i>Former US Treasurer, CEO Red River Assoc</i>	2025	\$57,622	\$51,583	\$6,118	\$22,220	\$659	\$142,335
	2024	\$58,573	\$55,691	\$7,043	\$23,753	\$603	\$138,202
	2023	\$81,000	\$127,800	\$10,575	\$-0-	\$-0-	\$145,663
Paul Shain <i>Exe Chair, Singlewire Board of Directors</i>	2025	\$66,661	\$59,674	\$7,018	\$25,705	\$763	\$165,162
	2024	\$68,072	\$64,723	\$8,185	\$27,604	\$676	\$159,821
	2023	\$95,400	\$150,520	\$12,455	-0-	-0-	\$169,260
Thomas Tefft <i>Former Executive, Medtronic, Inc.</i>	2025	\$64,402	\$57,651	\$6,838	\$24,834	\$737	\$159,791
	2024	\$65,697	\$62,465	\$7,900	\$26,641	\$676	\$154,462
	2023	\$91,800	\$144,840	\$11,985	-0-	-0-	\$163,379
Scott Wrobbel <i>Ret'd Mkt Leader/Managing Partner Deloitte</i>	2025	\$57,622	\$51,583	\$6,118	\$22,220	\$659	\$142,335
	2024	\$58,573	\$55,691	\$7,043	\$23,753	\$603	\$138,202
	2023	\$81,000	\$127,800	\$10,575	-0-	-0-	\$145,663
Thomas Zimbrick <i>CEO, Zimbrick, Inc.</i>	2025	\$57,622	\$51,583	\$6,118	\$22,220	\$659	\$142,335
	2024	\$58,573	\$55,691	\$7,043	\$23,753	\$693	\$138,202
	2023	\$82,500	\$130,167	\$10,771	-0-	-0-	\$145,753

“The CEO is the superstar, the board is the supporting cast.”

“Group thinking is the chief weakness of Boards today.”

“The board’s most dangerous moment is when they love the CEO too much.”

[AI Overview]

NOW, ABOUT THOSE CORPORATE SALARIES.....

Once again, the Wisconsin Department of Insurance was kind enough to forward the 2025 AmFam Corporate Salaries to NAAFA. Although we are extremely anxious to receive them, we always dread the headache of deciphering them into a format that our readers can understand.

First of all, as you recall, a few years ago, AmFam reorganized into a holding company concept. They call themselves an Enterprise. And an enterprise it is as described by AI as “a business, organization, or ambitious project—often large-scale or high risk—undertaken to achieve specific goals.” Of course, most of us by now know that one of the goals is the development of several underlying companies, all of which operate rather independently of one another. And as such, any one of these underlying companies could actually be sloughed off from the Enterprise, if need be. “And why might that be?” you ask. Well, an Enterprise might want to eliminate a certain underlying ‘holding company’ because it wasn’t particularly showing an acceptable profit, or to raise capital. Or the underlying company no longer ‘fits the parent company’s long-term strategy or core business.

Agents have been concerned for a long time about the safety of their Termination Benefits which, we’re told, are housed in American Family Mutual. There is no guarantee for an agent’s termination monies like there would be for a W-2 person’s 401(k) monies. It would be possible to pull out all profitable aspects of AmFam Mutual, leave the unwanted in the holding company and simply let it file bankruptcy. We pray that never happens, but we feel this is one of the biggest reasons AmFam along with many other insurance companies has reorganized into the holding company concept.

That being said, with our hands on the 2025 AmFam Corporate Salaries, we can now compare how our (the agents’) salaries have kept aligned with corporate salaries. NOT GOOD! [By the way, NAAFA will shortly after publication of this NAAFA Report be posting all 10 of the PDF documents we received from the WI Dept of Ins so you can see for yourselves exactly what we go through to try to show you what the corporate execs make.]

It takes many hours to pull the salaries for each of the 10 top CEO officers from each of the five underlying holding companies on whose boards they sit. Those companies include American Family Insurance, American Family Mutual S.I., American Family Life,

American Family Connect, and American Family Connect P&C. Not every officer serves on every board. A few years ago, AmFam had separate boards for AmFam, AmFam Connect and Main Street. Now there is just one.

And don’t forget there is now only one AmFam Board of Directors made up of various ‘important’ individuals from other companies. AmFam apparently does not expose how often their Board of Directors meets as we couldn’t find it anywhere on the Internet. We did find that the average insurance company board meets anywhere between 4 and 8 times a year. We have always remarked at how we would each love to be paid some \$135-\$200 a year for just attending four meetings. There appears to be about 13 on this board.

Taking a look at Bill Westrate’s salary, it appears Bill’s salary went up about 35% in 2025. It had gone up about 93% in 2024. And in case you are interested, Number 2 officer, Telisa Yancy, saw a 60% increase in pay in 2025 and a 28% increase in 2024. Now how does that compare to what your salary went up? Or did your salary go up?? Word from the agents who call NAAFA (and there are a lot of them!!) most have seen their salaries go down. Now why would the top officers make so much more when the people bringing in the money made less? One would have to admit that their compensation depends a great deal on how the company’s overall valuation did for the year. And yes, AmFam experienced a highly profitable year in 2025. In fact, our research shows they turned things around with a \$2.6 billion net underwriting gain in P&C lines which was up from \$603 million in 2024. No wonder they got such great raises! It has been pointed out that these profits didn’t come from an increase in selling policies, but from lower losses. Agents will tell you it’s been very hard to sell because AmFam’s rates are outrageous. More on that later.

Well, that’s our overview on salaries for now, but don’t forget to check www.NAAFA.com for a complete picture of every separate document we received from the WI Dept of Ins. 🙏

**“ALL I HAVE SEEN TEACHES ME TO
TRUST THE CREATOR
FOR ALL I HAVE NOT SEEN.”**

~Ralph Waldo Emerson



IS IT CORPORATE GREED?

NAAFA recently had an AmFam insured contact us not only about how much his rates had gone up, but he also complained about the corporate salaries. We don't often hear from AmFam insureds, but we do have an interest in what they have to say. This gentlemen had done some research and wanted to complain, it seems.

From what we have discovered, CEO salaries are being discussed across many companies. Have you read the September 8, 2025, article in PATRIOT PULSE entitled:

ConocoPhillips CEO used one excuse to fire thousands that will leave you speechless

The gist of the article is that ConocoPhillips is laying off about 3,250 workers by December 2025. CEO Ryan Lance told employees, "The company needed "fewer roles" and cited "rising costs" as the reason for the mass layoffs."

The part, the article says, that should make every working American furious is that ConocoPhillips just reported second quarter earnings of \$1.97 billion. That's nearly \$2 billion in profits in just three months.

WOW! Is right. The company is making lots of money but is laying off workers. So, where's the profit going? According to this article, it's all because of "CORPORATE GREED!!!"

Here's what PATRIOT PULSE says:

The real story behind corporate cost-cutting

Look, here's what's really happening at ConocoPhillips and countless other major corporations across America. These executives aren't making tough decisions because of financial necessity – they're making these decisions because Wall Street rewards companies that prioritize stock prices over human beings.

NAAFA has wondered for several months now just why AmFam is insistent on getting rid of their outstanding 1993 contract agents. These knowledgeable, outstanding agents are leaving by the scores. Patriot Pulse points out how American companies used to understand that their employees were their most valuable asset.... the same as American Family used to understand that their agents were their most valuable asset. NOT ANYMORE.

Corporations (including AmFam) are hellbent on paying extremely high corporate salaries, and hellbent on lowering the salaries of its agents. Proof? Look at production. It's down. Look at claims' complaints. AmFam's motto? Delay, delay, delay and watch the frustrated insured accept less!

So, maybe that AmFam insured who contacted NAAFA recently has a point. Maybe there's too much going into the pockets of the CEOs and too much of it coming out of the insureds' pockets. No wonder that guy called our office.

Well, you give it some thought. Or maybe you already have. Is that why you're leaving??!! 🦋

~Anonymously Submitted

What Captive Agents Should Be Evaluating Right Now

by SIAA's Jack Calabrese

For many captive agents, the last few years have brought meaningful changes to the business: Increased production expectations, shifting compensation models, profitability pressure, reduced underwriting flexibility, and technology changes that seem to accelerate every quarter.



For some agents, none of this alters their long-term plans. The captive model can still provide structure, brand recognition, and support that align well with their goals. But for others, the environment is creating new questions about stability, flexibility, and ownership.

The important thing is **not reacting emotionally to market conditions or company decisions**. It is taking the time to evaluate whether your current path still aligns with where you want your business and career to be several years from now.

One of the biggest questions many agents are beginning to ask is how much control they truly have over their future business. When rates become less competitive, underwriting tightens, or carrier appetites shift, captive agents often have limited ability to pivot. They may have strong client relationships but few options to solve problems outside of a single carrier environment. That can create frustration for both the agent and the customer.

Independent agents operate differently. **Access to multiple carriers** allows them to adjust as markets change, explore niche opportunities, and place business that may not fit one carrier's appetite at a given moment. That flexibility has become increasingly valuable in today's market.

OWNERSHIP

Another important consideration is ownership. Many captive agents work incredibly hard building client relationships and growing their book, yet some eventually begin to question how much equity they are truly creating for themselves long term.

Independent agency ownership creates a different conversation around value, perpetuation, and long-term financial opportunity. For agents thinking about retirement, succession, or creating a business asset they may eventually sell, those factors matter.

This does not mean independence is automatically the right fit for everyone. The independent channel comes with responsibility. Agents must make business decisions, invest in technology, develop marketing strategies, manage operations, and build carrier relationships. Success requires adaptability, discipline, and a willingness to continuously learn.

At the same time, the support systems available to independent agents have evolved significantly: Agency networks, technology platforms, market access solutions, business intelligence tools, and coaching resources now provide many of the operational advantages that once existed primarily inside captive environments. Independent agents today often have access to sophisticated tools and support without sacrificing flexibility and ownership.

That is one reason more agents are taking a fresh look at the independent model, particularly those who feel they may be reaching a ceiling within their current structure.

The most successful agents over the next decade will likely not be defined solely by the size of their book today. They will be defined by their ability to adapt, build lasting client relationships, leverage technology effectively, and maintain flexibility as the industry continues to evolve. For some, that path will remain within the captive system. For others, it may involve exploring independence for the first time.

Either way, this is an important moment to evaluate where the industry is heading and what kind of business you ultimately want to build.

SIAA – The Agent Alliance is a national insurance agency network with more than 5,200 independent agency members representing over \$18 billion in premium. Jack Calabrese serves as Chief Growth Officer and can be reached at jack.calabrese@siaa.com.



Where Insurance Thrives



Thinking about starting your own agency? We can help. SIAA-The Agent Alliance.

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Optimized outcomes | Enhanced decision-making | Integrated technology & real-time business intelligence

To learn how SIAA NXT is elevating the independent agency channel through The Intelligent Distribution Platform, visit siaanxt.com.



THE DANGERS OF QUOTAS!

American Family has been forcing quotas on their agents for many years. Agents' lives have been severely affected by quotas. Who benefits from quotas? Is it the agents, or is it the company? Is it right for the company to put the emphasis on "numbers" of sales rather than on the value of selling the product because the customer really "needs" it? Let's give this some thought.

People in authority have been forcing quotas upon people for centuries. The intent of quotas was not only for control, but obviously for increased production. Production that most often profited the entity forcing the quota. It is vitally important to realize that failed quotas give way for punishment. 'Failure to meet required quotas equals justified punishment' in the leaders' minds.

Historically, in the 13th century B.C., Pharaoh in Egypt put impossible quotas on the Children of Israel when he told them they had to produce a certain number of bricks a day and do it without giving them straw and materials to make them. When they failed, they were beaten.

The Roman and Mongol empires imposed great quotas on their people. The Mongol empire set quotas when they required their people to supply specific numbers of soldiers or laborers for state projects. The Roman empire forced nearly impossible quotas on their people in the form of land taxes, head taxes on residents, duties imposed on goods produced, 5% tax on any freed slaves, 5% inheritance tax to fund the military. Does some of this sound familiar? Well, you get the idea.

The world is full of quotas today as you can see. There are people who set personal quotas or goals they themselves want to meet. In such a situation, quotas might be acceptable. Possibly, if quotas are set that benefit all people, then that type *might* be justified. Quotas may increase short-term production, but they often lead to burnout, high turnover, (AI says that only about 10-11% of new insurance agents make it long-term.) damaged customer relationships, and reputational harm. And yes, history does show that systems built on forced production benefit those at the top while harming those doing the work.

Another possible side effect of forced quotas is **ethical erosion**. When job security and compensation depend on hitting certain numbers, ethical decision making becomes harder. *Those with a weak ethical constitution can be faced with the temptation to cheat.* We've all heard of agents who wrote fake life insurance applications to secure advance commissions or meet sales quotas.



American Family's quotas have harmed not only the customers (who didn't really need the product or bought more coverage than was needed) but put undue stress on agents who had to meet the quotas or be terminated. Agents live, knowing if they don't sell enough, they'll be fired. If an agency is showing numbers or statistics the company disapproves of (too many claims, document retention, sales requirements, etc.) this agent is set up to be terminated instead of being set up to succeed by being properly trained and being provided with products that can be sold because they are competitive, and sold based on need, not greed.

Conclusion: quotas, for the most part, are bad! Workers produce more when they have a vested interest in products they are proud of. A truly happy and successful agent is one who works for a company and says, "I want to sell more because if I do, this company can grow. I like this company, so I'm happy to work hard because I profit when the company profits." However, what we usually hear is that we agents have to work very hard to meet impossible quotas so top management can take millions of dollars in salary increases while we're losing money. Although the quota-imposing world is not fair, NAAFA always believes that a valued and appreciated worker will always do more than is expected. 🙏

SO, DO YOU REALLY THINK AMERICAN FAMILY TRUSTS ITS AGENTS??

[Anonymously submitted]

Here is my story: Unfortunately, a few people in claims and management know my story, so I pray my identity isn't exposed. But if I am recognized, then I will accept the consequences as I still feel that this story still needs to be told, especially to those agents who still feel that upper management is your friend. So, who actually makes these awkward decisions? I think you know!!

A few years back, my "significant other" and I were going on a 10-day, very needed vacation. I couldn't wait to get away from the office, drink a few beers, and relax. We had been driving for about eight hours and so decided to stop for a late lunch.

Once on the interstate again, the blue sky very quickly changed into a brown sky. My co-pilot asked, "What is happening, is it a tornado?" I instantly knew we were heading directly into a sandstorm, and it was coming fast. I started



looking for an overpass, but none could be seen. I quickly slowed down to minimize any damage, but still moving forward as I didn't want to get run over by some semi-truck

driver, who "throws caution to the wind" and barrels down the interstate no matter what the conditions.

Ten minutes later, which seemed like an eternity in that "brown out", we were back to speed. The windshield was covered with sand, dirt, and whatever from the windstorm. I used my wipers to clean the debris as we drove. We stopped for gas a short while later, and I cleaned the windshield. Once back into the car, it was obvious the windshield was sand blasted, and pitted. I figured I would get it replaced, once back into the office. That is where this nightmare started, and the reason for this letter.

About a week after I was back into the office, I decided to call in the claim to replace the windshield, as I had already called the glass shop for the price. I called the Claims Call Center to open a comp claim on my car. The claims rep asked what happened, and I told her that I was caught in a sandstorm, and the windshield was so sand blasted that it was hard to see through it. The claims girl said, "we don't cover sandstorms". I said, "Oh yes we do." She again said that sandstorm damage isn't covered.

I told her that "I have been an agent for over 25 years, and what you have to do is go back to the base peril, which is windstorm. We cover windstorm, and there was sand in the wind. It is covered". She responded, "Oh, so you are an agent?" I said that, "Yes, I was." She then informed me that since I was an agent, she had to give my claim to her supervisor. I said, "Really, over a \$186 windshield?"

About 30 minutes later, I got a call from a claims' supervisor. She told me we didn't cover sandstorm damages. I then went through the same story about the base peril. She

again said it wasn't covered. I again said that I was a 25-year agent, and it should be covered. She said that she didn't know that I was an agent, so she was going to send a field adjuster to see my car. I said "really? You don't trust me?"

She told me that she had been told by "upper management" that any claim by an agent was to be thoroughly investigated. I said "Really, over a \$186 windshield?" She said, "Every claim for an agent has to be investigated for fraud!"

Two hours later my field adjuster called and asked why he was investigating a windshield claim. I went through the whole story with him. He couldn't believe it but made the appointment to see my windshield. The next day when he arrived, it was raining very hard, so we drove over to a car wash, closed the doors, and dried the car with towels. He looked at the windshield and said that **claims owed me for a windshield**. He then said, "While I am here, I will look at the rest of the car." He then took pictures and said he would call me tomorrow.



The next day, he called and informed me that he was sending me a check for over \$4,000, as there was so much paint and chrome damage from the sandstorm.

I said, "All I wanted was a \$186 windshield." He said, "I know." **We both laughed!**

The problem that I have is that if you are an agent with American Family, and you have a claim, then you are not trusted, and any claim will be investigated for "fraud." The word "fraud" was actually used by this claims supervisor, and that term was passed down from "upper management," to use her words. I know this shouldn't surprise me, but it does. They question my integrity over \$186, but if I question their integrity, which I do daily, then they will find some "nothing" reason to terminate me, as they have terminated so many agents for no reason.

Well, there's my story. After 30+ years as an agent, I'm now retired. (Actually, forced out at 65). I know many of you know just what I am talking about. Anyway, let me tell you...

LIFE IS WONDERFUL OUTSIDE OF AMERICAN FAMILY!!!

In case you are wondering, Dirk Beamer (attorney at Wright Beamer Law Firm) serves as General Counsel to the United Farmers Agents Association (UFAA). Dirk regularly works with captive insurance agents from across the country, as well as their local attorneys, to handle business issues including purchasing and selling books of business, investigations and disciplinary proceedings with the carrier, employment law and contract litigation. The NAAFA office regularly receives the Wright Beamer newsletter. Here are a couple articles from his newsletters that we feel our readers might appreciate.

WRIGHT BEAMER.COM

Federal Child Savings Accounts

February 17th, 2026

Contributor: [LeClair L. Flaherty](#)



Brand new this year, 530A Accounts (also known as “Trump Accounts”) are an innovative tool for families considering options for their kids’ financial futures and potential estate planning moves for themselves. These tax-deferred savings accounts are designed specifically for children under 18.

Under the current framework, a guardian, parent, adult sibling, or grandparent can open a 530A Account for a child, but after that, anyone can contribute – friends, employers, even charities. Plus, for babies born from 2025 through 2028, the federal government will deposit \$1,000 into each eligible child’s account. The account grows tax-deferred, and once the child turns 18, it converts to an IRA.

530A Accounts can also benefit adults, particularly those who have a taxable estate. The accounts can serve as a way for grandparents, parents, and others to pass down wealth, whether for the first time or to augment an existing gifting program. Instead of waiting to leave inheritances, contributors can gift money to a child’s account now and watch the funds grow over time. The potential for compounding growth is huge, especially if the adult child elects to retain the IRA and continue to fund it until retirement age.

Government contributions begin after July 4, 2026. As with any new legislation, details on implementation, eligibility, contribution limits, and tax treatment may evolve. For now, funds are generally locked until age 18. Early withdrawals may incur penalties, and post-18 withdrawals are taxed as ordinary income. Families should compare these accounts with alternatives—such as 529 plans, UTMA custodial accounts, or custodial IRAs for children who have earned income—and consider that outcomes depend on contributions beyond the initial deposit, interest rate fluctuations, investment performance, and fees.

In short, 530A Accounts offer tax advantages and a unique long-term savings opportunity. They are worth considering if you are exploring your options to set up the next generation for financial success. info@wrightbeamer.com

Home Sweet Home

August 26th, 2025

Contributor: [LeClair L. Flaherty](#)

It is a common misconception that adding a child to the deed for your home, thereby making that child a co-owner with you, is a good idea. After all, your home would then avoid probate at your death, right? Yes, true, but the many reasons NOT to make a child your co-owner far outweigh the single benefit of avoiding probate. Here is a sampling of what could happen if you add a child to your deed:



- If your child survives you, the child will not receive a step-up in basis on the home. The loss of the step-up could cost your child tens of thousands of dollars (or more!) in capital gains tax if the child were to sell the home after your death.
- If your child predeceases you, then your probate avoidance plan goes up in smoke.
- If your child gets divorced, is sued, or fails to pay income taxes, then your home is vulnerable to the claims of the child’s ex-spouse or creditors.
- If you want to sell your home, your child could refuse to allow it or could insist on receiving half the proceeds from the sale.
- If you have a falling out with your child, you are powerless to take the child’s name off the deed.

There are other ways of avoiding probate of your home at your death. The most common and best way is to establish a revocable living trust and transfer your home to your trust. The transfer can be effective either immediately or upon your death. Your home would then be distributed or sold following your death as instructed in your trust.

If your trust leaves your home to your child, then your child would receive a step-up in basis, which would reduce or possibly even eliminate capital gains tax if he or she later sells the home. In the meantime, if you want to sell or otherwise dispose of your home while you are living, you do not need your child’s consent to do so.

Questions? You can reach the Wright Beamer estate planning attorneys at (248)477-6300. 🐦

AMERICAN FAMILY'S FINANCIAL STANDING

or their most 'recent' financial standing

So many of our retiring(ed) agents are asking about the financial security of American Family Insurance Company because of their concern for the longevity of their termination payments. Because the Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance only does a comprehensive financial examination report every 5 years, we are unable to give you a more recent summation than 2021. We do not expect to soon receive a more current summation because the 2021 summation did not come out until 2023!!! However, as soon as it is available, we will get it to you.

This document is a comprehensive examination report of American Family Mutual Insurance Company S.I. and its Wisconsin-domiciled subsidiaries, detailing their financial condition, operations, management, and compliance as of December 31, 2021. See the complete 104-page document at: <https://oci.wi.gov/Documents/Companies/FinAmFamMutSI.pdf>

Now here is a summary of the 104-page document:

Overview of the Group's Financial and Operational Examination

A comprehensive review of American Family Mutual Insurance Group's financial condition, corporate governance, and operational structure as of December 31, 2021, including subsidiaries, management, and key financial data.

Group Composition and Participating Companies

The Group includes multiple property and casualty insurers across several states, primarily Wisconsin, with subsidiaries offering auto, home, and specialty insurance products.

- The Group comprises companies such as AFMICS, AFIC, ASICW, ASIC, MIC, Homesite entities, PGC entities, and MSA entities.
- Wisconsin is the domicile for most subsidiaries; some operate in other states like Ohio, Illinois, and California.
- The Group operates in multiple states, with AFMICS licensed in 27 states and writing in 19; AFIC licensed in 19 states, writing in all.
- The Group's total net premiums written in 2021 are approximately \$12.6 billion, with significant contributions from homeowners, auto, and specialty lines.
- The Group's structure includes a mix of mutual and stock companies, with recent reorganizations including a mutual holding company and a stock insurer conversion.

Financial Data and Reserves

The examination reviewed the Group's financial statements, reserves, and reinsurance arrangements, with an independent actuary assessing loss reserves.

- The total net premiums for all lines in 2021 are approximately \$12.6 billion.

- The Group's reinsurance assumed is about \$9.2 billion, with ceded reinsurance of approximately \$494 million.
- The Group is annually audited by an independent public accounting firm, with consolidated financial statements filed.
- The Group's growth and financial stability are supported by extensive reinsurance and a risk-focused examination approach.

Management, Governance, and Corporate Structure

The Group's governance includes a 16-member Board of Directors, principal officers, and various committees overseeing operations.

- The Board of Directors is elected annually, with members serving three-year terms.
- Key officers include the CEO, Enterprise President, CFO, and other senior executives.
- Committees include Audit, Risk, Finance and Investment, Nominating & Governance, People, Culture & Reward, and Executive.
- The ultimate parent is the American Family Insurance Mutual Holding Company, with a complex organizational chart including subsidiaries and affiliates.
- The Group's governance emphasizes risk management, financial oversight, and strategic planning.

Corporate Reorganization and Mergers

Significant reorganizations include the 2017 conversion to a stock insurer, formation of a mutual holding company, and mergers with other entities.

- In 2017, AFMIC converted from a mutual to a stock company, forming AFMICS and a mutual holding company, AFIMHC.
- In 2018, AFIMHC merged with Main Street America Group Mutual Holdings, Inc., expanding the Group's Florida-based operations.
- The merger resulted in policyholders being converted into membership interests in AFIMHC.
- The Group acquired IDS Property Casualty Insurance Company in 2019, which was renamed AFCPCIC, and began offering reinsurance in 2021.

Product Offerings and Market Presence

The Group offers a broad range of insurance products through various brands, primarily targeting personal auto, home, and specialty lines.

- The American Family brand focuses on personal auto, homeowners, farm, and commercial multi-peril, mainly in the Midwest.
- The Connect entities market personal lines through affinity partnerships, including Costco and Ameriprise.

- Homesite companies offer home, condo, and renter insurance, mainly via online channels and partnerships.
- PGC entities provide non-standard auto insurance, operating under the “The General” brand, with a presence in 49 states.
- The MSA Group offers small business, personal insurance, and bonds, with subsidiaries in multiple states, but none domiciled in Wisconsin.
- The Group’s total direct premiums in 2021 across all lines are approximately \$3.9 billion, with total net premiums around \$12.6 billion.

Investment and Reserve Review

The Group’s invested assets and loss reserves were reviewed, with findings reported by the NAIC Capital Markets Bureau and an independent actuary.

- The Group’s invested assets portfolio was examined as of December 31, 2021.
- The actuary reviewed the adequacy of loss and loss adjustment expense reserves, with results reported to the examiner-in-charge.
- The Group maintains extensive reinsurance arrangements to mitigate risk and support growth.
- The review ensures the Group’s financial stability and reserve adequacy.

Conclusion

The examination confirms the Group’s strong financial condition, effective governance, and comprehensive operational structure, with ongoing compliance and risk management practices aligned with regulatory standards.

Overview of the Insurance Group

A comprehensive summary of the organizational structure, financial data, reinsurance strategies, and operational results of the American Family Mutual Insurance Group and its subsidiaries up to 2021, including recent developments and compliance status.

Corporate Structure and Subsidiaries

The Group comprises multiple property and casualty insurers, life insurers, holding companies, and affiliates across various states, with key entities including AFIMHC, AmFam Holdings, Homesite Group, PGC Holdings, and the MSA Group.

- AFIMHC, incorporated in 2017, owns subsidiaries with assets of \$36.85 billion, liabilities of \$25.44 billion, and members’ equity of \$11.41 billion as of 2021.
- AmFam Holdings, Inc., a Wisconsin stock holding company, wholly owns AFIMHC.
- The Group includes specialized companies like Homesite, PGC, and the MSA Group, each with distinct geographic and product focuses.
- Major acquisitions during the period include the MSA Group in 2018 and Connect entities in 2019, significantly expanding the Group’s footprint.
- The Group operates through various intermediate holding companies and manages multiple insurance companies across states.

Financial Performance and Growth

The Group’s financial condition as of December 31, 2021,

shows assets of approximately \$27.27 billion, liabilities of \$17.90 billion, and surplus of \$9.38 billion.

- Total assets increased by 68% over the examination period, driven mainly by acquisitions.
- Total liabilities stood at \$17.90 billion, with surplus at \$9.38 billion.
- The Group reported net income of \$347.8 million in 2021, with total premiums earned of \$12.19 billion.
- Total admitted assets grew 77% in premiums written, with significant contributions from acquisitions.
- The Group’s combined ratio ranged from 101.5% in 2020 to 105.8% in 2017, indicating underwriting losses each year.
- Net investment income was substantial, with \$663.7 million earned in 2021, offset by extraordinary dividends from affiliates.
- Surplus increased 37% during the period, with major capital contributions and dividends used for strategic investments and capital management.
- The Group experienced extraordinary dividends in 2018 and 2020, which did not impact surplus.

Reinsurance Strategies and Agreements

The Group employs extensive reinsurance programs, including affiliated and nonaffiliated contracts, with proper clauses transferring risk.

- Affiliated reinsurance includes 100% quota share agreements with AFLIC, Bowhead Insurance, MIC, HCT, and HICFL, among others.
- External reinsurance covers catastrophe and non-catastrophe risks, with layers providing limits up to \$2.375 billion excess of \$500 million retention.
- Catastrophe bonds issued through Four Lakes Re Ltd. provide supplemental coverage against named storms, earthquakes, and wildfires.
- The Group’s reinsurance program includes layers with reinstatements, and coverage varies by line of business.
- Reinsurance agreements are compliant with SSAP No. 62R, with proper insolvency, arbitration, and risk transfer clauses.
- The Group reinsures all subsidiary and affiliate businesses, with exceptions like HICNY, TRUE, and Bowhead.

Financial Data and Regulatory Ratios

The financial statements as of December 31, 2021, show assets, liabilities, and surplus consistent with prior periods, with no adjustments after examination.

- Assets of AFMICS total \$27.99 billion, with liabilities of \$17.90 billion and surplus of \$9.38 billion.
- The Group’s net premiums written grew 77%, with organic growth and acquisitions contributing significantly.
- The Group reported underwriting losses each year, offset by investment income.
- The Group’s IRIS ratios indicate some stress points, such as high gross premium to surplus (140%) in 2021 and investment yields around 3.0% in 2021.
- Surplus increased from \$7.63 billion in 2020 to \$9.38 billion in 2021.

- The Group's financial condition remains strong despite underwriting losses, supported by investment income and capital contributions.

Recent Developments and Future Outlook

As of December 31, 2022, AFMICS reported a net underwriting loss of \$1.6 billion, with a combined ratio of 110.2%, driven by catastrophe events and inflation.

- Surplus decreased by \$2.0 billion to \$7.3 billion, impacted by net losses and unrealized capital losses.
- The Group's 2022 results reflect significant weather-related losses and investment impairments.
- The company maintains compliance with prior recommendations, with no new issues identified.
- The Group continues to focus on risk management, capital adequacy, and strategic acquisitions to support growth.

Compliance and Examination Findings

The 2021 examination found no recommendations or adjustments, confirming compliance with prior directives.

- The Group's investments, corporate governance, and affiliate agreements meet regulatory standards.
- The Group's financial statements and surplus calculations are accepted as reported.
- The examination highlighted strong cooperation from management and no significant issues requiring corrective action.

Overview of Insurance Company Financial Data

The data provided offers detailed financial information, including assets, liabilities, surplus, operations, cash flows, and surplus analysis for multiple insurance companies as of December 31, 2021, covering various states and types of insurance.

American Family Connect Property and Casualty Insurance Company Assets and Liabilities

The company's assets totaled \$832.2 million, with net admitted assets of \$803.5 million, and liabilities of \$244.9 million, resulting in a surplus of \$558.7 million.

- Assets include bonds (\$479.9M), common stocks (\$13.9M), real estate (\$287K), cash equivalents (\$32.7M), receivables, reinsurance recoverables (\$90.3M), and deferred tax assets (\$30.9M).
- Liabilities comprise reinsurance payables (\$85K), commissions payable (\$3.1M), other expenses (\$30.4M), taxes (\$4.2M), reinsurance payables (\$156.3M), and payables to affiliates (\$27.5M).
- Total liabilities are \$244.9 million; surplus as of year-end is \$558.7 million.
- The company's net investment income was \$9.0 million, with total income before taxes of \$16.5 million, and net income after taxes of \$16.7 million.
- Cash flow from operations was \$38.2 million; total cash at year-end increased to \$32.7 million.
- Surplus increased from \$538.9 million in 2020 to \$558.7 million in 2021, reflecting net income and other adjustments.

American Family Insurance Company Financial Position

The company's assets are \$62.1 million, with liabilities of \$34.9 million, and surplus of \$27.2 million.

Summary The data provides a comprehensive view of the financial health, operational performance, and surplus trends of multiple insurance companies as of **December 31, 2021**, highlighting asset composition, liabilities, income, cash flows, and surplus changes over recent years. ☞

- Assets include bonds (\$9.7K), cash equivalents (\$52.7K), and reinsurance recoverables (\$300K).
- Liabilities include taxes (\$14.9K), premiums payable (\$18.1K), reinsurance payables (net \$46K), and payables to affiliates (\$43.4K).
- The net income for 2021 was \$165K, with net investment income of \$167K.
- Cash flow from operations was \$22.4K; year-end cash balance was \$52.7K.

American Family Connect Property & Casualty Surplus Trends

Surplus grew from \$538.9 million in 2020 to \$558.7 million in 2021, driven by net income of \$16.7 million and positive adjustments.

- The surplus increased by approximately \$19.8 million, indicating a stable financial position.
- Over five years, surplus fluctuated but showed overall growth, with notable increases in 2020 and 2021.

Multiple Insurance Companies' Asset and Surplus Data

Various companies, including American Standard, Homesite, Midvale, and others, show assets ranging from \$13.3K to over \$615 million, with surplus figures from a few thousand dollars to over \$318 million.

- Assets are composed mainly of bonds, stocks, cash equivalents, and reinsurance recoverables.
- Surplus figures vary significantly, with some companies showing negative surplus (e.g., American Family Connect with -\$152.8M) and others with positive surplus exceeding \$300M.
- Surplus trends over five years indicate growth or stability, with some companies experiencing dividend payments or surplus reductions.

Cash Flows and Operational Results

Most companies reported positive net cash from operations, ranging from a few thousand dollars to over \$46 million.

- Investment proceeds vary widely, with some companies selling bonds worth hundreds of millions, while others have minimal investment activity.
- Cash flow statements reflect fluctuations due to investment activities, premiums, claims payments, and financing sources.
- Notably, Homesite companies often show significant cash flows from financing and investments, with some negative cash flows from operations.

Surplus Analysis Over Five Years

Surplus for most companies experienced fluctuations, with some showing growth driven by net income and others impacted by dividends or unrealized gains/losses.

- For example, American Standard Insurance of Ohio's surplus increased slightly from \$9.2M in 2017 to \$9.2M in 2021.
- Homesite companies generally maintained or increased surplus, with some dividend payments reducing surplus temporarily.
- Overall, surplus trends indicate resilience and growth in many companies' financial positions over five years.

AMFAM'S RANKING

It looks like American Family is doing quite well, doesn't it? Most agents have expressed some concern because they realize that AmFam's financial strength certainly could have an effect on an agent's termination benefits. Leave it to AI to put it all together. Now we're not saying AIs got it right, but isn't it fun to see what AI came up with in their AI Overview?

AI's Overview of AmFam's Net Worth

- American Family Insurance's group assets were valued at **\$42.2 billion** at the end of **2024**.
- American Family Insurance's group assets were valued at **\$45.5 billion** at the end of **2025**.
- Their Members' Equity increased to **\$10.6 billion** during the same period. (Up from \$8.0 billion in **2023**.)
- Members' Equity at the end of **2025** was **\$14.3 billion**.
- Revenue for **2024** reached **\$20.0 billion**, a significant increase from the \$17.1 billion reported in 2023.
- Revenue for **2025** was **\$19.5 billion**.
- Direct Premium Written in **2024** was **\$19.6 billion**.
- Direct Premium Written in **2025** was **\$18.5 billion**, a 5.6% decline.
- **Rank on 2025 Fortune 500 list: #202** (moving up from #243 in 2024)

Now after looking at AI's Overview, we just thought you might have fun learning more about the various insurance companies worldwide and how they all compare to one another. But this time you'll be seeing how Wikipedia views the world's largest insurance companies....and who they are might surprise you!

By assets

The list is based on the 2025 report of the 25 largest insurance companies in the world by 2024 assets from [AM Best](#).^[1]

Rank	Company	Country	Total assets (US\$ Billion)
1	Allianz	 Germany	1,085.2
2	Berkshire Hathaway	 United States	1,069.9
3	China Life Insurance	 China	957.8
4	Ping An Insurance	 China	848.1
5	Prudential Financial	 United States	721.1
6	Axa	 France	711.3
7	MetLife	 United States	687.5
8	Legal & General	 United Kingdom	664.7

Rank	Company	Country	Total assets (<u>US\$</u> Billion)
9	Manulife Financial	 Canada	660.9
10	Nippon Life	 Japan	645.1
11	Assicurazioni Generali	 Italy	663.9
12	American International Group	 United States	596.1
13	Life Insurance Corporation	 India	560.3
14	Japan Post Insurance	 Japan	551.0
15	CNP Assurances	 France	547.0
16	Dai-ichi Life	 Japan	540.4
17	Aegon N.V.	 Netherlands	531.0
18	Credit Agricole Assurances	 France	502.7
19	Great-West Lifeco	 Canada	493.4
20	Aviva	 United Kingdom	483.6
21	JA Kyosai	 Japan	481.7
22	Zurich Insurance Group	 Switzerland	435.8
23	New York Life Insurance Company	 United States	428.6
24	Meiji Yasuda Life	 Japan	395.4
25	Lincoln Natl Corp	 United States	387.3

The following figures are all from AI, take it or leave it!!

American Family Insurance Group's TOTAL ASSETS for the full year of 2025 were \$45.5 billion.

State Farm Mutual's TOTAL ASSETS for 2025 were \$391 billion.

Allstate Insurance Company's TOTAL ASSETS for 2025 were \$119.8 billion.

Farmers, according to AI, TOTAL ASSETS for 2025 have not been released by the company yet. 🙄

The 10 largest P&C Insurance Companies in the U.S.

As American Family agents, some of whom have spent a lifetime with this company, it might be interesting for you to see where AmFam ranks. Hmmm! Not there, right? Here is how dear old Dr. Google attempts to explain why:

“American Family Insurance has not kept pace with the top 10 largest U.S. insurers largely due to its regional focus, operating in only 19 states. While maintaining solid financial stability (rated A by AM Best), its smaller geographic footprint, lower brand visibility, and reliance on agent-driven sales have resulted in a smaller market share compared to national carriers with massive advertising budgets.”

Interesting to say the least. One observation by AI here is that AmFam’s “Agency Model” relies heavily on exclusive agents, which is slower and more costly to scale compared to direct-to-consumer digital competitors.”

This might be a little frightening to AmFam’s active agents. It can’t be denied that AmFam seems to be shoving out the door many of its exclusive agents, especially those over the age of approximately 50. NAAFA has also noticed that just one year ago many agents had 2, 3, 4, even 5 and 6 offices. Or, they may have what is called “virtual offices,” more simply, just a phone number. Many of those extra offices are gone now. Where had those extra offices come from? Obviously, from departing AmFam agents.

The company has a plan. We know that. But we can only guess. The company evidently feels its exclusive agents are costing them too much money. They lower commissions, they lower renewals, they raise rates and then force quotas, all, it appears, in an attempt to set the agents up to fail. Get them out the door. This is so sad when it is widely recognized that one of the pros for insuring with AmFam is for the excellent service their exclusive agents give.



The “Top 10 largest property and casualty companies account for 48% of the total market. The P&C insurance industry’s net premiums written increased by 8.5%. each of the top 6 companies has auto insurance as the largest component of its insurance business.” (According to Beinsure Data by AM Best’s Review)

In case you are interested, here are the 10 largest P&C insurance companies in the US, ranked by premiums:

1. STATE FARM

Direct Premiums Written: \$109.0bn

State Farm retains its spot at the top of the leaderboard, writing \$109.0bn in direct premiums in 2024—a significant jump from \$93.8bn the previous year. The Bloomington, Illinois-based mutual

has consistently leveraged its vast agent network, strong brand loyalty, and consumer-first strategy to dominate the personal lines market.

2. PROGRESSIVE

Direct Premiums Written: \$75.9bn

Progressive continues its strong upward trajectory, climbing to \$75.9bn in direct premiums. Known for its aggressive pricing, digital-first approach, and broad distribution through both direct and independent channels, the Ohio-based carrier remains a powerhouse in the auto and home insurance segments.

3. BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY

Direct Premiums Written: \$63.3bn

Berkshire Hathaway, home to GEICO and several other insurance businesses, wrote \$63.3bn in P&C premiums in 2024. Warren Buffett’s conglomerate benefits from strong underwriting results and a diversified book that spans personal, commercial, and specialty lines.

4. ALLSTATE

Direct Premiums Written: \$55.9bn

Allstate continues to climb, with \$55.9bn in premiums written last year. With a sharp focus on technology investment and distribution transformation, the Northbrook, Illinois-based insurer is pushing hard to stay competitive in a tightening market.

5. LIBERTY MUTUAL

Direct Premiums Written: \$44.1bn

Continued on next page

Liberty Mutual posted \$44.1bn in DPW in 2024, slightly down from the year prior. Still, the Boston-based carrier holds firm in the top five, buoyed by its global presence and a broad portfolio spanning personal and commercial lines.

6. TRAVELERS

Direct Premiums Written: \$41.9bn

Travelers saw solid growth in 2024, increasing their DPW from \$38.6bn to \$41.9bn. The New York-based giant is known for its strength in commercial insurance and risk management services, particularly with middle-market and large corporate clients.

7. USAA

Direct Premiums Written: \$36.1bn

USAA continues to serve military members and their families with a focused model that drives loyalty and retention. With \$36.1bn in DPW, the member-owned carrier has expanded steadily across both personal auto and homeowners' insurance.

8. CHUBB

Direct Premiums Written: \$33.1bn

Chubb reported \$33.1bn in direct premiums for 2024. Known for its strength in high-net-worth personal lines, global commercial capabilities, and consistent underwriting discipline, Chubb remains a key global player.

9. FARMERS

Direct Premiums Written: \$28.3bn

Farmers wrote \$28.3bn in premiums in 2024, continuing a trend of modest growth. Backed by its extensive network of exclusive and independent agents, Farmers maintains a significant presence in personal lines across the US.

10. ZURICH

Direct Premiums Written: \$18.6bn

Zurich rounds out the top 10 with \$18.6bn in US P&C premiums written. While its global headquarters are in Switzerland, the company's US operations play a vital role in its commercial insurance strategy, serving businesses across a range of industries. ✂

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING YOUR ACCOUNTANT!!



NAAFA is interested in adding to our reference list (for NAAFA members only) of accountants who have had experience in doing taxes for retired American Family agents. As you know, active agent taxes are prepared much differently than retired agent taxes are, so most any qualified accountant or CPA can perform this task for you. But filing taxes for a retired AmFam agent requires further knowledge of the agent contract and skill in preparing the tax documents.

PLEASE, if your accountant has previously filed taxes for AmFam agents and would like to be placed on our list, would you

forward your accountant's name, address, phone number, email address or website to the NAAFA office? We will contact your accountant to get permission to list on our website. There would be no advertising charge to your accountant because this list will only be available to our NAAFA members.

Do note that on the member side of www.NAAFA.com, we have such a list of attorneys, also. It is important we update these lists every so often. Thanks for your assistance with this great service which helps so many agents.

Send accountant information to: NAAFAwest@comcast.net or
NAAFA, Inc., PO Box 578, Circle Pines, MN 55014.

I Don't Need No Stinkin' Insurance Agent

[So, what do you think?]

Since AI is becoming so popular and useful these days, it is understandable that people just might be starting to think they truly *don't need no stinking insurance agent*. Many, many workers have been 'misplaced' or shoved out the door. It's happening in nearly every business. Why would we think the insurance world should be exempt from such action? The following comments by Chris Burand you might just find very interesting. Here is basically what he said in this article he wrote just a few months ago.

Chris Burand, the author of "I don't Need No Stinkin' Insurance Agent" categorizes insurance agents 3 ways.

- 1) Order-taker agents probably won't last long as the world doesn't need them.
- 2) AI takes orders probably better than the order-taker agent, therefore will probably replace order-taker agents.
- 3) The true professional insurance agent:
 - a. Advertises his capabilities, advises on coverages and risk management
 - b. Knows coverages inside and out.
 - c. Charges clients for advice.
 - d. Accepts that as a professional insurance agent, he works for the client, not the carrier.
 - e. Assumes the role of a real leader in his organization/agency to the point that his workers understand the importance of helping the clients protect themselves and live safer lives.

Burand goes on to say that Insurance law says that independent agents can never represent the carrier and the client simultaneously. He says this requires that in practice, agents switch hats in microseconds. Then he accuses captive agents of "riding the coattails of independent agents because in their world, everyone is an "Agent!" He feels that captive agents all "wear the same badge and consumers cannot tell the difference."

Now whether you agree with Burand or not is up to you, but the advice of this author is that if you want to stay in the insurance selling world and truly be successful, you'd better sharpen your skills. As difficult as it is to say this, when a captive agent's products are priced too high, (and this often happens, believe me) he's stuck in a rut because he has no other companies he can quote and/or write with.

As insurance agents, we need to have our eyes open. We need to peek into the future regarding the security of our job. Learn what others are predicting about the future changes in insurance selling. After thoroughly doing your research, if you still feel insurance selling is right for you, then it's time to establish yourself as a truly professional agent. 🐦

Burand is the founder and owner of Burand & Associates LLC based in Pueblo, Colo. Email: chris@burand-associates.com.

Do you prepare your own taxes?

Do you use **Turbo Tax?**

Ever get stumped on how to use it?

NAAFA has a member who is extremely familiar with Turbo Tax software and is willing to answer any questions you might have as you're trying to file your own tax forms. Give the NAAFA office a call (763-208-0924) to get this member's contact information.

*Please note that this member does not give tax advice. He only advises on the Turbo Tax software.



Is Your Home Being Targeted for a Break-In?



There's no doubt about it.... crime is increasing in many areas of America today. Most insurance companies will confirm this because of the increase in claims they are experiencing. A recent article by Kevin Michalowski, USCCA, gives some very eye-opening hints to help you determine if your home is being targeted for a break-in. Perhaps you'd like to pass this information on to your insurance clients. Or perhaps you'd simply like to be more aware yourself. At any rate, we feel it's worth your read.

Here are Kevin's 7 subtle – and not so subtle – signs that your home is being targeted for a break-in:

1. Strangers with strange requests

A knock at your door...

“Would you like to try a new cleaning product?”

“Can I use your phone or Wi-Fi? My phone died and I need to make a call.”

“I'm doing a survey for the neighborhood.”

“Is John here?” [asking for a fake person]

Any of these scenarios could be legit. Or someone may be trying to case your home. Always ask for identification. Be very wary of letting someone in.

2. Unfamiliar vehicles or people

Are there repeated sightings of unfamiliar cars parked near your home with someone inside? Take note of license plates and a physical description of the vehicles or people inside.

3. Odd markings or objects left on or near your property

Strange chalk markings on the sidewalk? Sticker on your door or mailbox? It could be someone marking your home for an accomplice. Remove them immediately.

4. Flyers on your door or mailbox?

There's a good chance it's someone soliciting. But it could also be left to test occupancy. Remove them as soon as they appear.

5. Unusual questions about your schedule or household

Strangers or new acquaintances asking questions about your schedule or who lives in your home? Be on guard. Limit how much you share, even in casual conversations. You might be talking to a “bird-dog” who's gathering information for a home invader.

6. Pets behaving strangely

Animals acting agitated, barking at certain times, or showing interest in an area of your property? They might be alerting you to suspicious activity... Investigate but do so safely.

7. Tampering with outdoor lights or security systems

Unscrewed or missing light bulbs?

Cameras turned away or tape over a door camera?

Damaged alarm systems?

Regularly inspect security measures for tampering. 🦋



According to Investopedia.com, the average interest rate on credit cards is 24.4%. But some credit cards now have 35% interest rates on unpaid balances. Checkbook.org found that if you just make the minimum payment on what you owe on a card with 35% interest without adding any new charges, ***you will never pay the card off.***

~NARFE Magazine, June/July 2025

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), a U.S. government agency, has a credit card comparison tool to help you find the best credit card for your needs.

<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/credit-cards/explore-cards/cards/barclays-bank-delaware-aarp-essential-rewards-mastercard-from-barclays/>

Many AmFam agents have been either seriously considering retirement or have already made the decision and turned in their notices. Many agents have a plan, but some don't. Often, we hear, "Oh, I plan to just take it easy, sleep in for a change, travel a bit...nothing in particular." But those who have been there done that, often feel that something is lacking after a while.

Here are the thoughts of one of our members who took the task of retiring very seriously. Let's look at what he did and maybe his actions will spark ideas of a change in your plans.

IS RELOCATION IN RETIREMENT FOR YOU??

By Steve Crane



You have reached that stage in your life when retirement is just around the corner. If you are looking into the future and considering relocating, you would be joining 10%-12% of those who do so each year.

Why do people relocate? There are multiple reasons. The most common are reduced cost of living; a more desirable climate; or moving closer to family and grandchildren.

But listen up! There are many reasons why relocation does not work out. These include:

- Underestimating the emotional, financial, and practical challenges of moving.
- There's also the loss of your social network, meaning you will have to spend some time making new friends.
- There's the issue of adapting to your new environment. Are you one who adapts slowly...or perhaps not at all?
- And what happens if your expectation that the 'relocation will solve existing problems' falls through?
- And most serious of all, what if you and your partner can't agree on where you should move to?

Let's suppose now that you have worked out all the above issues and you have definitely made the decision to relocate. You and your partner have decided that together you will both try to give yourselves the best chances of success. Here are some suggestions about the steps you might take to make your relocation even more successful.

- Decide on the **area where you wish to locate** using criteria you have mutually agreed upon with your partner.
- Next, you need to decide **what type of community** you want to live in (active adult, 55+, golfing community, RVer communities, rent or own, etc.).

- Take the time to **visit several communities**. It is always good to visit with a current resident.
- It's good to **check the organized community's website** because often they post their contracts there.
- Another good idea is to check how the **cost of living in your chosen area** compares to your current area. On the internet, you can compare the cost of living in your current ZIP code with the new ZIP code.
- Sometimes it is possible to **do a trial run in your selected location**. VRBO (Vacation Rentals by Owner) is a great resource. Renting a private home, cabin, condo or apartment in your desired area helps you decide if that area is really for you.
- Don't forget about **healthcare and medical specialists** you might need in your new location. Is such care available? How respected is healthcare in that area? Often healthcare is rationed in communities with a high percentage of retirees. When care is restricted or prioritized, it can be based on factors like medical necessity, cost, or sometimes, age-related criteria leading to reduced access, long wait times for procedures (like hip replacements), and, in some cases, denial of certain treatments.
- **Don't forget about Dr Google!!** Questions like "Where's the best place for me to retire economically?" You'll learn which states have no income tax, low overall tax burdens, and often, lower living costs.

Do your research *before* making a decision on where you will relocate. You can often save a lot of money, enjoy better weather, and experience a lifestyle like you've never imagined. Good luck!! 🍀

ENGLISH IS HARD

1. The bandage was wound around the wound.
2. The farm was used to produce produce.
3. The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
4. We must polish the Polish furniture.
5. He could lead if he would get the lead out.
6. The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
7. Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
8. A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
9. When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
10. I did not object to the object.
11. The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
12. There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
13. They were too close to the door to close it.

www.analyticalgrammar.com

**Ever heard of
"Heteronyms?"**

**Do a Dr. Google.
What fun!!**

Did you ever sell **American Family's Long Term Care Policies**? If so, you know AmFam no longer sells them. You probably also know that the company has been raising the premiums (sometimes we're told) as much as 70% in one year. The policyholder has the option of making changes, such as reducing benefits, in an effort to be able to hold on to the policy. There's not one person with a conscience who feels this is right. Rumor has it that there is a faction that is seriously looking into this issue again. Who's to blame? Obviously, the insurance company which, once again, did not do its research and plan well. But it is the policyholder who suffers. We'll keep you posted as we learn more.

FINDING YOUR INSURANCE NICHE



[ASNOA]

One of the biggest mistakes independent insurance agents make is trying to be everything to everyone. It sounds productive at first. After all, you'd think that if you have more products, then you have more prospects, and consequently, more opportunities. But in reality, trying to serve everyone often leads to weaker marketing, inconsistent referrals, slower growth, and a constant struggle to stand out. The agencies that grow the fastest usually do the exact opposite: they become known for something specific. They find their niche. Here's how to find your niche for long-term success.

Start with What You Already Know

The best niche often starts with what's already working. Before going after a new market, look at your current book of business and ask yourself:

- Which clients are the most profitable?
- Which accounts are the easiest to retain?
- Which industries generate the best referrals?
- Which accounts create the fewest service headaches?

Sometimes, your niche is already sitting inside your agency, and you just haven't intentionally built around it yet. As they say, "Success leaves clues." Start there.

Identify Where You Have Natural Credibility

A strong niche isn't just about market opportunity; it's also about trust. Clients want advisors who understand their world. That means your personal background, industry experience, community involvement, and relationships matter more than you think. For example:

A former contractor may naturally connect with construction accounts

- Someone involved in agriculture may be trusted in farm and rural markets
- A strong church or nonprofit network may open doors in faith-based organizations
- Experience in healthcare may create credibility with medical professionals

Your niche should align with where trust happens fastest. When you're known for solving a specific problem for a specific type of client, trust builds faster and referrals become easier. People know exactly when to think of you. Essentially, credibility shortens the sales cycle.

Evaluate Profitability — Not Just Volume

A niche should make your agency stronger, not just busier. Some markets generate lots of activity, but they're not that profitable. Others may produce fewer clients, but they lead to stronger revenue, better retention, and more referral opportunities. Ask yourself:

- What is the average account size?
- What's the retention rate?
- Are there strong cross-sell opportunities?
- Does this niche create referral momentum?
- Is servicing these accounts operationally sustainable?

The goal isn't just to generate more business, but better business. A profitable niche supports growth without creating constant chaos.

Look for Underserved or Overlooked Markets

Not every profitable niche is obvious. Some of the best opportunities exist where other agents aren't paying enough attention. Look for:

- Industries with complex insurance needs
- Local business sectors that seem to be growing
- High net-worth households that need specialized coverage
- Professional groups with unique liability concerns
- Emerging industries that require education and guidance

Continued next page

These markets often value expertise more than price shopping. When complexity increases, trusted advisors become more valuable. That's where independent agents can truly win.

Build Your Marketing Around the Niche

Once your niche is clear, your marketing should reflect it everywhere. This is where many agencies can end up falling short: they choose a niche internally, yet they still market themselves like generalists. Your website, referral messaging, email campaigns, content strategy, and producer conversations should all reinforce your specialization. That includes:

- Industry-specific landing pages
- Targeted educational content
- Niche-focused referral partnerships
- Speaking opportunities and local visibility
- Client success stories and testimonials
- Social media content that speaks directly to that audience

Instead of saying, "We handle all kinds of insurance," you can say, "we specialize in helping contractors protect growing businesses," or "we work with families navigating high-value home coverage." When prospects feel like your agency "gets" them, conversion becomes easier. Specificity creates confidence. Where generalists compete on price, specialists compete on expertise. That difference matters.

Strengthen Referral Sources Around That Market

Niches grow faster when referral ecosystems support them. So, if your agency focuses on contractors, build relationships with lenders, attorneys, CPAs, payroll providers, and real estate professionals who already serve those clients.

If your niche is families with high-value homes, relationships with mortgage professionals, financial advisors, and estate planners become powerful lead sources. Referrals become much easier when partners know exactly who you help. People refer clients to specialists faster than to generalists.

Don't Confuse a Niche with a Limitation

Choosing a niche doesn't mean saying no to every other opportunity. It means choosing where your agency will lead — or even dominate. You can still write business outside your specialty. The difference is that your growth strategy, marketing focus, and operational energy all center around your strongest opportunity. So, think of your niche as your agency's identity, not its restrictions or limits. Having a niche just gives people a reason to remember you specifically. That's far more valuable than trying to be vaguely available to everyone.

Final Thoughts

If you're struggling to find your Niche, it could be that you don't have the right team or the right mixture of carriers to support your vision. Joining an independent network like ASNOA can help strengthen your carrier mixture and other revenue opportunities. If you're struggling to build the agency you really dream of having, reach out to ASNOA and we can talk you through our opportunities for new agents.

ASNOA: grow@asnoa.com

(630)908-4246 ☎

WANT TO HEAR SOME MORE IDEAS FROM AN INDEPENDENT AGENT??



Following are some comments from an extremely successful agent/member who went independent after several years as a captive. NAAFA appreciates that he is willing to share. As we have said before, we learn from each other and that's why both the young and mature agents make up the best mix of agents for any insurance company.

In our agency we dropped writing health, disability and long-term care as we felt we didn't have enough markets to do the best job. So, we connected with an agency that specialized in those products that had a good reputation in the industry and referred our clients to them. In return we received a referral commission as a result. It was a win for the customer as they were served by someone with competitive products and good customer service, a win for the agency that wrote the account as they picked up another client and win for us as we served our client with a better option, still received a commission for our time and it freed up our time to focus on our core business.

We also dropped almost all advertising, including Yellow Pages. We received a lot of referral business that kept our staff very busy, probably because we were focused on developing relationships and excelling at customer service. Since our clients were already vetted, they tended to refer people like themselves, the closing ratio was much better on referrals, and the policy retention was much better. People that called from the advertising or Yellow Pages tended to be shoppers, so the closing ratio was lower, the retention lower and overall as I remember, they seemed to have more claims. Our philosophy was we don't want to write everyone.

Lastly, we were selective regarding what carriers we contracted with. Are they a good match for our clients and core business, is their commission structure profitable and do they have a good reputation and service? We tended to try to develop good relationships with our carriers and not treat them as a commodity. Beside not wanting to write every prospect, you also don't want to contract with every carrier. ☎

21 INSURANCE SALES TIPS FOR YOUNG OR INEXPERIENCED INSURANCE AGENTS

[21 Insurance Sales Tips For Young or Inexperienced Insurance Agents - InsuranceSplash.com](#) **

1) Dress More Professionally

Obviously, if you dress more professionally clients are more likely to take you seriously. I don't need to convince you of that. But when you're the sharpest dressed person in the office your coworkers and your boss will take you more seriously and most importantly, you'll take yourself more seriously!

Sometimes confidence comes from the outside in. If you look the part everyone, including yourself, will start to believe it.

2) Avoid Using "Young" Slang"

Have you ever told a client or prospect that you were "all about" customer service? Do you express agreement by saying things like, "Gotcha", "Right on" or "For Sure"?

Don't get me wrong, I believe in being yourself and not apologizing for it, but when you're trying to sell, the more you speak like your prospect the better success you'll have. If your prospect doesn't use those terms, it's harder to earn their trust when you do

3) Find Common Ground

Regardless of your prospect's age or background there's always something you have in common. Find it. Did you grow up in the same neighborhood? Like the same baseball team? Shop at the same grocery store? Do you both love your family? Ask questions and figure it out so you can focus on the commonalities and skip over the rest.

4) Ask Prospects About Their Kids

If you're trying to sell to someone much older than you, try to find out if they have a child or grandchild your age and ask a lot of questions about him or her.

You'll prime their brain to think about their loved one. This makes your prospect more likely to buy from you since they would want someone else to do the same for their child.

Plus, while you may be young and inexperienced, if you're more polished than their child, you'll come off as a real professional by comparison.

5) Reference Combined Experience

Remind prospects that they're not buying only from you. "I passed my licensing exam 3 months ago and I'm so lucky because our office has over 45 years of insurance experience! In fact, every single policy I write is double-checked by the owner of the agency." If experience may be an issue for your prospect, make sure they know you're up to your ears in it.

6) Learn From Experienced Coworkers

Technology has created a very unusual situation in the business world. It makes younger people think they're smarter than they are.

As a tech guy myself, I know it's hard to take advice from someone you just watched peck away at a keyboard to write a one sentence email.

But I also know more multi-millionaire insurance agents than almost anybody and I have found almost no correlation between their tech abilities and their success. That'll change for your generation but learn everything you can from those who've been around.

7) Be Enthusiastic

Have you ever seen an infomercial without enthusiastic people? Everybody likes enthusiasm and as a young salesman, you can display unbridled enthusiasm without looking like an idiot. People will just think you're young and have a lot of energy. They'll like it. And they'll buy into it.

Continued on next page

8) Follow the Markets

If you want to relate to a more mature and professional audience, follow the stock market. You don't have to be an expert, just know enough to ask questions that don't make you sound stupid.

After you've qualified someone by asking if they follow the market, ask something like, "What sectors do you think are going to do the best in the next quarter?" And don't turn into one of those Cramer wannabees who think they always know the sleeper stock. It'll make you look inexperienced to someone who has followed the market for years.

9) Listen to Your Phone Voice

Record your voice on the phone while talking to some clients.

Do you sound smart?

Do you sound confident?

Do you sound like a little kid who picked up the phone in Daddy's office?

10) Sell to Other Young People

There's one group you have a huge advantage within selling... other young people!

And guess what... There's millions of them! Millions buying homes, millions getting married, starting businesses, having kids, buying expensive stuff! **Go get them!**

11) Don't Ignore Sales Fundamentals

I'm sorry to burst your bubble, but Facebook, Twitter, Text Messages and QR Codes don't sell insurance. People do. Of course, there are tools that can make things easier and more effective for agents, but social media will never replace the basics.

Read "[How To Win Friends and Influence People](#)" by Dale Carnegie. It was written in 1936 and teaches you how Teddy Roosevelt, Henry Ford, Benjamin Franklin and a lot of other old people become successful long before Mark Zuckerberg. Everything in that book is just as relevant today as it was 75 years ago.

12) Speak Less, Listen More

As a young or inexperienced salesperson, there's always an impulse to demonstrate your knowledge. You want prospects to see you know your stuff because you're a bit worried about it yourself.

The more you talk or explain things they didn't ask about, the more obvious it is how much you don't know. And the more likely you'll elicit a question you can't answer!

13) Bring Up Age First

The best way to avoid an objection is to bring it up and overcome it before the prospect has a chance to. Make a joke about your inexperience and be open about it. Once you've brought it up, you have the excuse to explain why your prospect shouldn't be concerned. (you're well-trained, you're licensed, you ask questions when you don't know answers, etc.)

Here's [the greatest example ever](#).

14) Be Better Prepared

If your inexperience makes you feel inadequate as a salesperson, then find a way to get around it. Work harder, work longer, learn more about your products. Have an answer for every possible question.

Read books about sales, listen to sales audio tapes, go to seminars about sales. Get in front of a mirror, a colleague, or a friend and practice your sales scripts, practice your rebuttals, your closes. Nothing comes to you. Prepare yourself and go get it.

15) Expect to Live in the Trenches

Selling insurance is hard, hard work. Insurance agents you see with big houses and nice cars playing golf around the world didn't get there overnight. They sold and sold and sold. And sold more.

It's the only way to become super successful in this business and if you want to be successful, you're going to have to do it too.

Continued next page

16) Become a Marketing Expert

Here's a few marketing resources to get you started:

- Free Marketing Book for Insurance Agents
- 100 Insurance Agent Marketing Ideas
- 100 Insurance Social Media Marketing Ideas
- 100 Insurance Lead Generation Ideas
- Insurance LeadFinder Tool. You're not just a salesperson; you are a marketer.

17) Don't Spew Feature

When you're new to selling it's common to focus on product features rather than benefits. At some point you learned all 10 features of a product and you're anxious to prove your knowledge by telling customers about all 10 of them.

Unfortunately they don't care about all of them. There are maybe one or two features that interest them and you're better off asking questions to identify the client's needs so you can explain how your products will satisfy those needs than trying to explain everything. Don't spew features on your clients; identify their needs and satisfy them.

18) Don't Use Jargon

Nothing says "bad salesperson" more than using jargon to someone that doesn't understand it. There is no better way to show prospects you don't give a %&#! about them than by using terminology no one outside your industry should know!

When you're new, you have a unique advantage of being able to relate to clients as an outsider. People will actually relate better to you if they feel like you're still on their side. You haven't crossed over to the "insurance salesman" side. Don't use jargon, it only makes you look like you're hiding something.

19) Recognize and Act on Buying Signals

I've witnessed a lot of new salespeople shoot themselves in the foot because they didn't know when to shut up. When someone is ready to buy it, let them do it. If it's that important to explain everything then go ahead and do it... after you get their signature and a check!

20) Don't Sell on Price

I get it... people are shopping on price, they're comparing on price, and they're buying on price. You buy everything on price, too, right? **Wrong.**

Here's the bottom line: If you honestly believe people only buy on price then quit today. You're in the wrong business and the industry doesn't need you. We're not going to survive with a bunch of price-checkers. The entire industry will suffer if you don't get out now.

Need some ideas for selling value? Read this.

21) Embrace Your Youth

Be crazy. Be reckless. Be passionate. Be young! No one ever had a mid-life crisis and became an insurance salesman. Don't be afraid to breathe some life into this business! Smile. Laugh. Be fun. Who would you rather spend an hour talking about insurance with? 🐦



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[Permission granted from Josh Carlson at newsfeed@carrietmanagement.com to reprint this article.]

DID YOU KNOW? #1

IRS

The IRS **typically has 3 years** to audit a tax return, measured from the later of the **due date** (usually April 15) or the date you **actually filed**.

Common exceptions that extend the window:

- **6 years** if the IRS believes you **underreported income by more than 25%**.
- **No time limit** if you **filed a fraudulent return** or **didn't file a return** at all.
- **7 years** for certain claims involving **worthless securities** or **bad debt deductions**.
- If you filed an **amended return**, the audit window can be affected depending on timing and what changed.

Those retired agents who feel no need for NAAFA and our SECA Kit once they get their lump sum pay out, need to "think again!!" Or, if you haven't been audited in the past 10 years and feel safe in thinking you won't be getting a notice of audit on your termination benefits, "think again!!" NAAFA has had several agents who retired 15+ years ago receive their first CP2000 from the IRS. And many agents get audited 2 or 3 years in a row. Now that the IRS uses AI to determine who gets audited and even to determine if your response is acceptable or not, we are seeing an uptick in audits. NAAFA membership is a small price to pay to have help if you need it.

DID YOU KNOW? #2



Insurance fraud is estimated to cost American consumers over \$300B per year, and these costs are borne by the American public (individuals and businesses) **in the form of increased premiums on our various insurance policies**, including health insurance, homeowners and property insurance, auto insurance, worker's compensations insurance, life insurance products, and commercial liability products.

A recent report estimated that this amounts to increased premiums of each American of almost \$1,000/year, or \$3,700 per each American family.

[Information from Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance.]

BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW THIS ONE, DID YOU? #3

TIME FOR A LAUGH...JUST CAN'T BE SERIOUS ALL THE TIME!

A lawyer just opened his new office and wanted to look busy when a man walked in. The lawyer quickly grabbed his phone and started talking very loudly.

"No, sir! I won't settle for less than five million dollars! My client deserves justice! Tell the judge I'll see him in court tomorrow!"

He hung up and looked at the man.

"Sorry about that, I'm very busy. Now, how can I help you?"

The man looked at him and said,

"I'm just here to connect your phone line. It's not working yet"



DID YOU KNOW? #4

Dear NAAFA:

Has anyone said anything about last year's ruling on **non-compete agreements**? Wasn't there a law passed where they're null and void?
Name Withheld

NAAFA'S RESPONSE:

Dear NAAFA Member:

We wrote about the new non-compete law back in 2023. See the Fall issue of the NAAFA Report. You can access it by going to www.NAAFA.com where we have posted all past issues.

Since that time, many state courts challenged the law, blocking the rule from going into effect. As a result of all this, the FTC's rule did not go into effect in 2024 as it was scheduled to, and as such, each state's rules for non-compete stand.

Just a word about the AmFam agent contract's non-compete clause: Had the FTC law passed, it would not have affected the AmFam contract. Here's why. Our contract is a non-solicitation contract. During the one-year non-compete, you may NOT solicit business from any of the customers you had on the books the day your contract ended. However, you are allowed to solicit any other AmFam client or any non-AmFam client. Therefore, you were able to still make a living selling insurance. What the FTC law said was that any contract where you could not sell insurance at all, anywhere, to anyone for one year was against the new law. Our AmFam contracts never said that, ever. Oh yes, some of the older contracts before 1993 put mileage restrictions in the non-compete...you couldn't solicit business within 50-mile radius from your original office. But even that was removed in the '93 contract. As you may or may not know, agents who never signed the '93 contract are today able to roll their agencies over to the independent world immediately upon retirement because the Wisconsin courts determined that the previous contracts were unenforceable.

Now we are not informed of exactly what the non-compete laws say in your state. But from what we understand, the courts there try to determine if the contract is favorable to both the employer and the agent who holds the contract. In other words, a good contract will protect the business interests of the employer, but should the agent quit, the contract's non-compete must allow the agent to still make a living in the field he just left.

Hope this helps a bit. In case you are pondering going independent, just know that attorneys often tell agents it is ok to write former customers if they have a waiver signed by their former customer stating that the customer contacted the agent (and not vice-versa). PLEASE KNOW THAT THIS DOES NOT STAND UP IN COURT. There is no way you should ever try to write your former customers or urge anyone else to until the one-year non-compete is over. Thanks for supporting NAAFA.

DID YOU KNOW? #5

Because insurance agents are also policy holders and because all active insurance agents have clients who are policy holders, the following information might be useful. Recently we have learned that some insurance companies are using AI to handle claims. Wow! Is that good or not? It will be up to you and your clients to decide. At any rate, it might be good to have this information handy.

Notice from NAIC Communications 3/10/2026
(National Association of Insurance Commissioners)
Consumer Insight: How Do I File a Complaint Against My Insurance Company?



By going to the NAIC website, (<https://content.naic.org/article/how-do-i-file-complaint-against-my-insurance-company>) you can get information on what an insurance complaint is, in their eyes, when and how it should be filed, and then what happens next.

NAAFA quite often gets emails from members who simply need to express their frustration with ‘things the way they are.’ Following is an example that hurts us to even read. The suffering at rejection and ridicule make a long-lasting impression on the oppressed. We must ask our readers how often they have witnessed the abuse of agents by company personnel or even by other agents and not spoken up about it for being wrong. Our ‘dream’ here at NAAFA is that we all take a stand against evil. We need to be brave, we need to protect, we need to stand for what is right and let others know where we are on such issues. The author of the following article will remain anonymous, but we are glad to reveal his thoughts and feelings. Perhaps this is what is meant by “standing for what is right!!”



Vietnam, Civil Rights, an AmFam Insurance Agency—

What Do They Have in Common?

[By someone who’s been involved in all three.]

I served in Vietnam. I believed it was my civil right—and my duty—to protect this great country. As a Green Beret Sergeant, I stepped up to the plate and did my part.

Coming home was a different story. The United States turned its back on us as if we were the enemy. We couldn’t find jobs. Even the VA denied us care. We were left to fend for ourselves with the wounds—physical and emotional—we brought back from Vietnam. That war became a ghost on my shoulder, a quiet presence constantly reminding me that we were no longer welcome in the country we had served.

Then came our families. In front of our children, we struggled to find anything positive to say about our service—or about our homecoming. My daughter once bought a jacket that said “Vietnam Veteran” on it. It sat in the closet for years, unworn—until Desert Storm happened. Suddenly, it was “Thank you for your service” time. And honestly? At first, I wanted to punch the people saying it, especially the older ones. They were the same ones who had slammed the door in our faces when we came back from Vietnam.

Now here we are, more than 50 years later. I’ve been asked many times—like so many other vets—to share my story. One experience stands out: I was invited to a religious school in Hales Corners, WI, where 25 to 30 veterans sat down with small groups of students for ten-minute conversations. No question was off-limits. Almost every conversation started with, “My grandfather was in the service.” Not one student mentioned a parent who served. The stigma of the ‘60s, ‘70s, and ‘80s had turned an entire generation away from service—and I didn’t blame them. My own kids avoided military service, and I never tried to talk them into it. But Desert Storm changed something. It helped bring this country back together. I just hope we never again turn our backs on those who step up to defend the vulnerable—the *De Oppresso Liber*.

Let’s talk about civil/equal rights and AmFam Insurance Agencies

I fought for those too. I **owned an insurance agency** and learned very quickly that once you reached the five-year mark, the company would try to push you out. Training programs changed. You were warned not to speak up. The mission of helping people turned into a strategy: *Take as much as you can from the client now—they won’t retire with you anyway.* Racism was out in the open. My manager said whatever he wanted, no filter. Training groups were divided by tenure, and I’d often challenge the status quo. I remember saying, “Cas (not his real name), what if your parents, when they came from Italy, were treated the way you’re asking us to treat African Americans?” The response? I was told I had a “bad attitude.”

Then came the NAACP lawsuit. I was right in the middle of it. I gave tapes to the company lawyers—full of racial slurs and blatant discrimination. I was terminated, but one of the attorneys, Alice, helped save my agency—at least for a while. You see, we were supposed to be self-employed. That was a joke.

Nothing happened to the managers. Rube, a respected veteran agent, was told not to write policies for black clients. He recorded it. His tape even made the news. He was terminated too. He sued—but in Wisconsin, it seemed an insurance agent could be fired for something as trivial as the way they comb their hair. He lost.

Why did we tape? Because what we heard was so vile, no one would believe it otherwise.

Eventually, the NAACP won a settlement. The company’s response? “Hire a few token blacks.” Training shifted again—this time to exploit *everyone*, not just minorities. I kept speaking out. A VP told me: “*Swim with the current or drown.*” When I was terminated, they gave me three reasons:

1. I refused to sign a blank sheet of paper.
2. It is ethical to take advantage of the consumer and there is nothing you can do about it.
3. Your manager said you called him a “N”.

The accusation didn’t hold. The manager himself confirmed I never said it. Still, I was terminated. The State Commissioner’s office replied, simply: “An insurance company can terminate an agent whenever they feel it’s necessary.” Lawyers told me not to bother. I’d never win. They wanted cash up front. So, there I stood—completely alone.

Continued next page

I reached out to everyone I could: the NAACP, the media, politicians—anyone. No replies. Ironically, I received the most support from fellow agents and company employees. I had full access to their computer systems, and I ran a clean agency. I never did anything unethical. Still, no response from the NAACP. Nothing. And I found myself feeling exactly like I did after Vietnam—abandoned. I had nothing positive to say about fighting for civil rights or equal rights.

Now, 30 years later, what do we see? Neo-Nazis symbols on overpasses. Hate crimes on the rise. But here's the real issue: Those who *won* during the Civil Rights movement didn't turn around to protect the people who fought beside them—nor the next generation that should have followed in their footsteps. Many were bought and paid for in the '90s by the same people who had once oppressed them. And yes, that includes the NAACP.

The protests we see now aren't the same as Vietnam—but they speak to the same pain. Today, I'm a white man labeled a racist for something I didn't say. And I'm from the generation that fought for the NAACP lawsuit. We have nothing good to say about how it all ended. What will future generations say? My great-great-grandfather fought for civil rights and equal rights... but my parents didn't. We're skipping whole generations of hard-working people who once stood for something.

Moral of the story:
Being part of the problem is easy---**do nothing.**

Solving the problem takes **hard work.**

STAND UP FOR WHAT IS RIGHT, EVEN IF YOU STAND ALONE. 🦋

At What Point Do Most New Captive Agents Fail?

While a captive insurance agent can fail for many reasons, the most critical point of failure occurs within the first year, where an estimated 90% or more of new agents leave the business. This high failure rate can be attributed to several factors that are particularly acute early in an agent's career.

High attrition in the first year

The transition from training to active sales is where most new captive agents falter. This period often combines the highest expectations with the most significant challenges.

- The "grind" is not a "get-rich-quick" scheme: Many agents enter the industry with unrealistic expectations of rapid success. The reality is that building a client base and generating a stable income takes years of persistence, hard work, and long hours, including nights and weekends.
- Discouragement and rejection: Inexperienced agents often lack the skills to handle the high volume of rejection that comes with sales. When initial results don't come fast enough, discouragement and financial stress set in, leading many to quit.
- Poor lead quality: Many captive agencies operate on a high-turnover model that provides new agents with low-quality, aged leads. With minimal training and poor starting resources, agents burn out quickly from constantly calling unqualified prospects.
- Lack of mentorship: A new agent's performance is often hindered by insufficient mentorship or poor guidance from an experienced veteran. Many are left to figure things out for themselves, increasing the chances of early failure.

Long-term challenges that can cause failure

For captive agents who make it past the first year, longer-term challenges can still derail their career.

- Limited product offerings: Unlike independent agents who can shop from multiple carriers, captive agents are contractually bound to sell products from a single company. This limited selection can prevent them from offering the most competitive pricing or tailored solutions, potentially causing them to lose clients.
- Market changes: Economic shifts or "hard markets"—periods of high premiums and limited coverage options—put captive agents at a disadvantage. Their inability to shop for better rates makes it difficult to serve clients, who may then seek out an independent agent.
- Sales quotas and pressure: Many captive agents must meet stringent sales quotas set by their parent company. When market conditions make it difficult to hit targets, agents face reduced income or the risk of contract termination.
- Lack of business ownership: A captive agent does not own their "book of business," which is the list of clients they service. If they leave their company, even after years of building relationships, they cannot take their clients with them. This lack of ownership is often cited as a key motivator for experienced agents to leave the captive model.

Submitted by Member as Observed 🦋



Man charged with **DWI** while driving lawnmower on road

SARAH C. JOHNSON sjohnson@hickoryrecord.com *Morganton News Herald*

[Hey readers, have you ever run into this before? How is possible damage to the mower covered? Does this DWI affect the person's driving record for auto insurance? Is coverage for a snowmobile different from mower coverage? Better know what you're selling, right??]



A Valdese (North Carolina) man was charged with DWI while driving a lawnmower in Morganton on Wednesday.

Zachary Norton, 38, is charged with driving while impaired, no liability insurance, failure to display registration plate and a brake light equipment violation, the Morganton Department of Public Safety said in a news release.

Morganton police officers saw a lawnmower driving along East Union Street near East Fleming Drive shortly before 9 p.m. Wednesday. The Morganton Department of Public Safety had received reports prior to the sighting of a lawnmower being driven recklessly on U.S. Highway 70, the department said.

The officer pulled the lawnmower over and identified the driver as Norton. Morganton Department of Public Safety said Norton appeared to be under the influence of an impairing substance at the time.

Morganton Department of Public Safety said this is Norton's second DWI offense. The previous charge occurred on July 4, 2024. Norton is innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

[Man charged with DWI while driving lawnmower on road - Insurance News | InsuranceNewsNet](#)

SOME STATISTICS YOU MAY OR MAY NOT WANT TO HEAR ABOUT!

These 10 states have the worst drivers in the country. Interestingly, state residents with the poorest driving behaviors don't seem to carry significantly higher insurance rates.

It's a question for the ages: which state holds the dubious distinction of housing America's worst drivers? Just in time for increased summer holiday traffic and related accident claims, SmartAsset.com has the answer.

Researchers with the group trawled through National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data to craft rankings based on the percentage of insured drivers in the state; DUI arrests per 1,000 drivers; vehicular-related deaths per 1,000 drivers; and Google trends on automobile ticket-related searches. According to that methodology, the states with the worst drivers in the country are:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Florida | 6. Alabama |
| 2. Mississippi | 7. Vermont |
| 3. Oklahoma | 8. Tennessee |
| 4. New Jersey | 9. Texas |
| 5. Delaware | 10. Nevada |

Only 74% of drivers in Oklahoma are insured – the worst rate in the nation – followed by Florida and Tennessee. Florida also tops other states in its Google searches for “speeding tickets” and “traffic tickets,” perhaps leading to its status as the worst driving state in the country.

Top 10 Most Expensive States for Car Insurance in 2025

Based on October 2025 data, the 10 most expensive states are:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. New York (\$4,031) | 5. Colorado (\$3,233) |
| 2. Louisiana (\$3,953) | 6. Michigan (\$3,225) |
| 3. Florida (\$3,874) | 7. California (\$3,102) |
| 4. Nevada (\$3,566) | 8. New Jersey (\$3,061) |
| | 9. Maryland (\$2,966) |
| | 10. Rhode Island (\$2,959) |

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Farmers Moves to Settle Charges It Treated Agents as Employees

The proposed deal comes as the carrier shifts cancellation decisions from agents to corporate teams.

By **Carl Winfield** | February 23, 2026

Listen to this story

Farmers Insurance is moving to settle a second federal lawsuit in less than a decade over claims it treated its exclusive agents as independent contractors when they should have been classified as employees.

The lawsuit, filed in 2023 in federal court in Los Angeles, alleged that agents outside California were treated as independent contractors despite working under what plaintiffs described as detailed corporate oversight of branding, systems and performance standards that resembled employment. The court has granted preliminary approval of a proposed \$4.5 million settlement, with a final hearing scheduled for June 4.

Farmers declined to comment.

The proposed deal follows a separate California agent misclassification lawsuit that resulted in a \$75 million settlement approved in 2022. Farmers denied wrongdoing in that case and has likewise denied liability in the latest dispute.

In fact, other personal lines carriers with exclusive-agent networks have also been drawn into similar litigation over whether agents are properly classified as independent contractors.

Allstate is defending a comparable exclusive-agent classification case in California. The lawsuit, filed in April 2023 in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, alleges that the carrier treated its exclusive agents as independent contractors when, according to plaintiffs, they functioned more like employees under California law. The court certified a class action in March 2025, and a trial is scheduled for September.

State Farm has also been drawn into litigation involving its term independent contractor agent program — a structured pathway for prospective agents to operate under temporary independent contractor agreements while training to become full agency owners. A lawsuit filed in March 2019 challenged whether participants in that program were properly classified as independent contractors rather than employees. The case advanced into class-certification proceedings and remained active at least through 2021, according to publicly available court records.

Remember the **American Family** case: Jamal vs American Family?? Our board has certain suspicions concerning this case. We know insurance companies often buy off judges and even opposing attorneys. It's no secret that captive insurance companies have been controlling their captive agents as though they were employees for many years. AmFam tells us we are "Agency Owners" when we don't own a darned thing. If you truly own something, then you can sell it. Ever try selling your American Family insurance agency?? Can't be done.

Good luck, you captive agents who are suing your company for treating you like employees. You'll never win it unless some miraculous intervention occurs. We can pray for that, can't we?

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They have more carriers, more agents,
more premium.

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fewer seats in
first class.

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above the rest.

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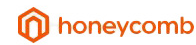
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