

Double A Solutions

How To Start

YOUR INSURANCE



AGENCY

**OFF ON THE RIGHT
FOOT**

*A 97-PAGE GUIDE ON HOW TO
START YOUR AGENCY...
AND SCALE!*

Claire Jenq

TABLE OF CONTENTS

02 Introduction

03 Steps to Start an Insurance Agency

Starting an Independent Insurance Agency.....	4
Starting a Captive Insurance Agency.....	11

15 You've Started an Agency, Now What?

Staffing.....	14
Hiring.....	14
Training.....	19
Prospecting.....	22
How to Find Customers.....	23

29 Agency Technology

Lead Management Software.....	24
Auto Dialer.....	26
VoIP System.....	28
Accounting Software.....	40
Email Marketing Systems.....	43

45 Quoting, Rating, and Binding

Quoting.....	46
Rating.....	47
Binding.....	49

51 Sales Forecasting

TABLE OF CONTENTS

53	New Customer Onboarding	
	Craft Customer Personas.....	55
	Set Customer Expectations.....	56
58	The Endorsements Process	
60	The Claims Process	
62	The Annual Customer Review Process	
	What to Know Before the Review.....	63
	What to Ask During the Review.....	65
67	Rate Increases	
70	Bookkeeping and Accounting	
	Agency-Billed Policies.....	71
	Direct-Billed Policies.....	73
74	Conclusion	
	Appendices	
A	Appendix I: New Agency Checklist.....	75
B	Appendix II: List of Resources by Chapter.....	92

Introduction



Insurance agency ownership is a huge achievement for anyone in insurance. Having your own agency means that you're finally in charge. However, being an insurance agency owner is much different than being an insurance agent. You're running your own business. That means there may be many facets of business ownership that you haven't yet considered. For example, you've taken a couple college classes in accounting, and you've realized accounting is not for you. As an insurance agency owner, accounting is unfortunately something you'll have to think about. The first step to successful agency ownership is to assemble your dream team who'll help support you in the areas where you're less confident. The next step is to read this eBook for a step-by-step guide on how to start your insurance agency off on the right foot.

STEPS TO START AN INSURANCE AGENCY



If you're interested in starting an insurance agency, you'll want to follow these steps to ensure a smooth transition from agent to agency owner. Before you begin your transition, there are a few questions you must ask yourself. For example, do you want to represent several different insurance carriers? Or, are you interested in working for one particular insurance company? Keep in mind that if you open a dedicated insurance agency, you'll have more support when you start. Generally, the dedicated insurance company will have a local recruiter to walk you through the agency ownership process. The insurance company may also give you license to use their marketing materials. Once you've done some soul searching and chosen which style of agency works best for you, follow the steps below to get your business off the ground.

Starting an Independent Insurance Agency

1

Write a Business Plan

The reason why you need to write a business plan for your agency might not be clear to you at first. However, this step should not be skipped. The many reasons why writing your business plan is a necessary step becomes clearer once you've begun the process of becoming an agency owner. First, you'll need a business plan if you want to secure funding through debt financing such as bank loans or equity financing. Also, a business plan is a useful document to use when you'd like to attract other stakeholders to help you fund your business. Finally, a business plan will serve as the blueprint for running your business and enable you to better understand the insurance industry, your customers, and your competition.

Starting an Independent Insurance Agency

Usually, business plans include an executive summary, a company description, information about products, a market analysis, marketing strategy and implementation, organization and management, a financial plan, and a funding request. Check out this [useful guide to building an Insurance Agency Business Plan](#) to learn exactly what components your business plan should include.

Starting an Independent Insurance Agency



Choose a Legal Structure

When you choose the legal structure of your business, you're choosing how **personally liable** you'll be for your business. For example, if you're sued in court and you lose, the plaintiff can go after your bank account, home, or car. That's why choosing the right legal structure is so important. The different kinds of legal structures are:

Sole Proprietorship

Partnership

Limited Liability Corporation (LLC)

Starting an Independent Insurance Agency

Sole Proprietorship

With a sole proprietorship business structure, the individual is held personally liable for any debts. Like in the example above, if you owe money, the plaintiff can take it from your bank account, home, or car.

Partnership

When two or more people own a business, they can form a partnership. The two kinds of partnerships are limited partnerships (LP) and limited liability partnerships (LLP).

A limited partnership (LP) indicates that one person of the partnership has unlimited liability, while the other partner(s) have limited liability. The one person with unlimited liability has the most control over the company, while the partners have limited control.

In a limited liability partnership, every partner has limited liability. This option means that the rest of the partners are protected if a debt is incurred by another partner.

Starting an Independent Insurance Agency

Limited Liability Corporation (LLC)

An LLC contains advantages from both the corporation and the partnership structures. With an LLC, your personal assets are protected from bankruptcy or lawsuits.

Read [this article](#) by the U.S. Small Business Administration to determine which business structure is right for you.

Starting an Independent Insurance Agency

3

Register Your Agency's Name

The next step is deciding on a name for your agency. While some agents decide to use their own names when choosing an agency name, you can really choose anything. Look for a name that immediately spells out to the customer your purpose and is easily searchable online.

4

Apply for a Tax ID Number

If you choose to do a sole proprietorship business structure, you can use your own social security number to file your taxes. However, if you've chosen another option, your insurance agency needs an identification number to file taxes. You can apply for a [Federal Employer Identification Number here](#).

5

Register Your Business with the State

Now that you have a way to pay your federal taxes, you have to register your agency with the state commissioner's office in order to be able to pay your state and local taxes. Use [this map](#) provided by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners to find the contact information for your state.

Starting an Independent Insurance Agency



Get the Appropriate License or Permit

Depending on where you live, in addition to your insurance license, you may also be required to have a general business permit or state license. [This U.S. Small Business Administration Licenses and Permits article](#) has more information about finding which licenses and permits you may need.



Purchase E&O Insurance

Purchasing errors and omissions insurance (E&O), a form of professional liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance (PII), is a good move, especially if you choose a sole proprietorship business structure. E&O insurance protects companies and their employees against [claims of inadequate work](#). Some financial bodies and states list E&O insurance as a business requirement.

Starting a Captive Insurance Agency

1

Locate a Company District Manager or Recruiter

Once you've decided on the insurance company you'd like to represent, simply look them up online. Most insurance company websites will include a section about what you should do if you'd like to open a dedicated insurance agency. The first step is often to contact a local district manager or recruiter who can help walk you through the process.

2

Get State Certified Training

This step is for aspiring insurance agents who haven't yet done state certified training for the kind of insurance they'll sell. While the amount of time required by each state can differ, here is a general idea of how much classroom time you'll have to put in for three popular forms of insurance:

Life insurance- 20 hours

Accident and Health Insurance- 20 hours

Property/Casualty Insurance- 40 hours

The kind of state certified training that you'll be required to have also varies by company. Be sure to check the company's website to see which form they require.

Starting an Independent Insurance Agency

3

Get the Appropriate License or Permit

Similar to the step that you'd take as an independent agency owner, you'll need to acquire the appropriate business license or permit for the state where you'll be operating. The insurance company that you decide to work for should help you through this process.

5

Build or Buy an Agency

Most insurance companies will give you the option to either purchase an existing agency or build your own. Check out the company's website to find out which options they have available.

4

Write a Business Plan

Writing a business plan will help you secure funding such as bank loans or equity financing should you need it. Each insurance company may have varying requirements for the content of the business plan, but most business plans include an executive summary, a company description, information about products, a market analysis, marketing strategy and implementation, organization and management, a financial plan, and a funding request. For more information, check out this [guide to building an Insurance Agency Business Plan](#).

YOU'VE STARTED AN AGENCY. NOW WHAT?

Now that you have your agency, you have to think about who's going to work with you, how you're going to pay them, and what your sales process will look like.

STAFFING

Hiring

Training

PROSPECTING

How to Find Customers

STAFFING

Hiring

Finding and hiring qualified employees can be challenging no matter what industry you're in. An article published on [Betterteam.com](https://www.betterteam.com), "[Complete Guide to Finding Employees](#)," suggests the following methods for finding qualified job candidates:

1. Do your current employees know someone from a past position who would fit perfectly at your company? Ask your other employees for referrals. You won't know if they know someone unless you reach out. Then, once you have a list of names, look up the referrals on [LinkedIn](#). You can also find people with related skills through a quick search on LinkedIn. Message promising leads through the platform to see if they're interested in applying for a job at your agency. A way to encourage employee referrals is to reward employees for referrals. When an employee refers someone who then becomes an employee at your company, reward the employee with a nice bonus.

STAFFING

2. Either write (or find a writer) who can write a killer job posting.

3. Keep in contact with any good candidates that you didn't hire but could see yourself hiring in the future. One way to maintain contact is to occasionally send them emails with current open job opportunities at your agency. For example, you can make a list of these contacts and send them an automated email every month with your current openings.

4. Purchase ad space on Facebook to advertise your job opening.

5. Have employees share job postings on their social media accounts (such as LinkedIn). A way to make this easy for employees is to send them emails with short, pre-written messages that they can copy and paste to their social media accounts.

STAFFING

6. Find job boards that are specific to insurance and post your job opening there. Some examples that we've found are [InsuranceJobs.com](#), [GreatInsuranceJobs.com](#), and [InsuranceJournal.com](#).

7. Make sure you post your job on multiple websites. There are many job boards out there; you can also post your job on more general job sites such as [Indeed](#), [Glassdoor](#), and [Google for Jobs](#), to name a few. Don't forget to include a page on your website where you can post your job openings!

STAFFING

If you've tried the steps above and still have trouble finding qualified candidates, it's time to get creative. For example, you don't have to limit your search to asking your current employees for references. Get in touch with your personal network and ask friends, colleagues, and former colleagues if they have any recommendations. Also, maybe you've posted your job opening on many job boards, but your post is lost among the myriad of job openings. Some job boards like [Indeed](#) allow you to sponsor your job opportunity so that it appears at the top or bottom of the search page.

Colleges and universities are also great places to search for fresh, young talent. Contact local colleges and see if you can post a job opening to their job board. Additionally, you can call a career counselor and put your name on a list of companies with internship opportunities. After some time at your company, the interns you bring on will receive the training they need to fill a job opening at your company. You'll also already have an idea of their abilities. It's a win-win for everyone! Here are [29 other creative ideas](#) to find effective employees.

STAFFING

Maybe you don't want to commit to a new employee right away. In this situation, you'll want to look into **temp-to-hire employees**. Because this kind of employee is only employed temporarily, he or she won't receive the benefits of a full-time worker at your agency. You can find a temp employee through a temporary staffing agency. The employee accepts a temporary assignment with your company and remains under contract with the staffing agency until the temporary assignment ends. When the assignment period ends, you can choose whether or not you'd like to hire the employee full-time. Temp-to-hire situations benefit employers because you can give temps different responsibilities to see what most benefits the company. You can also test whether the temp has the skills to become a full-time employee.

STAFFING

Training

No matter what the qualifications are of your new hires, every new employee must undergo training. In an article written for *Forbes* by Stephen Baer, “4 Elements of Effective Employee Training,” Baer explains that the recipe for effective training includes 4M’s: Micro, Mobile, Memorable Content, and Memorable Data. His own 4M’s were adapted from the book *Designing Successful e-Learning* by Michael Allen. While your new agency might not be able to complete all 4M’s right away, you can adapt the 4M’s to fit the size of your business.

Micro, the first “M” of the recipe, refers to microlearning. If we learn something and don’t follow up with the lesson, we tend to forget it. Microlearning is about exposing new employees frequently to short and specialized lessons. *Walmart* is an example of a company that has used microlearning successfully. The grocery chain had excessive employee injury and accidents in its distribution centers. To combat this, Walmart required employees to answer daily safety questions. The safety incidents in Walmart distribution centers decreased by 54%!

STAFFING

Mobile is the next “M” of the training recipe. You know from experience that you’re always glued to your phone. Nomophobia, or Smartphone Separation Anxiety, is a real issue that’s more widespread today because smart phones have become essential to our daily lives. You should be aware of your employees’ phone addiction and use it to your advantage by making mobile-friendly training lessons. Training lessons that are mobile-friendly allow your employees to access training modules wherever they’d like.

Memorable is the third “M” of Baer’s training recipe. In order to make training memorable, many companies are resorting to game-based training. Game-based training was used by [Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals](#). The company created a game called [Rep Race](#), which was a salesforce training simulation game. Rep Race became very popular with employees and increased sales team effectiveness by 20%.

STAFFING

Finally, the last “M” of Baer’s training recipe is Measurable. Basically, whatever you do for training, you need to be able to measure how effective it was. Being able to track employee training is a vital necessity when measuring the effectiveness of different training methods. Baer suggests using Experience API (xAPI) to track employees’ training experiences. Experience API sounds like a phrase from science fiction, but it’s actually simple to implement. Using the formula below, the trainer records what an employee has completed so far:

[Employee] [read/watched/played/did/passed] [this learning experience].

So, for example, after an employee has completed a portion of his or her training, you’d record:

Claire passed the sales 101 quiz.

The benefit of being able to measure training experiences in this format is that you can see which learning methods were the most effective for your employees.

For more information about creating your own effective employee training procedures, check out my white paper, [How to Create a Successful Employee Onboarding Process](#).

PROSPECTING

Every business owner knows that you need customers to cover your costs and make a profit. Here's how to build a valuable book of business for your agency:

To earn money, you have to spend money, and that includes spending money to prospect potential customers. Especially in the insurance industry, most agents spend quite a lot on acquiring leads. As [Matt Johnson, State Farm's](#) former head of digital marketing, explained, "Insurance is not a high-interest category for someone aged 18 to 35. They want to spend as little time as possible thinking about insurance." Building a book of business is difficult when many people aren't thinking about your product on a day-to-day basis. Additionally, in a [2016 survey by PolicyGenius](#), half of the United States couldn't give the definition of a "deductible." So, as an insurance agent, you have the difficult task of trying to sell a low involvement product that's difficult for consumers to understand. There is a not-so-secret way to increase your agency's popularity, and that's by spending money on advertising.

PROSPECTING

How to Find Customers

Advertising is a short-term cost that leads to long-term benefits. *Agencies who spend over 15% of their revenue on marketing* tend to see revenues surge more than 20% year after year. *Entrepreneur* has a great article written by Brad Sugars called, "*Four Simple Ways to Find Customers*," which analyzes different methods you can use to attract new business. Advertising is the first method that Sugars discusses.

Advertising

The different advertising platforms are television, radio, print, and internet. As a new agent, you might not need, or want, to advertise on television. Although advertising on TV can be effective for reaching a select group of people, such as those who live locally, it's also the most expensive of the platforms. Instead, radio might be the better option for you.

PROSPECTING

Maybe when you think of radio advertisements you imagine annoyingly catchy jingles for some business or another. Maybe you even begin to hear the jingle and immediately change the station. However, did you know that's not the only way you can advertise on the radio? A more cost-effective option may be to sponsor a weather or traffic report. People are less likely to change the station because they're actually interested in hearing the report, and you get a nice shout out as well!

The next platform for advertising you should think about is the local newspaper. Although not as popular as it once was, print newspapers are still frequently read by a population aged 55 and over. If people aged 55 and older are your primary insurance buyers, this would be a good option for you. Don't limit yourself to just newspapers. If you belong to a church or organization with bulletins or newsletters, asked to be featured there as well.

PROSPECTING

Internet advertising is a popular and affordable choice, and [Facebook](#) is still one of the best social platforms you can use to reach potential customers. Facebook's new ad creator helps you in defining your marketing objective. For example, you can choose to aim for brand awareness or spread your reach. Then, you can choose what metrics are important to you. Do you want to see how much traffic your ad has gained? How many people have engaged with your ad by liking, sharing, or commenting? Or, how many leads you've acquired from the ad? Once you've decided your metrics, Facebook will help you measure conversions. The customization of Facebook Ads is what makes them such a powerful advertisement tool. Here's a great video you should watch to learn more about [launching your first Facebook Ads campaign](#). Also, [Canva](#) has some amazing [free Facebook Ad templates](#) if you need some help designing eye-catching and professional ads. All you need to do is create a free account to start designing.

PROSPECTING

Instagram

The next internet advertising option is Instagram. If you're trying to target younger audiences, you should be on Instagram. That's because 64% of Instagram's 1 billion users are between the ages of **18 and 35** (the same group that **thinks about insurance the least**). Create a business profile and post content that's relevant to your target market. Statistics says that 75% of people interact with a brand after seeing an advertisement on Instagram (according to **Hootsuite**). Similar to Facebook, Instagram also allows you to target your market with Instagram Ads. Be sure to read this **6-Step Guide to Using Instagram Ads** and learn how you can take advantage of this platform.

PROSPECTING

Networking and Getting Referrals

Another way to get new customers is to network with the people you know! According to Brad Sugars from the article we referenced above, "Four Simple Ways to Find Customers," this inexpensive method will leave you with the most loyal customers. To ask for referrals, you should identify your best customers and ask them if they're willing to refer your agency. Be sure to give them a small reward for referring you. An easy way to make sure that you're consistently asking for referrals is to use **web forms**. A web form is essentially a way to capture an interested party's information. Your website should definitely have a web form. Another idea is to put a web form in your email signature so your clients can easily make referrals.

PROSPECTING

Purchasing Leads

The final way to find customers is by purchasing lists of people who are interested in insurance. There are many lead list providers who can sell you lists of names, emails, and phone numbers. However, you don't want to waste your money purchasing bad lead lists. Here's how to make sure you're only purchasing quality leads:

1. When purchasing lead lists online, make sure to look for a page on the website called "Data Quality." There you can learn about how the provider gathers contact information. This is an important step in determining the value of the leads.

2. Check to see if the lead list provider is listed on the [Better Business Bureau](#) website. You'll be able to see on the BBB if there are any complaints from other purchasers.

PROSPECTING

Purchasing Leads

3. Decide what kinds of leads you'd like to purchase and what information you'd like. Ask yourself, do you need emails or phone numbers?

4. Decide how many leads you'd like to purchase. Remember, quality always beats quantity.

5. Purchase the leads and download them. Some lead list providers are affiliated with CRM and sales follow-up software, meaning that whatever leads you purchase will automatically be moved into the software.

[FitSmallBusiness.com](#) has a list of the top places to buy business leads and includes UpLead and Salesfully as the best lead list providing companies. [UpLead](#) is a large B2B lead list provider that has direct CRM integrations and verified leads. [Salesfully](#) is known for being simple and affordable with no lead download limits. Simply choose the lead list provider that fits within your budget and get to contacting those leads!

AGENCY TECHNOLOGY

LEAD MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

AUTO DIALER

VOIP PHONE SYSTEM

ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

EMAIL MARKETING SYSTEM

AGENCY TECHNOLOGY

Lead Management Software

A lead management technology, also known as contact management technology, keeps track of your leads or contacts. When you start collecting names of contacts who are interested in purchasing insurance, a simple spreadsheet might not be powerful enough to help you work through that list. **Excel** is an amazing product, but it doesn't have the same lead management capabilities as a lead management software. Without a software, you may find yourself forgetting to follow up on quotes you issued weeks ago or losing a prospect to another provider. Intelligent lead management software automates many of your manual lead organization tasks so you can focus on selling.

AGENCY TECHNOLOGY

Checklist of Features to Look for:



1. Does it come with web forms you can customize?
2. Does it use workflow automation to perform day-to-day tasks and free up your time?
3. Does it have one-click automation?
4. Does it allow you to track opportunities?
5. Are you able to import an existing list of contacts?
6. Will it enable you to create multiple email templates?
7. Will it automatically send out emails on your behalf?
8. Does it have powerful reporting capabilities?
9. Are you able to access it from your cell phone?
10. Does the system automatically check for duplicates?
11. Can it schedule appointments for you?
12. Are you able to integrate it with other systems?
13. How easy is user management?

AGENCY TECHNOLOGY

Lead Management Software

You probably already use a policy management system, so you may be wondering why you would want to use another software. While a policy management system keeps a record of insurance policies, a lead management system keeps track of your potential sales opportunities and comes with a number of powerful sales features that a policy management system simply doesn't have. For example, many lead management systems give insurance agents the ability to automatically generate referrals with web forms. Agents create a web form for customer referrals and add the form to email templates or even their email signature. This way their customers have a simple way to send over a referral, and sales managers can easily track which referred leads were converted. Web forms are an easy way to gather all the information needed to process a referral. Without email web forms, insurance agents might have to reply several times to receive all the information they need. Email web forms eliminate the extra dialogue (and time) spent on the customer.

AGENCY TECHNOLOGY

Lead Management Software

Another feature of sales software that policy management systems don't have is the ability to automate emails. Research is showing that welcome emails are essential for engaging new customers. A [2017 study by Epsilon](#) revealed that open rates for welcome messages were 69% higher than regular business emails. However, this only held true if the welcome message was sent within a couple days of receiving a referral. With a policy management system, these messages aren't automatically sent to new referrals, so there's a high risk that an agent will forget to send them. In contrast, lead management systems often allow insurance agents to specify how many times they'd like to send an email out to their leads. Then, the agent can step away and let the system do its job. No further input is needed from the insurance agent.

AGENCY TECHNOLOGY

Lead Management Software

Lead management systems also often have integrations with lead list providers such as [Cole X-Dates](#) or [Salesgenie](#). This means that after the initial set-up, the purchased leads move directly into the sales software without any further effort from an insurance agent. If you want to learn more about how to pump up your sales game by using a sales follow-up software along with your policy management system, read the white paper, [4 Ways Your Policy Management System Fails on Its Own](#).

AGENCY TECHNOLOGY

Auto Dialer

If you're an insurance agent, you know a large part of your day is spent making phone calls. An auto dialer is essential for speeding through your lead lists at record pace. Especially if you have an agency, you'll really see a return on investment when your employees are armed to make calls with an **auto dialer**.

Checklist of Features to Look for:



1. Is it cloud-based?
2. Is the system fully TCPA-compliant?
3. Can you easily set up a call campaign?
4. Can the system record calls?
5. Is whisper coaching available?
6. Can you import contacts from an existing list?
7. Does it have smart caller ID?
8. Can you record voicemails and send them to a contact with one click?
9. Does it have a calendar feature with reminders?
10. Can you see detailed reports?
11. Can it integrate with other systems?
12. Does the manager have a dashboard?

AGENCY TECHNOLOGY

Autodialer

Auto dialers work by automatically dialing the next number in a list. If a call is unanswered, the dialer moves right onto the next number. The agent doesn't have to wait to leave a message. Instead, he or she can leave a pre-recorded voicemail with one click. Using an auto dialer is one of the most efficient forms of [outbound calling in mass](#).

VoIP Phone Systems

Every business should have a reliable phone system, especially an insurance agency. A VoIP phone system lets you make calls anywhere that you have an internet connection. That means you can make and take calls from your computer, landline, or cell phone. For example, if you're out of the office for the day and meeting clients at Starbucks, you can still make and receive calls because you're connected to Wi-Fi.

AGENCY TECHNOLOGY

Checklist of Features to Look for:



1. Does it have a softphone?
2. Can you make ring groups?
3. Does it have a chat feature?
4. Does it have a mobile app?
5. Can you do voice to email?
6. Is it cloud-based?
7. Can you do drag and drop transfers?
8. Can you see in-depth reporting?
9. Can you track employee performance?
10. Does it have caller ID?
11. Does it have whisper coaching?

VoIP Phone Systems

VoIP phone systems can be a great solution for employees working remotely. They can make outbound calls and receive calls while appearing to clients as if they're working in the office. The last criterion to consider when choosing a VoIP phone system is customer service. Traditionally, dealing with phone companies can be difficult and frustrating. You want to pick a company that will take good care of your system so you don't have to think about it.

AGENCY TECHNOLOGY

Accounting Software

Whether your agency operates as a direct-billed or agency-billed organization, you'll need to keep good accounts. Many agents turn to accounting software to help them with their bookkeeping. You don't need to be an accountant to keep accurate books. And, there's so much support available, you often don't need to be a software expert.

AGENCY TECHNOLOGY

Checklist of Features to Look for:



1. Is it easy to use?
2. Is it secure?
3. Is it cloud-based?
4. Is there technical support?
5. Does the product support invoicing and payments?
6. Are you able to access data on any device?
7. How much automation does it have?
8. Can you create financial reports?
9. Does it have frequent updates?
10. Is it affordable?

Accounting Software

When looking for accounting software, [Finances Online](#) suggests looking for software that's easy to use, secure, and affordable. Desktop accounting software is outdated. Accounting software is now cloud-based and has more customization, which allows it to scale when you're ready to scale. Also, cloud-based accounting software is often more within budget.

Two of the most highly recommended accounting software for insurance agents are QuickBooks Online and Xero.

[QuickBooks Online](#) is the most widely-used small business accounting software, according to [fitsmallbusiness.com](#). It scales as your agency grows. While initially a bit pricier than other options, it has all the account management capabilities your agency needs.

[Fitsmallbusiness.com](#) describes [Xero](#) as an alternative to QuickBooks Online. If you've used QuickBooks Online in the past and you aren't a fan, consider using Xero. Users have unlimited tech support, unlimited number of users, and can view key financial statements.

Email Marketing Systems

Email marketing campaigns are a breeze when you use an email marketing system. That's because these systems show you analytical reports about your campaigns. You're able to see if your emails have been opened and when a person has subscribed to receive your emails.

Checklist of Features to Look for:

1. Is it intuitive and easy to use?
2. Is it affordable?
3. How many emails can you send out per day or per month?
4. Are you able to collect data about your audience?
5. Does it have pre-made templates?
6. Does it have one-click automation?
7. Does it show you analytics?
8. Does it have any integrations?
9. Is it GDPR-compliant?
10. Is it secure?



Email Marketing Systems

Many popular email marketing systems have free versions. This is good if you're just beginning to market yourself over email and want to get your feet wet. If you decide that you need more powerful campaign tools, you can always sign up for the full version of the systems.

According to [Capterra](#), most small businesses use [MailChimp](#). With a free account, you can send up to 12,000 emails per month. MailChimp also has a huge integration list and can even integrate with your CRM, such as [Blitz Sales Software](#) or [Salesforce](#). More powerful capabilities such as using an autoresponder and advanced social media monitoring are only available in the premium version.

For help learning how to start email marketing, check out the [beginner's guide to email marketing](#) from [OptinMonster.com](#).

QUOTING, RATING, AND BINDING

QUOTING

RATING

BINDING

QUOTING

When quoting prospective clients, give them the option to either call in or use your website to get an insurance quote. The quoting process should not take long. If a prospect calls in requesting a quote, insurance agents generally will spend 5-10 minutes acquiring information from the prospect. Make sure to call the prospect back within one day of receiving the quote request.

Usually, people looking to buy insurance will compare **three to five different insurance quotes**. If you're an independent insurance agent, you have an advantage over captive agents in that you can compare quotes from each of your insurance carriers to present prospects with the best rate. Pro tip: once you've quoted prospects, save them to your **lead management system**. You can reach out to them later, see how they'd like to proceed, and address any concerns they have. Even if a prospect purchases insurance from a competitor, you can still reach out later and see if he or she is interested in switching.

RATING

When it comes to rating, the process differs for captive and independent agents. Ratemaking is when an insurance company determines what rates (or premiums) to charge insureds. If you're an insurance agent, you likely don't have to be concerned with the process of pricing insurance. Instead, your job is to input the insured's information into a rater and communicate the rate to the insured.

Independent Insurance Agents

Rather than going to each different agency's rater to pull up a rate, independent insurance agents can use a comparative rating software to pull the rates up all at once. Check out [Captterra's list of the most popular insurance rating software of 2019](#) to discover the best insurance rating software.

RATING

Captive Insurance Agents

To determine the rate for an insured, captive agents can log in to their agency's rater, provide the insured's information, and find the rate for that person.

The rating process might look different if you own a small insurance company. In this case, you may have to rely on a rating bureau to provide loss data. Two of the largest rating bureaus for property and casualty are the [Insurance Services Office \(ISO\)](#) and the [American Association of Insurance Services \(AAIS\)](#). It's important to note that life insurance companies don't use rating bureaus because they rely on actuarial tables. Once you've received the loss data, you or your actuarial team can determine what rates to charge depending on the loss data. Check out this comprehensive article called "[Rate Making: How Insurance Premiums are Set](#)" to find the formulas you can use to determine your rates.

BINDING

Once a prospect is interested in moving forward with your insurance company, you'll need to bind his or her policy. **Binding a policy** confirms that the person has coverage. The binding process differs depending on the insurance company. Insurance agents must have the permission of the insurance carrier that they represent to bind coverage. They must also have a license in the same state in which the policy is issued.

Agents can verbally bind coverage, however, binding often takes place over email or text message. Agents must check their state's laws to determine if they're allowed to issue a binder over email or text message. According to the **Houston Chronicle**, most insurance companies require that a paper binder be issued immediately after an oral agreement. They also usually require that the agent send a copy of the binder to both the insured party and the insurance provider. While a binder is typically valid for 30 days, if an actual policy is not issued during that time, the insurer can issue a revised binder to keep coverage intact.

BINDING

Some insurance companies use their own binder forms. However, most insurance companies use the standardized binder form available from the [Association for Cooperative Operations Research and Development \(ACORD\)](#). The [ACORD binder form](#) includes information such as the involved parties, coverage provided on the final policy, policy limits, dates when the policy becomes effective, conditions and requirements, and any additional insured parties like lenders or subcontractors.

SALES FORECASTING

Sales forecasting is about estimating your future sales. Being able to accurately forecast sales is important because it allows your agency to **predict sales revenue**, allocate the appropriate resources, and plan for the future.

So, how do you do it? According to **The Ultimate Guide to Sales Forecasting** by Hubspot, an accurate sales forecast needs:

1. Quotas: Set individual and team quotas at your agency. Make sure that the quotas are realistic and measurable. To ensure that quotas are measurable, define your agency's definition of success.
2. A Sales Process: going off-script for every sale is not going to help your agency in the long run. What you need is a well-documented sales process that discloses structured stages and steps. This ensures that your agents are using a uniform approach to sales and helps you more accurately predict when an agent will close an opportunity.

SALES FORECASTING

3. Sales Process Definitions: Have your team agree on the definitions for “opportunities,” “leads,” and “prospects.” For example, what does a “close” actually mean at your agency?

4. A CRM: A CRM can help you better track opportunities and more accurately predict when your team will close.

5. Accountability: Use your sales forecasts as training tools for your team. If one of your agents has a bad month and doesn't reach his or her sales forecast, take time to check in and see if you can provide additional training or support.

When you're ready to start forecasting your sales, check out these [5 essential sales forecasting techniques](#) and choose which one works best for your agency.

NEW CUSTOMER ONBOARDING

One of the biggest mistakes that new insurance agents make is neglecting to follow up with customers after a sale. You may be thinking, “I’ve already closed. It’s a done deal.” However, because insurance is a low involvement product, you have to occasionally reach out to customers to remind them of your value. Rate increases and dissatisfaction with your service can cause customers to switch to a competitor. If your customers understand how valuable your product is, they’ll be more understanding of rate increases. They’ll also be more willing to purchase additional products from you down the line. In other words, when you follow up with customers, your customers’ lifetime value increases. An easy way to bring value to your customers after the sale is to create a customer onboarding program.

NEW CUSTOMER ONBOARDING

A customer onboarding program is a valuable tool for insurance agents because it ensures that your relationship with your customers starts off on the right foot. When you maintain relationships with your customers, they're more likely to purchase additional products from you. Current customers spend **67% more than new customers**. Your current customers are also a **great referral source**. (For some more referral ideas, check out **this section**.)

CRAFT CUSTOMER PERSONAS

SET CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

NEW CUSTOMER ONBOARDING

CRAFT CUSTOMER PERSONAS

To create a customer onboarding strategy, first, consider your customer. What does your customer generally look like? For example, do you more often sell homeowners insurance to newly married couples? Or, maybe, are your life insurance customers age 30 with children? Get to know your customers and understand their needs and pain points. Some aspects to consider when crafting your buyer personas:

1. Demographics like age, sex, income, level of education, location, marital status, and parental status
2. Group needs like taking care of a new family or preparing for retirement
3. Other consumer needs like price, reliability, and customer service

NEW CUSTOMER ONBOARDING

SET CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Once you've crafted your customer personas, it's time to specify what your customers can expect from you and your service. This should be a reiteration of the promises that you told them during the sales process. For example, if you promised the best customer service, remind your customers that you or a member of your team will be readily available to address any questions or concerns. Captive insurance agents might already have a help desk available on their websites that's maintained by the insurance company they represent. If you're an independent insurance agent, however, make sure that you have a section on your website with links to articles, resources, and FAQs for your customers.

NEW CUSTOMER ONBOARDING

When a customer purchases a product from you, send them an email with a link to your website and any other useful resources. Be sure to reach out regularly to see how the customer is doing. If your customer has any questions, make yourself available to answer them. The goal with insurance customer onboarding is to educate customers so that they understand exactly what they're purchasing and exactly what value you bring them. For more information about customer onboarding, check out [HubSpot's, "Ultimate Guide to Customer Onboarding."](#)

THE ENDORSEMENTS PROCESS

When a customer needs to amend his or her insurance contract, that's when you start the endorsement process. An endorsement is an "amendment or addition to an existing insurance contract" which changes the terms or scope of the original policy." Some insurance companies call an endorsement a rider. An insurance endorsement can be done any time, whether that be right when a customer purchases insurance or when a customer is renewing. Riders are mostly used in property and casualty insurance.

There are many reasons why your customer may want or need an endorsement. For instance, your client may want an endorsement that adds or restricts coverage. A specific example of when your client may want an endorsement is if he or she is going through a divorce and needs the other person's name removed from insurance documents. Rather than having to create a whole new policy, an endorsement allows customers to add extra coverage to or change an existing policy.

THE ENDORSEMENTS PROCESS

To summarize, endorsements can be used to:

Remove coverage

Add coverage

Modify coverage

Make editorial changes (if the original policy had an error)

Make administrative changes (such as changing the policyholder's name)

For more information about endorsements, check out Marianne Bonner's article, "[Endorsements- What are They?](#)," published on *The Balance Small Business*.

THE CLAIMS PROCESS

When customers have insurance claims, their insurance agent is usually the first person to get a call. However, many times the insurance company, rather than the agent, will handle the claims process. The insurance agent's involvement in the claims process simply depends on the insurance company.

IF YOU'RE A DEDICATED AGENT

You may be contacted directly by the customer with an insurance claim. Some dedicated agents are given the autonomy to handle the situation on their own. In other cases, the insurance company may have a special call center with staff that's specially trained to handle claims. If your insurance company has the latter setup, you simply need to direct the customer to the call center.

THE CLAIMS PROCESS

IF YOU'RE AN INDEPENDENT AGENT

You may also be contacted directly by a customer with an insurance claim. However, most independent insurance agents may only be able to direct the customer to the insurance company that owns the customer's policy. From there, the company might send an insurance adjuster to inspect the claim and offer a settlement.

There are [laws about the insurance claim process](#) that require insurance companies to act in good faith and fair dealing. Be sure to fulfill your responsibilities to the insurance company. Also, remember to act in good faith with your customers by communicating in a timely manner and providing detailed information when an insurance claim is denied.

THE ANNUAL CUSTOMER REVIEW PROCESS

Customer reviews should be held once a year and they usually last about an hour. An annual review of a client's insurance policy is useful for many reasons. First, an annual review is a great opportunity for you to educate your customers and answer any questions they might have about their insurance policies. They'll see you as a valuable, trusted advisor, and you'll gain their loyalty. The next reason to do an annual review is to see if there are any gaps in your client's coverage. If there are any gaps, you can make sure that your client becomes covered for those. So, for instance, if your client becomes newly engaged, you can make sure that her engagement ring is covered by her homeowner's policy. An annual review is also a great time for cross-selling. During the review you'll get the chance to ask your client about any kind of life changes. This will help you identify any additional insurance a client needs. Finally, an annual review is another opportunity for you to ask your client for referrals.

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE THE REVIEW

WHAT TO ASK DURING THE REVIEW

THE ANNUAL CUSTOMER REVIEW PROCESS

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE THE REVIEW

If this is your first time conducting customer reviews, you'll want to be prepared. [New Horizons Insurance Marketing](#) has a great list of what you'll need to know about your client before the review. Here's what you be able to answer:

1. What type of policy are you looking at?
2. Who is the insurance carrier?
3. What's the policy number?
4. When was the policy issued?
5. How much is the client's premium and how often do they pay it?
6. Who's the insured?
7. Who's the beneficiary (if it's life insurance)?

THE ANNUAL CUSTOMER REVIEW PROCESS

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE THE REVIEW

8. What are the features of the policy?
9. When will the policy or changes take effect?
10. What are benefits?
11. What are the qualifications for the benefits?
12. What restrictions exist?
13. How much will the person's premium be?
14. Is there any duplicate coverage in the person's policy?
15. Does the person really need all the coverage?
16. Are there any gaps in the customer's coverage?

THE ANNUAL CUSTOMER REVIEW PROCESS

To ask your clients to attend a review, send them a letter or email about what will be discussed during the meeting as well as the amount of time you expect it to last. During the meeting, you'll first want to go over the basics of the policy. Then, ask your client about any kind of big life changes he or she has experienced. These changes could include a change in marital status, a new baby, a new house, or a pay increase. The article, "[Time for You Annual Insurance Review](#)," has a checklist of topics you should cover depending on the kind of insurance your client has purchased from you.

WHAT TO ASK DURING THE REVIEW

For Homeowner's Insurance, You Should Ask About:

- Any changes in the value of the house (for example, has anything been remodeled?)
- Any new jewelry or valuables that your client has purchased (does your client have new valuables that should be added to the homeowner's insurance?)
- Any new discounts (check to see if your client qualifies for any new discounts)

THE ANNUAL CUSTOMER REVIEW PROCESS

For Life Insurance, You Should Ask About:

- Any life changes such as a new baby, a death in the family, marriage, and divorce
- Any changes in income from a raise or job loss
- Any changes in life insurance policies
- Any change in retirement plans

For Auto Insurance, You Should Ask About:

- Adding any new drivers to your policy (like a teenage child)
- The status of the client's car (older cars may need less coverage)
- Any new discounts (check to see if your client qualifies for any new discounts)

Once you've attained this information, you can go into the details of the policy and make suggestions where you see fit.

Finally, answer any questions, and, if all has gone well, ask the client for referrals.

RATE INCREASES

When insurance premiums increase, many customers jump ship and seek out a lower rate through another insurance provider. Try not to take this personally. After all, you might not know about a person's entire financial situation. They could be making loan repayments or paying child support. Instead, you should make a plan to deal with rate increases and prevent customers from turning to another company. Here's what to do when your customers' insurance premiums are going up:

Be the Expert

One way to prevent customers from leaving is to educate them on the circumstances surrounding the raised rates. Do you remember when you were little and your parents told you to do something you didn't want to do? You probably asked, "why?" And the answer was inevitably, "Because I told you so." You probably still remember how that explanation felt (lousy). Given that very common childhood experience, you know you can't treat your customers the same way. Your clients are adults, and they deserve an explanation as to why they should pay increased premiums.

RATE INCREASES

As the insurance expert, educating your clients is your responsibility. Do a little research and report the findings to your clients. Maybe your area has seen an increase in crime or uninsured drivers. Or, perhaps there have been recent natural disasters in the area. These are all valid reasons why auto or homeowners' premiums are on the rise. When you're honest with your clients about the reasons behind rate increases, they may feel that paying an increased premium is completely reasonable. At the very least, you'll have your clients' respect because you've treated them as equals.

Empathize

Your clients will feel better about rate increases if you treat them with empathy. Allow your clients to voice their concerns and then answer any of their questions. Explaining that you too feel frustrated by your own increased premiums will make you more relatable.

RATE INCREASES

Win Back Past Customers

The customers you've lost in the past aren't lost forever. Keep a list of these contacts and be sure to reach out periodically. You have a **20-40% chance of gaining past customers**. To reach out to past contacts, create an email template offering each person a re-quote. Be sure to schedule these emails to go out periodically. If your contacts' current insurance premiums have recently increased, they may be interested in switching back to your agency.

BOOKKEEPING AND ACCOUNTING

Accounting may not have been your favorite class in school. However, for any business to succeed, owners need to know how much money their business is earning versus how much money their business is spending. This is one of the simplest definitions of accounting. Two terms you really need to know when it comes to accounting for an insurance agency are agency-billed policies and direct-billed policies. The major difference between the two is that independent insurance agents generally bill policies through their agency, while captive insurance agents rely on direct billing.

AGENCY-BILLED POLICIES

DIRECT-BILLED POLICIES

BOOKKEEPING AND ACCOUNTING

AGENCY-BILLED POLICIES

When policies are agency-billed, the insurance agent invoices the customer, collects the premium, and remits the premium to the insurance company. The way that insurance agents receive their commission is by retaining their portion of commission from the premium and sending the net amount to the insurance agency. Here's an example of an agency-billed policy:

Assume an insured has a policy with a premium of \$10,000. The agent will invoice the insured and collect \$10,000. This money must be deposited in a premium trust account. Typically, the agent is paid 10% commission on premiums billed. In this example, the agent would earn \$1,000. So, the agent will send the insurance company \$9,000 and retain the \$1,000 as income. This \$1,000 can be moved from the premium trust account to the agent's operating account, which is used to fund the operations of the agency.

BOOKKEEPING AND ACCOUNTING

AGENCY-BILLED POLICIES

Because the insurance agent is taking out their own commission, they'll need an accountant to make sure that their accounts are in order. Another reason independent agents require more accounting work is because they represent multiple insurance companies. Therefore, it's important for the agent to keep meticulous records of what premiums belong to which insurance company. Many independent insurance agents find it useful to have their own internal accounting department to help them with the increased accounting work. For more information about insurance trust account management, check out the article, "[From Concept to Practice: Insurance Trust Account Management](#)," published on [InsuranceJournal.com](#).

BOOKKEEPING AND ACCOUNTING

DIRECT-BILLED POLICIES

When policies are directly billed, the insurance company invoices the customer and collects the premium. The insurance company then pays the agent a commission from the premium collected. In this situation, the insurance company handles most of the accounting. Dedicated insurance agents often hire third-party accountants to help them with the rest of the accounting.

For more detailed information about how to perform accounting for an insurance agency, be sure to read "[Building Equity Value](#)" by Wayne A. Walkotten.

CONCLUSION

After reading this eBook, you should have a better understanding of what you need to do to start your agency off on the right foot. From staffing to technology to accounting, we've covered all of it. At the end of the day, insurance is important. You're helping people plan for the most important things in their lives. That's why we're committed to helping insurance agents become more successful.

Starting an insurance agency takes a lot of grit, but you aren't in it alone. There are plenty of companies dedicated to helping insurance agents succeed. Check out these other useful resources:

[BLITZ SALES SOFTWARE](#)

[AGENCY NATION](#)

[INSURANCE LEADS GUIDE](#)

[CHIEF SALES LEADER](#)

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

Steps to Start an Insurance Agency

Starting an Independent Insurance Agency

- Write a Business Plan
- Choose a Legal Structure
- Choose and Register Your Agency's Name
- Apply for a Tax ID Number
- Register Your Business with the State
- Get the Appropriate Business License or Permits
- Purchase Errors and Omissions Insurance

Starting a Captive Insurance Agency

- Locate a Company District Manager or Recruiter
- Get State Certified Training
- Get the Appropriate Business License or Permit
- Write a Business Plan and Submit it to the Insurance Company
- Build or Buy an Agency

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

You've Started an Agency, Now What?

Staffing- Hiring- Ideas to Find Employees

- Ask current employees for referrals
- Write a great job posting
- Contact past candidates you didn't hire before but are qualified
- Purchase ad space on Facebook
- Have employees share job posting on their social accounts
- Post on insurance-specific job boards ([InsuranceforJobs.com](#), [GreatInsuranceJobs.com](#), and [InsuranceJournal.com](#))
- Post on general job sites ([Indeed](#), [Glassdoor](#), and [Google for Jobs](#))
- Ask your personal network for referrals
- Sponsor your job opportunity on general job sites
- Offer an internship to college students
- Post your job on a local college's job board
- Hire a temporary employee from a temporary staffing agency

Training- 4 Training Ideas

- Expose new employees frequently to short, specialized lessons
- Make your training lessons mobile-friendly
- Use game-based training
- Measure your training with Experience API (xAPI)

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

You've Started an Agency, Now What?

Prospecting- How to Find Customers- Advertise

- Radio- Sponsor a weather or traffic report
- Print- Purchase ad space in print newspapers if your primary insurance clients are ages 55 and older
- Internet- Advertise on Facebook and Instagram

Referrals

- Network with the people you know
- Use web forms on your website and in your email signature

Purchase Leads- How to Buy Only Quality Leads

- Learn how the company gathers contact information to determine how valuable the leads are
- Check the BBB to see if there are any complaints about the lead list provider
- Decide exactly what type of leads you'd like to buy (what information do you need to know about the leads?)
- How many leads do you want to buy?
- Is your CRM able to move the leads directly into the system?

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

Agency Technology

Lead Management Technology

- Does it come with web forms you can customize?
- Does it use workflow automation to perform day-to-day tasks and free up your time?
- Does it have one-click automation?
- Does it allow you to track opportunities?
- Are you able to import an existing list of contacts?
- Will it automatically send out emails on your behalf?
- Does it have powerful reporting capabilities?
- Are you able to access it from your cell phone?
- Does the system automatically check for duplicates?
- Can it schedule appointments for you?
- Are you able to integrate it with other systems?
- How easy is user management?

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

Agency Technology

Auto Dialers

- Is it cloud-based?
- Is the system fully TCPA-compliant?
- Can you easily set up a call campaign?
- Can the system record calls?
- Is whisper coaching available?
- Can you import contacts from an existing list?
- Does it have smart caller ID?
- Can you record voicemails and send them to a contact with one click?
- Does it have a calendar feature with reminders?
- Can you see detailed reports?
- Can it integrate with other systems?
- Does the manager have a dashboard?

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

Agency Technology

VoIP Phone Systems

- Does it have a soft-phone?
- Can you make ring groups?
- Does it have a chat feature?
- Does it have a mobile app?
- Can you do voice to email?
- Is it cloud-based?
- Can you do drag and drop transfers?
- Can you see in-depth reporting?
- Can you track employee performance?
- Does it have caller ID?
- Does it have whisper coaching?

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

Agency Technology

Accounting Software

- Is it easy to use?
- Is it secure?
- Is it cloud-based?
- Is there technical support?
- Does the product support invoicing and payments?
- Are you able to access data on any device?
- How much automation does it have?
- Can you create financial reports?
- Does it have frequent updates?
- Is it affordable?

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

Agency Technology

Email Marketing

- Is it intuitive and easy to use?
- Is it affordable?
- How many emails can you send out per day or per month?
- Are you able to collect data about your audience?
- Does it have pre-made templates?
- Does it have one-click automation?
- Does it show you analytics?
- Does it have any integrations?
- Is it GDPR-compliant?
- Is it secure?

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

Quoting, Rating, and Binding

Quoting

- Prospective clients can either call in or use your website to get an insurance quote
- The quoting process only takes between 5-10 minutes
- You call the prospect back within one day of receiving the quote requests
- You put the interested lead in your CRM to contact later

Rating

- Independent Insurance Agents- Use a comparative rater to pull all rates up at once
- Captive Insurance Agents- Use their agency's rater to find the rate

Binding

- Issue a paper binder immediately after an oral agreement
- Send a copy of the binder to both the insured party and the insurance provider?
- Issue a revised binder if the actual policy isn't issued within 30 days
- Use either your company's binder form or the ACORD binder form

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

Sales Forecasting

What You Need to Accurately Forecast Sales

- Quotas
- A sales process
- A CRM
- Accountability

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

New Customer Onboarding

Create an Onboarding Strategy

- Craft customer personas
- Learn:
 - Demographics like age, sex, income, level of education, location, marital status, and parental status
 - Group needs like taking care of a new family or preparing for retirement
 - Other consumer needs like price, reliability, and customer service
- Set customer expectations

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

The Endorsements Process

Use an endorsement to:

- Remove coverage
- Add coverage
- Modify coverage
- Make editorial changes (if the original policy had an error)
- Make administrative changes (such as changing the policyholder's name)

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

The Claims Process

If You're a Captive or Dedicated Agent

- If you have the autonomy, handle the situation
- Direct the customer to the call center

If You're an Independent Agent

- Direct the client to the insurance company that owns their policy

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

The Annual Customer Review Process

Before the meeting, you should be able to answer:

- What type of policy are you looking at?
- Who is the insurance carrier?
- What's the policy number?
- When was the policy issued?
- How much is the client's premium and how often do they pay it?
- Who's the insured?
- Who's the beneficiary (if it's life insurance)?
- What are the features of the policy?
- When will the policy or changes take effect?
- What are the benefits?
- What are the qualifications for the benefits?
- What restrictions exist?
- How much will the client's premium be?
- Is there any duplicate coverage in the person's policy?
- Does the person really need all the coverage he or she currently has?
- Are there any gaps in the customer's coverage?

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

For homeowners insurance, ask about:

- Any changes in the value of the house (for example, has anything been remodeled?)
- Any new jewelry or valuables that your client has purchased (does your client have new valuables that should be added to the homeowners insurance?)
- Any new discounts (check to see if your client qualifies for any new discounts)

For life insurance, ask about:

- Any life changes such as a new baby, a death in the family, marriage, and divorce
- Any changes in income from a raise or job loss
- Any changes in life insurance policies
- Any change in retirement plans

For auto insurance, ask about:

- Adding any new drivers to your policy (like a teenage child)
- The status of the client's car (older cars may need less coverage)
- Any new discounts (check to see if your client qualifies for any new discounts)

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

Rate Increases

How to Handle Rate Increases

- Explain the situation to clients
- Answer questions
- Be empathetic
- Win back past customers

Appendix A: New Agency Checklist

Bookkeeping and Accounting

About Agency-Billed Policies:

- Usually used by independent insurance agents
- Insurance agent invoices the customer, collects the premium, and remits the premium to the insurance company

About Direct-Billed Policies

- Usually used by captive insurance agents
- The Insurance company invoices the customer and collects the premium
- The insurance company then pays the agent a commission from the premium collected

APPENDIX B: List of Resources by Chapter

Steps to Start an Independent and Captive Agency

- <https://insureonsolutions.com/resources/agency-management-tips/agency-business-plan>
- <http://www.dmlp.org/legal-guide/personal-liability>
- <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/choose-business-structure>
- <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>
- https://www.naic.org/state_web_map.htm
- <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/apply-licenses-permits>
- <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/errors-omissions-insurance.asp>
- <https://insureonsolutions.com/resources/agency-management-tips/agency-business-plan>

Hiring

- <https://www.betterteam.com/>
- <https://www.betterteam.com/finding-employees>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/>
- <https://www.insurancejobs.com/>
- <https://www.greatinsurancejobs.com/>
- <https://www.insurancejournal.com/jobs/>
- <https://www.indeed.com/>
- <https://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm>
- <https://jobs.google.com/about/>
- <https://www.indeed.com/hire?hl=en&cc=US>
- <https://fitsmallbusiness.com/find-employees/>
- <https://www.wonolo.com/blog/what-is-temp-to-hire/>

APPENDIX

LIST OF RESOURCES BY CHAPTER:

Training

- <https://www.forbes.com/#f8267e62254c>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2018/04/04/four-elements-of-effective-employee-training/#2bfd469a1818>
- <https://www.alleninteractions.com/designing-successful-elearning-book>
- <https://resources.axonify.com/case-studies/walmart-case-study>
- <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/smartphone-separation-anxiety-nomophobia-why-feel-bad-no-phone-personalised-technology-a7896591.html>
- <http://pharma.bayer.com/>
- http://www.ibscdc.org/Case_Studies/Marketing/Marketing/Sales Force Effectiveness-Bayer-Business Case Studies1.htm
- <https://www.nowblitz.com/whitepapers/how-to-create-a-successful-employee-onboarding-process/>

APPENDIX

LIST OF RESOURCES BY CHAPTER:

Prospecting

- <https://contently.com/2016/05/11/insurance-companies-took-content-marketing-storm/>
- <https://www.statefarm.com/>
- <https://www.policygenius.com/health-insurance/learn/health-insurance-literacy-survey/>
- <https://contently.com/2017/02/06/insurance-advertising-abundance/>
- <https://www.entrepreneur.com/>
- <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/219582>
- <https://www.facebook.com/business/>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oce_bNA5obM
- <https://www.canva.com/>
- <https://www.canva.com/create/facebook-ads/>
- <https://www.statista.com/statistics/248769/age-distribution-of-worldwide-instagram-users/>
- <https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-statistics/>
- <https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-ads-guide/>
- <https://blitz.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/232300748-Creating-a-Blitz-Web-Form>
- <https://www.coleinformation.com/>
- <https://www.bbb.org/>
- <https://fitsmallbusiness.com/best-place-to-buy-business-leads/>
- <https://www.uplead.com/>
- <https://www.salesfully.com/>

APPENDIX

LIST OF RESOURCES BY CHAPTER:

Agency Technology

Lead Management Technology

- <https://products.office.com/en-us/excel>
- <https://www.nowblitz.com/>
- <https://us.epsilon.com/pressroom/q1-2017-north-america-email-trends-and-benchmarks-show-increase-in-desktop-open-rates-2>
- <https://www.colexdates.com/>
- <https://www.salesgenie.com/>
- <https://www.nowblitz.com/whitepapers/4-ways-your-policy-management-system-fails-on-its-own/>

Auto Dialers

- <https://www.calllogic.com/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eR8jhSib9Tg>

VoIP Phone Systems

- <https://www.alinevoice.com/>

Accounting Software

- <https://financesonline.com/top-5-accounting-software-small-business-2017/>
- <https://quickbooks.intuit.com/online/>
- <https://fitsmallbusiness.com/best-small-business-accounting-software/>
- <https://www.xero.com/us/>

APPENDIX

LIST OF RESOURCES BY CHAPTER:

Email Marketing Systems

- <https://blog.capterra.com/10-free-email-marketing-software-solutions-small-business-marketers/>
- <https://mailchimp.com/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d66w57Rt4Us>
- <https://www.salesforce.com/>
- <https://optinmonster.com/beginners-guide-to-email-marketing/>

Quoting

- <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-an-insurance-quote-527552>
- https://www.nowblitz.com/lead_management/

Rating

- <https://www.capterra.com/>
- <https://www.capterra.com/insurance-rating-software/>
- <https://www.verisk.com/insurance/brands/iso/>
- <https://www.ncci.com/pages/default.aspx>
- <https://thismatter.com/money/insurance/rate-making.htm>

Binding

- <https://www.wnins.com/resources/personal/features/binding.shtml>
- <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/binding-mean-insurance-31759.html>
- <https://www.acord.org/>
- <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/binding-mean-insurance-31759.html>

Sales Forecasting

- <https://trackmaven.com/marketing-dictionary/sales-forecasting/>
- <https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/sales-forecasting>
- <https://www.nowblitz.com/blog/how-to-use-mobile-sales-software-to-your-advantage/>
- <https://blog.getbase.com/5-essential-sales-forecasting-techniques>

APPENDIX

LIST OF RESOURCES BY CHAPTER:

New Customer Onboarding

- <https://www.business.com/articles/returning-customers-spend-67-more-than-new-customers-keep-your-customers-coming-back-with-a-recurring-revenue-sales-model/>
- <https://www.slideshare.net/HubSpot/the-hard-truth-about-marketing>
- <https://blog.hubspot.com/service/customer-onboarding>

The Endorsements Process

- <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/endorsements-what-are-they-462463>
- <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/>

The Claims Process

- <https://hirealawyer.findlaw.com/choosing-the-right-lawyer/what-is-bad-faith-insurance-law.html>

The Annual Customer Review Process

- <https://blog.newhorizonsmktg.com/complete-guide-annual-policy-reviews-independent-insurance-agents>
- <https://www.moneytips.com/annual-insurance-review>

Book Keeping and Accounting

- <https://www.insurancejournal.com/magazines/mag-ideaexchange/2012/08/06/257776.htm>
- <https://www.insurancejournal.com/>
- <http://www.roughnotes.com/rnmagazine/2006/november06/11p064.htm>