

Insurance

BUSINESS AMERICA

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TOP PRODUCERS 2019

IBA names 65 of the most successful producers in the industry



PROFITING IN THE NONPROFIT SPACE

What agents need to know to find success in a varied and complex sector

THE LATEST ON BLOCKCHAIN

It's been hyped as a game-changer for insurance – so why aren't more companies using it?

WHAT'S DRIVING TRUCKING INSURANCE?

A guide to the major headwinds in this demanding, ever-changing specialty

TOP PRODUCERS 2019



TOP PRODUCERS 2019

IBA celebrates 65 standout producers who represent the top tier of America's insurance industry

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FOR THE fifth year in a row, *Insurance Business America* is singling out the best-performing insurance professionals from around the country. The 65 producers featured here collectively earned \$32.4 million in commission revenue in 2018. Six producers crossed the \$3 million mark on their own, earning a spot in *IBA's* Platinum Producers Club, which gives special recognition to the individuals who are within the top percentile of all producers.

While the majority of this year's Top Producers are veterans with more than 10 years of experience, the 2019 group also contains several rookies who have proved that impressive results can be achieved within just a few short years. On the following pages, the 2019 Top Producers share the keys to their success and the strategies they employed to generate such impressive numbers over the past year.

METHODOLOGY

To qualify as a Top Producer, applicants must have achieved at least \$750,000 in commission revenue in 2018, with at least 50% commercial P&C business and demonstrated year-over-year growth. Each nominated producer was required to provide specific details about his or her business to be eligible. Producers whose 2018 commission revenue exceeded the \$3 million mark were named to the Platinum Producers Club in recognition of their impressive achievement.

WHAT DOES A TOP PRODUCER LOOK LIKE?



349

Average number of clients



995

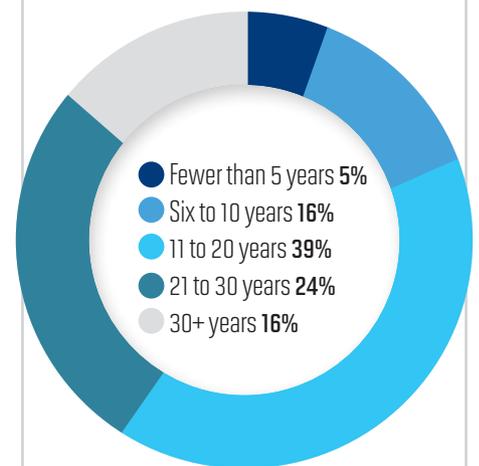
Average number of policies written



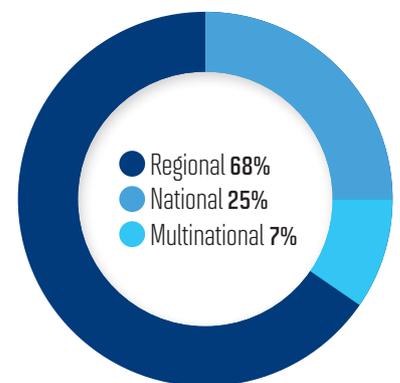
\$1.7 million

Average commission revenue

HOW LONG HAVE THE TOP PRODUCERS BEEN IN THE INDUSTRY?



WHERE DO TOP PRODUCERS WRITE BUSINESS?



TOP THREE REGIONS



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TOP PRODUCERS 2019



WILL DENBO

Principal

COMMERCIAL INSURANCE ASSOCIATES

Throughout his career, Will Denbo's key to success has been twofold: relying on his team to support both him and his clients, and growing through referrals.

"Relying on my team of great client

managers, client service representatives, account executives and producers that I have brought into my inner circle allows me to add bench strength and support to claims, loss control and client services so that I can focus my attention on face time with current clients and customers, as well as soliciting new customers," Denbo says. "I lean on my customers for referrals and introductions to new opportunities. The network within the niche that I focus on is very tight. I ask my clients who value my service and expertise to make personal introductions to their peers and friends in the industry who might be looking for the same type of partnership with their own insurance agent."

In addition, Denbo lives by the motto "if you're not growing you're dying," which propels him to keep his pipeline filled with new business opportunities.



SHAWN BUDNEY

Vice president

ACENTRIA INSURANCE

As vice president at Acentria Insurance, Shawn Budney brings almost two decades of industry experience to the organization. Specializing in national multifamily, commercial real estate and high-hazard risk management, Budney believes his key to success lies in building relationships with clients and prospects. He puts a high priority on conducting carrier negotiations on thresholds and attachment points to layered programs, evaluation of proper insurable valuations, and final pricing to ensure his clients obtain the proper coverage at the best possible premium.

A team player, Budney often works with other producers across the organization to round out accounts. His hard work has earned him several awards, including the Top Gun Award with his previous employer and Acentria's Top Producer recognition for two consecutive years.

STEVE ZISOOK

Commercial lines producer

ROSENTHAL BROTHERS INSURANCE

Steve Zisook is a producer at Illinois-

based Rosenthal Brothers Insurance, where he specializes in real estate insurance for condo associations, apartment buildings, commercial buildings, developers, general contractors and property managers.



SAM SACKLER

Commercial insurance consultant

FISHER BROWN BOTTRELL INSURANCE

With more than 20 years of experience consulting with companies in the construction, healthcare, manufacturing, real estate development and hospitality industries, Sam Sackler has served as a commercial insurance consultant for Fisher Brown Bottrell Insurance since 2004. Believing that the industry is best served by those who acquire and maintain a high standard of professionalism, he has earned his CIC and CRM designations.

Outside of insurance, Sackler has served on the boards and committees for a number of community and professional organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America's sporting clay committee, the Hattiesburg Historic Downtown Association, the USM Symphony Gala and the Area Development Partnership. He is also an alumnus of the 2012 Leadership Mississippi class and has been asked to teach emerging contractors about bonds and insurance through the Mississippi Development Authority's annual model contractor development program.

TOP PRODUCERS 2019



KEVIN MASON

President

ACENTRIA INSURANCE

Under Kevin Mason's guidance, Acentria Insurance has become recognized as a leader within the industry. As president, Mason focuses on developing insurance solutions that strengthen Acentria's presence in the market, as well as its commitment to client relationships and exceptional service. With almost 30 years of industry experience, he specializes in multifamily protection, focusing on national condominium associations.

Before co-founding Acentria Insurance, Mason served as branch manager for Insurance Office of America [IOA], where he was recognized as Rookie of the Year. During his tenure with IOA, he was named Agent of the Year and became managing partner of North Florida operations, while also serving on the IOA advisory council.

Making his fourth appearance in a row on *IBA's* Top Producers list, Mason also led Acentria Insurance to be recognized as an *IBA* Top Insurance Workplace in 2018. Active in his community, Mason spent more than a decade on the board of directors of the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, which funds children's charities along the Florida Panhandle. He is also a member of the Destin Chamber of Commerce, Community Association Institute and Florida Association of Insurance Agents.



MARK N. LEE

Managing director

HIGGINBOTHAM

Mark Lee lives by the mantra "do the right thing" when looking after his clients. "To grow your book, you have to take care of your customer by always

having their best interest at heart and doing what is necessary to make sure they have the best-value solution available and the tools necessary to be successful," he says. "You have to be the valued tool they can't do without."

Lee's insurance career began in 2005; today, he is a managing director at Higginbotham, where he focuses on clients in the oil & gas, construction and manufacturing industries. Lee has been recognized multiple times for his success in the industry, including being named an *IBA* Top Producer in 2016 and 2017.



JONATHAN SCHRETER

Executive vice president

BOLTON & COMPANY

Jonathan Schreter enjoys managing risk for all kinds of businesses, but his career really took off after he identified

specific industries where he could deeply examine the key challenges. "For example, charter schools have seen tremendous growth, especially in California," he says. "I've leveraged Bolton & Company's 35-year history of serving private and independent schools and repurposed our intellectual capital to address the specific needs of these public institutions with great success."

In 2018, Schreter's number-one priority was ensuring that he used his available time in productive ways that demonstrated a return on ROI, especially when it comes to business development activities like conferences, lunches and other networking opportunities. Currently, he is working on authoring a book to share the insurance intelligence and risk management practices he's collected over the years.

BOB MIDDLETON

Director and owner

ARTS INSURANCE PROGRAM

Over the course of his career, Bob Middleton has focused on using marketing to provide specialized coverage, services and support to niche markets. For the past 15 years, he has served as owner and director of the Arts Insurance Program, a program of Maury, Donnelly & Parr.

The program's focus on the arts community allows him to "work with incredibly talented and dedicated

employees who want to bring their art to their audience," he says. "It's incredibly satisfying to help them achieve their goals." Through the years, the program has developed relationships with numerous associations, including Dance USA, Opera America and the Shakespeare Theatre Association, which has led to tremendous success.





ALLEN CHAPMAN

Executive vice president

HUB INTERNATIONAL GULF SOUTH

With extensive experience in creating insurance solutions for a range of industry segments, including aviation, public entities, manufacturing, large regional retail, marine, nonprofits and technology, Allen Chapman strives to maintain strong working relationships with all of his clients.

To build his book, Chapman has developed a strategy that starts with his first meeting with a client. “[I] took a hard look at what I was taking to first meetings,” he explains. “My deliverables [were] all over the place, so I focused on putting something together that would get me to a credible place with the prospect.”

His current presentation to prospective clients includes trade publication articles, a logo sheet that gives a snapshot of his client base and a claims scenario. “[I take] a picture of a claim scenario [where a claim was denied thrice by the carrier, and we got it paid in full] and the copy of the claim check to illustrate standing behind our customers in the event of a loss,” Chapman says.

Outside of the insurance world, Chapman has been actively involved in his local community in Mobile, Alabama, including serving on the board of an independent school, as chairman of the local sports stadium board, as a member of the local Rotary Club and a member of his church’s board of trustees.



MARCUS F. EAGAN

Vice president

EAGAN INSURANCE AGENCY

Making his third consecutive appearance as an *IBA* Top Producer, Marcus Eagan is part of the fourth generation of the

Eagan family to become a vital part of Eagan Insurance Agency. After earning a degree in business administration from the College of Charleston in 2002, Eagan joined the family business. A CIC and CRM designation holder, he specializes in risk management and insurance placements with an emphasis on large property risks, marine and construction clients.

Outside of Eagan Insurance Agency, Eagan is president of the board of the Insurance Agents of Greater New Orleans, has been tapped by local media to speak about his business success and has been named to *New Orleans CityBusiness*’ Ones to Watch column. An avid sailor, Eagan is a three-time collegiate All-American who has won numerous sailing awards on both a national and international level. He’s also a member of the Bay Waveland Yacht Club and Southern Yacht Club.

JEFF BAJZA

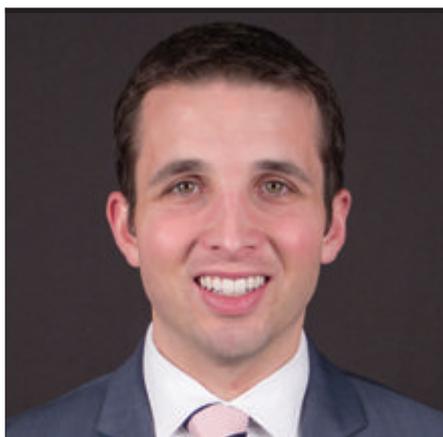
Vice president, sales producer

AMERIFLOOD

With almost three decades of experience in the insurance industry, Jeff Bajza boasts unparalleled knowledge and outstanding customer service that sets him apart in a competitive marketplace.

He founded AmeriFlood in 2005 and has become a subject-matter expert on flood insurance in the multifamily condo association sector.

Bajza has also been integral in leading AmeriFlood, a subsidiary of Acentria Insurance, to be voted one of the top insurance agencies in Fort Lauderdale for the past three years.



TYLER LAMANTIA

Area president, San Diego and aviation

GALLAGHER

If Tyler LaMantia had to pick one strategy that has been key to growing his book of business, it would be specializing in a particular class of business and fully immersing himself in that world. “Earning the reputation of a trusted advisor, as opposed to just another vendor, is the key to achieving long-term sustainable success,” he says.

As his book has grown, LaMantia has had to focus more on time management and improving his decisions on where to spend his time. Recently, LaMantia moved into a new role as area president, in which he’s responsible for growing Gallagher’s San Diego and aviation operations, which will be his primary focus for 2019.

TOP PRODUCERS 2019



NEGAR SHARIFI

Commercial vice president

ASSUREDPARTNERS

After graduating from college, Negar Sharifi landed her first job in the audit department at a Big Four accounting firm, where she worked in the timeshare/hotel/property sector. In 2008, she decided to shift gears and leave accounting behind to learn more about the insurance side of real estate. Since then, Sharifi has built a book of business consisting of more than 250 clients, primarily in the construction and real estate industries.

"My strategy over the past 10 and a half years has simply been to work harder than my competition," she says. "Even after being in the business for 10 and a half years, I still, to this day, cold-call accounts. Last year, cold calls alone accounted for over \$100,000 in new business revenue."

In 2018, Sharifi and her partner hired support staff to alleviate administrative responsibilities, which allowed Sharifi to grow her business even further. "Those responsibilities were getting in the way of our ability to sell," she says. "It got to the point where administrative tasks became so cumbersome that we were turning away incoming leads. Instead, we hired smart teammates and trained them up so that they can run with the assignments we give to them."



JONATHAN BROOKE

Vice president

ACENTRIA INSURANCE

Jonathan Brooke brings more than 28 years of experience to Acentria Insurance, where he specializes in the construction

and hospitality industries. Believing in forming strong and meaningful client relationships, Brooke excels at analyzing coverage to reduce potential risk and exposure for his clients and prospects. Prior to joining Acentria Insurance, Brooke was part of a local agency in Fort Myers, Florida, where he was named managing partner in just three years.

With a passion for giving back, Brooke has been either a volunteer or board member with several community organizations, including Big Brothers Big Sisters, the YMCA, the Heights Foundation, the United Way, the Lee County Association of Independent Insurance Agents, Fort Myers High School and the Fort Myers American Little League Association.



DAVID MILLER

Senior vice president

BOLTON & COMPANY

Over the course of his career,

David Miller has remained committed to building relationships and focusing his energy on particular niches. Last year, he took those efforts a step further by expanding the geographical reach

of his network, which resulted to more opportunities within his niche segments. "Continuing to advocate for and educate my clients and prospects has led to more word-of-mouth exposure as well," he says.

Prior to joining Bolton & Company in 2014, Miller worked for several years at Merrill Lynch, where he served as operations controller and then operations supervisor, responsible for the growth and development of the department, which resulted in him being promoted to director of internal audit preparations.



JOHN SHAFFER

Vice president

M&T INSURANCE AGENCY

At M&T Insurance Agency, John Shaffer specializes in providing

enterprise risk management solutions for businesses in heavy casualty industries such as waste management, construction and property management. He also provides both contract and commercial surety solutions to a wide array of

businesses. A Construction Risk and Insurance Specialist and Commercial Lines Coverage Specialist, Shaffer also holds several accreditations from the National Association of Surety Bond Producers.

Shaffer identifies honest and frequent communication, responsiveness, and a caring nature as the pillars of his success. "I care as much about the people that work for the companies I represent as the companies themselves," he says. "I have an unbridled willingness to do not just what is required, but to do everything I possibly can for the client's benefit. I'm driven by a desire for my clients to know that no other broker will care as much as I do."

TOP PRODUCERS 2019



ALKA MANAKTALA

Vice president
INSURANCE OFFICE OF AMERICA

The top producer among 300 producers at Insurance Office of America [IOA] in 2018, Alka Manaktala brings more than two decades' worth of experience in quick-service and fine-dining restaurants to IOA's restaurant group. Having written coverage for more than 600 restaurants, Manaktala's client portfolio includes national brands such as Wendy's, Carl's Jr. and Papa Johns, for which she arranges coverage for P&C, workers' compensation and employment practices liability.

To further increase her business in 2019, Manaktala plans to hire part-time support in telemarketing, in addition to asking her clients for referrals, which she has singled out as the key strategy to growing her book of business.



BRIAN STANTON

President
GATEWAY-ACENTRIA INSURANCE

A two-time *IBA* Top Producer, Brian Stanton brings more than 20 years of industry expertise to Gateway-Acentria Insurance, a subsidiary of Acentria Insurance. He specializes in estate and life insurance planning for high-net-worth individuals, as well as commercial insurance for restaurants, contractors, wholesalers, distributors, trucking and retail. With a strong focus on outstanding customer service and creative insurance program design, Stanton aims to continue propelling Gateway-Acentria Insurance to the forefront of the insurance industry.



JD POWERS

Senior vice president
POWERS
INSURANCE & RISK
MANAGEMENT

JD Powers
has found a

competitive edge in the insurance industry by proactively managing insurance and risk management programs for nearly any type of exposure. "Over the course of my 10-year career, I attribute most of my success to developing our proprietary risk management approach to challenge the status quo and proactively

safeguard our clients, their employees and families," Powers says. "In 2018, most of our success was due to staying focused on growing our specialty niches, which include hospitality, manufacturing, educational institutions, construction/heavy equipment, habitational and personal risk management for successful families."

Thanks to his efforts to help Powers Insurance & Risk Management become a recognized regional firm for these specialty practices, Powers grew his clientele significantly in 2018. His plan for 2019 is to continue to grow all of his practices regionally while also focusing on growing the construction and heavy equipment unit nationally.



DAVID MCKINNON

Senior vice president
FISHER BROWN
BOTTRELL INSURANCE

David McKinnon serves as a senior vice president at Fisher Brown Bottrell, where he focuses on construction

insurance and surety for clients across the Southeast. McKinnon maintains one of the largest books of business at the firm and was the number-one producer for new business in 2018.

He credits his success to valued relationships with his clients, as well as his dedicated support team, who allow him to exceed production goals year in and year out. McKinnon is actively involved in numerous construction associations, including serving on the board of one.