

# THE BRIDGE

A report on understanding &  
retaining the Millennial and Gen Z  
Insurance Workforce



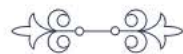
# CONCEPT NOTE

'The Bridge' symbolizes the vital connection between generations. It represents the pivotal transition as one generation passes and the subsequent steps forward—are we adequately preparing them for what lies ahead? Moreover, when multiple generations work together, the question arises: how do we ensure effective collaboration, communication, and connection?

As we introspect these questions, we also ask do Millennials and Gen Z feel a sense of belonging, and are they inspired enough to remain with the organization? What concerns do they have? What needs must be met to foster their allegiance and growth?

This 'Bridge' is not just a metaphor for generational handover; it also signifies the transition from the traditional to the contemporary—from pen and paper to intuitive technologies and AI, from face-to-face interactions to digital engagements and remote handshakes.

**'The Bridge'** is the framework within which we understand and retain the Millennial and Gen Z workforce, guiding them across the ever-evolving landscape of the insurance industry.



T H E   B R I D G E



## In this report

This report delves into the profound impact of the largest demographic in US history on the insurance workspace – their experiences, priorities, behaviors, and preferences. What do they seek from their workplace?

How are they reshaping the insurance industry? What is on their tech and digital wish list? And what can Insurance organizations do to attract, engage and retain Millennial and Gen Z employees?

# INTRODUCTION

Vymo partnered with LIMRA on The Bridge – Millennial and Gen Z Workforce Report '24 to provide actionable insights into a demographic that has experienced unprecedented life alterations – the social media and digital revolution, the COVID-19 pandemic, quiet quitting and firing, climate change, mental and physical health issues, inflation, and concerns about the economy.

Through in-depth qualitative interviews, we gathered feedback from carriers, insurance agents and industry experts to understand how Millennials and Gen Z want to work and live.

Born between 1981 and 1996 (aged 43 to 28 years), Millennials represent a substantial demographic with approximately 72.24 million individuals, comprising roughly 22% of the population. In 2024, over half of the Gen Z cohort had transitioned into adulthood, with the eldest members of this generation now reaching 27 years of age. This group accounts for 38.6 million adults – 16% of the U.S. adult population.

This demographic shift creates a significant, untapped potential for the insurance industry, which currently boasts a staggering 300,000 job openings for insurance agents. The influx of these younger cohorts, alongside Gen X and Boomers has given rise to a 'multigenerational workforce' spanning four generations.

## Our findings –

- Millennials and Gen Z don't just work for a paycheck — **they want a purpose.**
- Millennials and Gen Z don't want bosses — **they want coaches.**
- Millennials and Gen Z don't want just CRMs — **they want intuitive tech.**





**1997- 2012**

**GEN Z**

**1981-1996**

**MILLENNIALS**

**1965-1980**

**GEN X**

**1946-1964**

**BABY BOOMERS**



# THE EVOLVING INSURANCE AGENT

While traditional attractions like job security, financial opportunities, and the freedom of flexible schedules continue to be relevant, there's a notable evolution in the aspirations of modern agents. Today's candidates are increasingly drawn to the potential for societal impact and the ability to make a meaningful difference. This change mirrors broader societal shifts, emphasizing the importance of purpose-driven work.

Comparative Table: Top Reasons Why People Join the Insurance Industry

Factors	Then	Now
Job Security	High priority for stability and long-term prospects.	Still valued, but coupled with the desire to be influencers in their field.
Financial Opportunity	Primary motivator for personal gain.	Now also seen as a platform for making a positive societal difference.
Flexibility	Escape from a rigid 9-to-5 (or longer) schedule.	Still a driving force, seen as a pathway to entrepreneurship with unlimited potential.
Societal Impact	Less emphasized in the past.	Central motivation, especially among the younger generation.

A common thread noticed among interviews with leaders and agents is that people often join the industry by 'accident'. It was never their first choice. One senior leader, reflecting on his thirty-five-year career, remarked, "Insurance has a reputation for being old. We're slow to react. We're slow to move. We're slow to change. When you picture a boardroom of an insurance company, you see a bunch of white-haired old men sitting around."

Another leader echoes similar sentiments, noting that often people join the industry due to a 'life impact'. They might have experienced the loss of a family member and dealt with a life insurance claim, or seen their parents struggle with retirement. There's usually a personal event that shows them the value and importance of the role they're going to play. "Those who have experienced such impacts are likely to connect with this work," she adds.

Flexibility remains a major draw to the insurance industry, both then and now. Agents aren't tied to a time clock—they can manage their schedules around family commitments and personal life, which is a significant advantage. The desire to escape a nine-to-five job remains a major reason for agents choosing this profession.

Then there's the financial opportunity. The financial services sector is known to be one of the more lucrative professions across various industries. A senior leader says, "Around 20 years ago, job security was a significant motivator for people to join the industry.

The idea was to work for a company that had a long-standing history and was seen as a safe bet in a world where businesses like Enron were collapsing. The insurance industry was considered noble, a profession that didn't attract negative news attention."

Insurance is evolving now. The impact of COVID-19 has shifted perspectives positively towards the financial services industry, highlighting how this career allows one to have a significant impact on the community, control one's destiny, and engage in meaningful work.

There's a stronger emphasis on the ability to help people. "It's about the impact one can make," says one of the senior interviewees. He gave the example of Nike, where the focus isn't on the shoes but the goals. The industry needs to draw inspiration from this – sell the benefits, not the features. The younger generation is more motivated by the difference they can make, the greater good. That's become a powerful attractor. People are now drawn to the industry because they see themselves as influencers. "It's not just about selling; it's about influencing and helping shape the future," he concludes. Today's younger generation thinks about their careers as platforms for making a positive difference.





“I really enjoy working with people of different generations because I can learn from them and how they approach life.”

---

**DARRYL LIU**

Registered Representative, NYLIFE Securities LLC

Experience – 5 years

# BUILDING THE ‘TRUST BRIDGE’

## Choosing Insurance as a Career

Before this, I was in STEM – a Chemical Engineer by undergrad education. It was my mom, who works at New York Life, who suggested I give this a shot. I initially declined, but I eventually sought a career change because engineering didn’t fulfill me. And that’s pretty much the main reason I entered this profession.

## On His Favorite Moments in the Profession and What Motivates Him

There are two reasons. One, you genuinely get to help people. You also assist people with planning and navigating finance. Two, it’s highly flexible. I can travel and manage my schedule. I can work long hours or take a day off as needed, and that’s probably the best part.

## QUALITIES OF A GOOD AGENT

### People skills, diligence, being thorough, and trustworthy–

Those are the most important things. I thought going into this it would be more about learning how financial instruments work, how money works. My biggest surprise was that this was more about learning how people work, learning to understand where they’re coming from, learning to speak their language. I think that is what defines someone who will last one year versus someone who will last 20 or 30 years: can people trust you? And underneath that question, can they trust that you’re not going to mess it up for them?

### On the Biggest Challenge He Faces in the Field

The daily struggle is always going to be finding new clients. For me, the way I try to do this, once you get the clients, you have already done the hardest part, which is getting them to trust you.



You have built the 'trust bridge' between you and the customers by having them give you their private information and their wishes, their desires. The hardest part is always going to be, at least for me, just finding more people like this and making sure that it's worth their time.

### On How He Collaborates with Colleagues Spanning Multiple Generations

I really enjoy working with people of different generations because I can learn from them and how they approach life. Each generation has a different set of needs, a different language that they speak, a different set of responses, and a different set of experiences that shape them.

Like me, I'm in my 30s, I'm a Millennial. But the Gen Zs, they speak a totally different language. They act differently, they spend very differently. They're a lot less guilty about spending more than my generation. My sister is ten years younger than me. She has no problem spending a lot!

And then with the boomers your conversations are different. Watching them helps me speak to clients as well.

### On the Role of Technology in His Practice-

The insurance industry is pretty backward in terms of technology. A lot of the time, it's an obstacle from the company's perspective. I grew up with it - learning how to fix computers, how to play video games, how to use what little resources I had to get the most out of it. So I'm very comfortable with technology.

CRMs are easy to learn and use, but I don't like their inflexibility. There are certain things they are really bad at, like calendars and reminders, for instance. They pop up once, but they expect you to act immediately, and it's very hard to find after the reminder disappears. For this reason, I keep a paper calendar with me at all times.

I've created a word file where I can take notes on everyone, and it has a way of summarising their family information that CRMs are not capable of. This becomes crucial when you're dealing with complex families, including half-siblings, grandparents, uncles, and aunts who are all somehow connected.

### On the Role of AI

AI is too new to be reliable. It's a fun experimental stage at this point. **But if you have real decisions and you have real money at stake, are you going to want an AI to make a decision for you?**

AI can't grasp real-life problems because it only knows what's on the internet, and what's on the internet is written by people. AI doesn't provide answers for critical questions like what conservative investing truly means for you? Or how much insurance you actually need? I have not used it in any situations where I need a guaranteed outcome.

### On Strategies to Make His Day More Productive-

In terms of technology, hotspots are really useful, as are VPNs. In terms of security, I'm very accessible. That can be both a good and a bad thing. Technology is such a wide-ranging part of it, and I believe it's about staying connected and having options.

For example, I have a hybrid setup with both paper and digital. I keep all the key stuff, like summary files, digital. I work on two different computers, a mobile laptop, and a stationary computer. I have remote and secure access to the stationary computer. So, in case someone randomly calls, and they do this all the time, and I need to access something I don't have immediately, it takes me only about a minute or two to do it.

# CHALLENGES IN RETAINING INSURANCE AGENTS



## The Post-COVID Workforce Shift:

Since COVID-19, there has been a notable shift in workforce dynamics. The balance of power has tilted towards employees, with demands for increased flexibility and benefits. This change is a departure from the past when companies held more leverage over job seekers. Today, the challenge lies in adapting managerial training to suit the recruitment of contemporary candidates. ***Traditional recruitment methods are becoming obsolete.*** A President and Chief Marketing Officer at a prominent insurance carrier compares this to sports coaching. He says, "A coach from the old school would likely struggle with today's players, who are engrossed in their smartphones, social media, and an environment that seldom tells them 'no.' This culture permeates through schools and society, fostering a generation with distinct expectations."



## Economic and Generational Shifts:

Economic factors and generational shifts further complicate recruitment. With the rising cost of living, what was once considered a livable salary is no longer sufficient. Millennials and Gen Z are seeking rapid success, recognition, and substantial experiences. The Vice President of Independent Brokerage and Agency Growth at a leading carrier emphasizes the need to evolve communication strategies to attract these generations. She says, "Life is expensive, significantly more so than when I graduated from college. What was once a livable salary is no longer enough, and our minimum production requirements are comparable to what someone could make at Starbucks – with full benefits included." Additionally, there's a need to correct misconceptions about the industry, such as the belief that a finance degree is necessary for success. The focus should be on the ability to build networks and possess the right mindset. The job market's evolution has also had negative impacts, particularly in terms of the speed of hiring and onboarding. The challenge is not just finding talent but doing so quickly enough before they receive other offers. A Senior Vice President points out the challenge of overcoming negative connotations associated with commission-based sales roles and the use of insurance products in financial planning.

## The Obstacles Ahead:

The demand for remote work and greater flexibility has surged. This change has made finding quality candidates more challenging, necessitating more extensive interview processes and altered recruitment metrics. A critical challenge is developing frontline leaders, who are the face of recruitment. There's a need for more focus on training and development in this area. Shifting candidates' perceptions from the traditional image of an insurance company to a firm offering holistic planning is also crucial. **This involves reassessing what success looks like in today's context.**

## The Personal Touch in Insurance

Why go personal in a digital world? Surprisingly, nearly half of Gen Z and a majority of Millennials value personal connections when buying insurance, higher than Gen X and Boomers. It's clear: the human element remains key in our tech-driven age. Insurance agents who blend digital savvy with a personal approach can win big.

**Q: Why Agents need to have personal connect with their customers?**

I would research online but buy from an insurance agent or other financial professional in person

**49%**

GEN Z

**64%**

MILLENNIALS

**42%**

GEN X

**41%**

BOOMERS



# WHY AGENTS LEAVE THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY

66% of respondents cited financial reasons as a primary deterrent for staying in the industry, including lack of a stable salary and the challenges of variable incomes.



## **Lack of Financial Stability**

The primary reason for departure is often not earning enough money. The fear and reality of working on commission lead to variable and sometimes insufficient income.



## **Unmet Expectations**

The loss of a sense of mission or purpose turns the job into a grind. Initial expectations are not met, leading to disappointment.



## **Running Out of Prospects**

Directly linked to lower retention rates. It leads to boredom and failure due to a lack of a steady stream of new prospects.

The challenges of the industry remain constant. It's a demanding field, requiring significant effort to acquire licenses and complete training. During this phase, the income may not be substantial. The current economic environment, marked by inflation, means that the insurance sector is competing with sectors offering higher starting salaries. While some insurance carriers do provide salaried roles, success as an insurance agent often hinges on embracing a variable income model.

Market considerations have also been significant, particularly with the impact of COVID-19. With the shift to remote work, people have moved to different states, thus facing the challenge of building a new market from scratch, can deter them from entering this career. Additionally, transitioning from a completely different career to becoming a financial professional requires confidence and competence, which not everyone possesses.

Another reason is that the job turned out to be much harder than expected. Agents were perhaps oversold on the opportunity with too much emphasis on freedom and flexibility, and not enough on the hard work and dedication required. They come into the industry under certain pretenses which, when unmet, can lead to disappointment. Access to a market becomes less useful without the ability to influence. New agents typically have a pool of social contacts in the form of current clients, family, and friends when they join the industry. But what happens when they exhaust those resources? This issue is closely tied to retention rates.

Ultimately, as one insurance leader said, it is about being patient, putting in the hours, and having a sense of mission – “When people lose that (purpose) and they lose sight of the fact that they're really helping people, it becomes just a job. And when it becomes just a job, it's a real grind.”

# DRIVEN, HUNGRY AND ALWAYS LEARNING!



“You have to be goal-oriented, driven, hungry, adaptable, and always learning. Good time management is essential.”

---

**JUSTINE ANNORENO**

Financial Services Professional at NYLIFE Securities LLC  
Experience – 4 years

## **Tell us a bit about yourself and how you became interested in the Insurance sector:**

I'm with New York Life, and it's been four years. I'm currently in the transition part of becoming an agent partner. This means I'm going to start recruiting my own team, and I am a registered rep.

Honestly, I had no clue about any of this. If someone had told me I'd be doing financial security work, I'd have laughed and said, "No way!" I was in sales and didn't want to continue. Then I met my partner, Louie, who introduced me to the insurance field. He asked, "Are you open to an opportunity?"

Women are doing great." And that's when I decided to take the leap of faith and I went all in. I was open to an opportunity, even though I knew nothing about it. I have attended 16 hours of continuing education (CE) classes. And at each step of my journey, I learned more about the insurance field.

## **What is the best part about your profession?**

It's never the same. No day is the same as another. I can leave if I need to, work from home if I want, or come in. It's never a dull moment.



### **What are the skills or the key factors that contribute to the success of an agent?**

You have to be goal-oriented, driven, hungry, adaptable, and always learning. Good time management is essential.

### **What are the challenges you face daily?**

My biggest challenge is being more consistent in finding new clients and following up with people. It's a roller coaster, and you get caught up in it. You reach out and start getting interested people. Then you get busy with the business, and you forget to keep reaching out. You have to manage well and keep the business on the books while setting appointments and meeting new people.

### **How do you plan your work week?**

I use a CRM, which helps with tracking clients, policies, and information. However, CRMs aren't mobile-friendly, and I'm a paper person. I have stacks of binders with information on my leads. When I receive an email, I print and organize it by date in these binders on my desk. Taking notes on paper helps me keep track of my leads, and I can easily access the information when making calls.

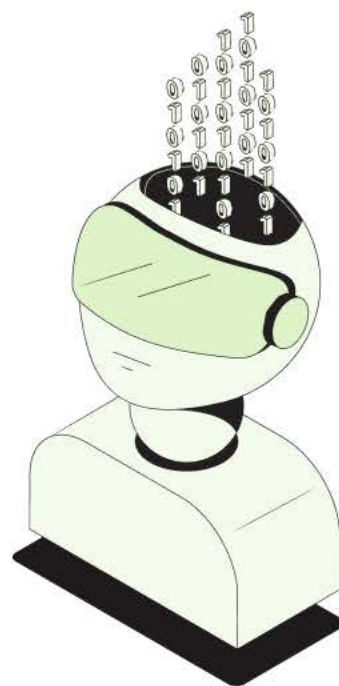
### **How has been your experience of using AI?**

AI has been a significant help for me, especially when I struggle with articulating and describing things professionally. For instance, it can help me find a policy number and gather relevant information. It's particularly beneficial for time management, which is one of my struggles.

### **On the power of Social Media:**

The Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) guidelines regulate what can be posted on social media. We can't discuss products or numbers. Everything we post online has to be approved by the company compliance department. Companies need to balance fun social media content and information gatekeeping, as the Millennial generation is turning to the internet for their insurance needs.

On the flip side, there are dubious accounts on Tik Tok spreading fake information. These accounts are unregulated, and Gen Z consumers might get influenced by them. I'm a licensed professional who has spent hours studying insurance, yet I can't post the right information while others just toss out content. Insurance companies need to find a solution to this issue.





# TECHNOLOGY

THE BRIDGE BETWEEN TODAY AND TOMORROW

All prominent U.S. insurance carrier leaders we interviewed unanimously emphasized technology's pivotal role in shaping the next generation of insurance agents.

THE BRIDGE

“Technology has been a blessing. The flexibility in client engagement has enabled practices to grow and has expanded the search for talent beyond local markets.”

DIRECTOR OF TALENT ACQUISITION

“Agents can now achieve much more than in the past when they had to travel for in-home visits and complete applications by hand.”

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF RETAIL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

“I would say over 70% of our sales are done remotely, either on the phone or virtually.”

VICE PRESIDENT OF AGENT DISTRIBUTION

“We're observing two distinct streams within our workforce - 1) digital natives, who are comfortable with digital solutions and quick to learn, and 2) career changers, who are less comfortable and slower to adopt technology.”

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF AGENCIES

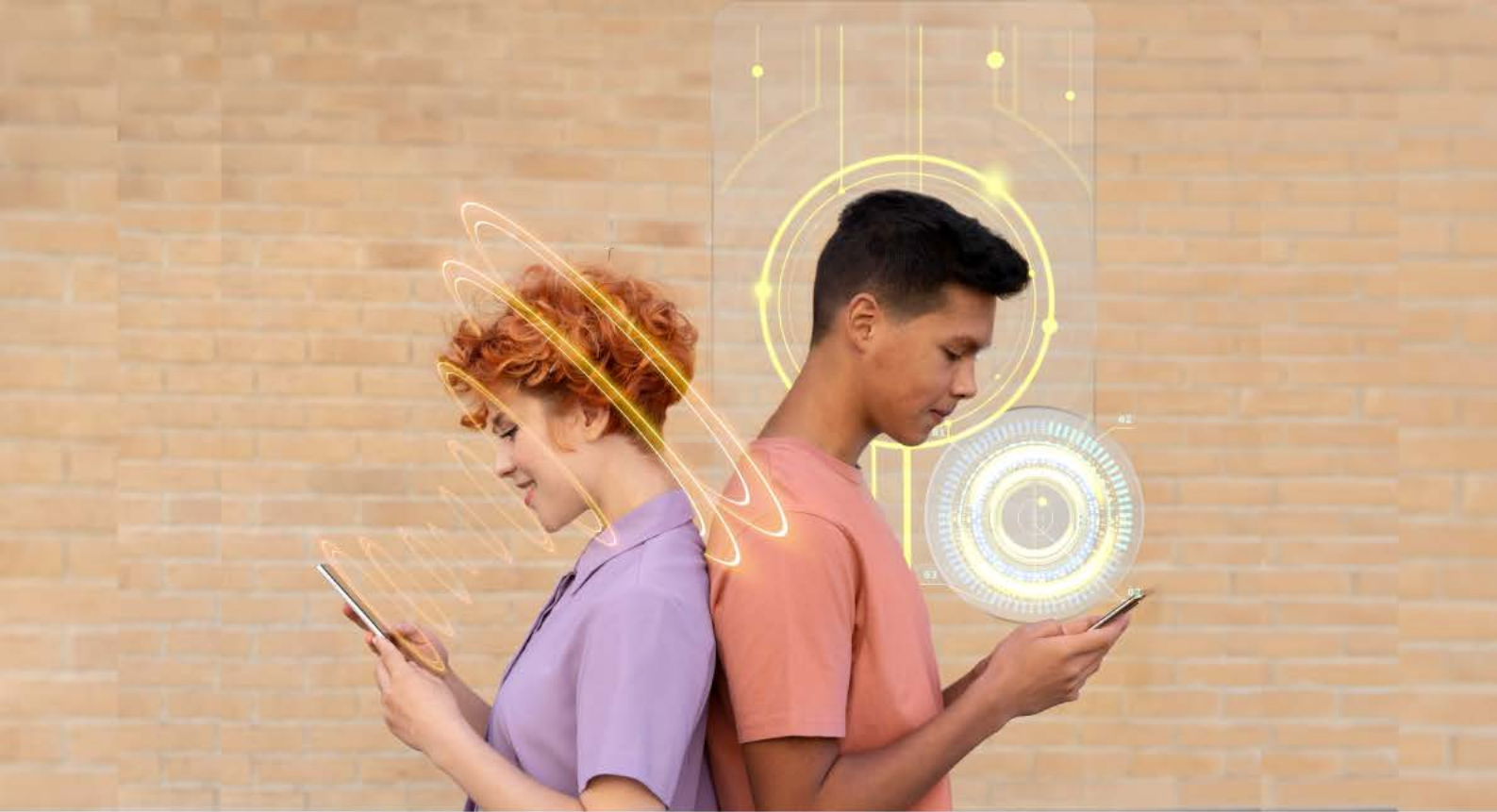
“In 2019, we recognized the need to move away from cumbersome paper applications and face-to-face meetings, allowing us to transition to virtual sales during the pandemic seamlessly. We've also introduced accelerated underwriting decisions and electronic policy delivery in many cases.”

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

Companies must align technological offerings with the integrated, seamless experience that young professionals expect.”

VICE PRESIDENT OF INDEPENDENT BROKERAGE & AGENCY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT





## The Essential Trifecta

Technology stands as a leading component in modern-day insurance companies, complementing People and Products to complete the essential trifecta. Post-COVID, carriers have embraced the acceleration of digital technology to connect them with agents and clients nationwide. As one insurance leader succinctly pointed out, someone earning over \$100,000 is more likely to have a 401(k) to roll over, questions about mutual funds, and the financial capacity for a \$300 monthly program. To tap into this market, technology is essential. The higher a person climbs the socioeconomic ladder, the more crucial sophisticated technology becomes.

## A Digital Friend

Most insurance practices now operate with a blend of virtual and in-person meetings. CRM tools help carriers better understand and manage their client base, enabling advisors to streamline client reviews, proposals, and analyses. Digital meeting platforms like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Webex, which proved especially useful during the pandemic, have helped advisors reach unprecedented productivity levels. "Instead of limiting themselves to one or two appointments per day, they can now handle eight to ten, thanks to the efficiency technology provides in connecting with clients and streamlining processes," shares one leader. Marketing and client engagement platforms like LinkedIn and Hearsay Social are among the most used by both agents and carriers. These technological advancements are pivotal in daily operations.

## Building Better Agents

Insurance companies are increasingly investing in Learning and Development initiatives. "Our organization has invested in agent portals that track behavior and coach best practices. Technology has revolutionized activity management," a leader shared. "A decade ago, all activities were self-reported, but now, technology automates and improves these systems."

One leader shared an insightful example of interviewing a 24-year-old woman: "I was struck by her statement that she's been using technology for 20 years – a fact that made me realize the generational gap in technological fluency. Since 2003, technology has advanced exponentially, and the younger generation has adapted accordingly."

Their concept of friendship, often including people they've never met in person, differs vastly from that of older generations. Insurance carriers need to redefine what a 'friend' means in today's context. Perhaps, someone reliable enough to show up at a party or look after your dog while you're away might be a better measure of friendship."

Reflecting on the recent past, another leader shared, "If you'd asked me before COVID could you sell complex concepts virtually, I'd have said no, it's impossible. It's not impossible. We've learned how to do it. We've mastered that now. And virtual technology has enabled us to do that."



The United States has **over 100 million active users on major social platforms, representing more than 90% of the total population.** Many young insurance agents use it for professional development – they're networking, learning, and even job hunting on these platforms.

Source: [Statista](#)





“I don't believe AI will play a role in emotional intelligence; however, it is certain to replace many functions that require human intelligence.”

**TAYLOR REYNOLDS**

Financial Advisor at Insurance

Noble Capital Group LLC

Experience – 5 years

# A NEW ADVENTURE DAILY

## Choosing Insurance as a Career

I began my career in the insurance industry five years ago, around the age of 25. At that time, I was transitioning between jobs and had a background in sales. A recruiter introduced me to the field, emphasizing its flexibility—the opportunity to build my own client base, on my own terms, and according to my own schedule. The prospect of having greater control over my time was particularly appealing to me then.

## Highlights of the Profession

The job brings a new adventure daily, and no two days are the same, which I find exciting. In a 100% commission-based career, doubts can arise, yet my focus is on cultivating long-term growth and nurturing future relationships.



## Qualities of an Effective Agent

Quickly building trust and maintaining integrity are crucial — it means doing what you promise. It involves having numerous conversations, understanding that the timing won't be right for 90% of the people you talk to. However, for the 10% with questions, you need to be there for them. Also, it's important not to forget that the other 90% likely have concerns and questions, too; it's just not their time yet. The key is knowing how to circle back to them later on, to check in without seeming overly aggressive.

## A Day in Taylor's Life

My mornings start with email correspondence and administrative tasks. I prefer to ease into calls as the day progresses. Often, the day begins with a coffee meeting, perhaps with a local banker or an entrepreneur, to explore joint opportunities. My day is interspersed with investment follow-ups and networking, ensuring that non-meeting time is filled with productive tasks.

## The Rise of AI

Generative AI is already being incorporated into life insurance analysis and portfolio construction. There's no doubt that its impact will continue to grow. The advisor's role, as I see it, is to manage and continue to act as the bridge between information and the human experience, guiding clients on their personal journeys. While tools like robo-advisors or portfolio construction assistants might expedite processes, they don't change the fact that an advisor spends the majority of their time focused on the client's life, goals, and family concerns.

I don't believe AI will play a role in emotional intelligence; however, it is certain to replace many functions that require human intelligence.

## On the Importance of Building Personal Relationships

I've found that my productivity peaks when I'm out interacting with people. Being an active community member has always been important to me. I engage in a variety of activities such as coaching, esports, volunteering, and participating in the local chamber of Rotary. Being face-to-face with individuals, and following up with them using my cell phone, is at the core of my process of onboarding and acquiring new clients.

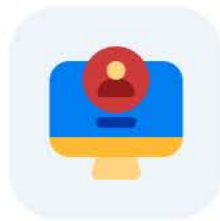
While I'm aware that many have found success with digital tools or through entirely remote work, I've discovered that in-person interactions are significantly more effective for me.

# STRATEGIES FOR RETAINING AGENTS

Recruitment is the lifeblood of the insurance industry, ensuring continuity and success. Those skilled in recruitment excel in this field. However, retaining agents remains a significant challenge for insurance companies, with a four-year survival rate of 15% according to LIMRA research\*. As one of the leaders pointed out, *"Recruiting shouldn't just be about getting new agents in the door; it should be about enabling their long-term success. If you can't show that you're focused on making sure the people you recruit are successful and have longevity, then there's no real strategy for recruitment. You're essentially just recruiting their clients."*

*Historically, the industry has relied on warm recruiting, such as gaining referrals. During the COVID era, there was a shift towards cold, high-volume recruitment marketing and generating leads from job websites like Indeed, ZipRecruiter, and LinkedIn. Despite this shift, warm source candidates often demonstrate higher retention and success rates, likely due to the existing connections with the recruiter or the company.*

*To improve agent retention, insurance companies can focus on four key areas:*



**A robust recruiting and selection system**



**Comprehensive training for agent development**



**Efficient activity management systems**



**Effective case management systems for better agent compensation**



## Quality Hiring and Training

Modern insurance companies invest in training managers and agents, favoring the recruitment and early success of newcomers. Senior leaders emphasize the importance of a strong start to prevent new agents from becoming discouraged. To facilitate a strong start, many firms provide new agents with support from training managers or partner agents.

One leader describes their recruitment philosophy as the 'Northeast' direction, focusing not just on increasing numbers, but on enhancing productivity per representative. It's analogous to operating multiple stores where each store is yielding higher returns. The emphasis is not just growth in quantity but also in the quality and productivity of their agents. "It's ineffective to just amass a large workforce without ensuring they're achieving substantial sales. That would only shift our metrics eastward – more people, less productivity."

Training courses that cover not only sales skills but also soft skills are equally vital. During COVID, companies greatly expanded their virtual training offerings. Previously, training meant flying advisors in for intensive week-long sessions, now companies offer continuous learning opportunities through virtual sessions. This access to a broader range of perspectives from across a nationwide network, compared to learning only from nearby colleagues, has been beneficial.

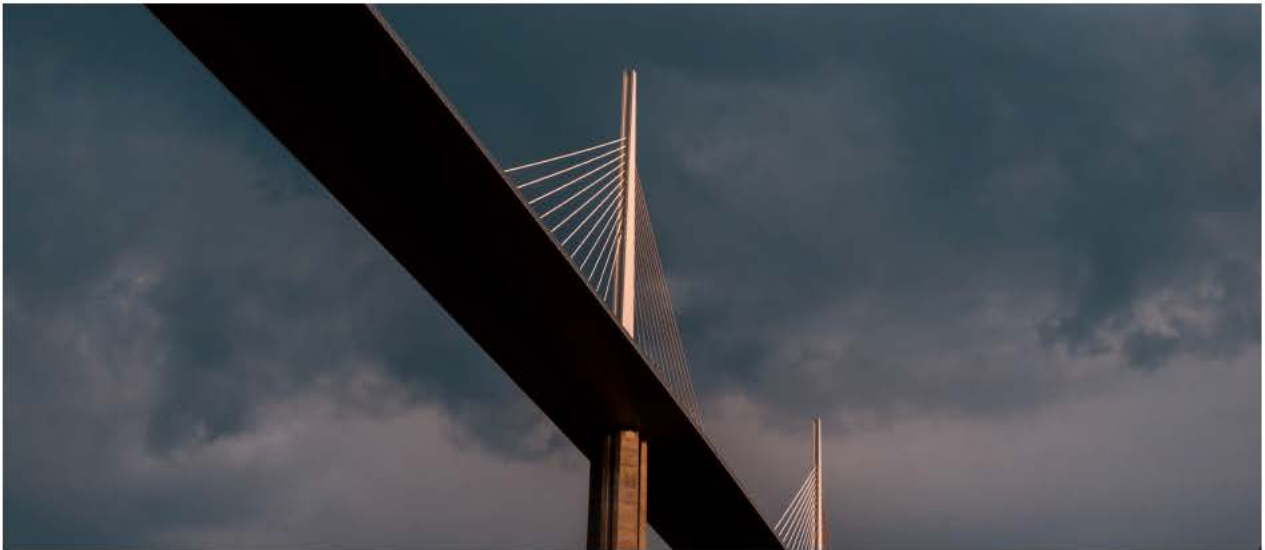
## Mentors and Role Models

New agents benefit from guidance on networking and leveraging personal connections. A supportive and inspiring leadership, including a Chief Sales Officer who connects authentically with the team, is crucial. Cultivating a sense of camaraderie and a strong company culture is essential in this commission-based environment.

For more experienced agents, a firm has established Centers of Excellence, offering centralized resources for practice management and growth. They have also invested in a field leadership structure to ensure that agents have the support they need. In addition, they continually review their incentives and compensation to remain competitive and appealing to their advisors.

An approach that emphasizes a greater cause and community contribution, rather than focusing solely on financial gain, may be more appealing to Millennials and Gen Z, attracting them to the insurance profession.





# BUILDING NEW BRIDGES - 2024 AND BEYOND

## Key Findings

- Advanced technology, such as AI, will play a larger role in simplifying seller activities.
- Human connection will still be an important factor in building relationships and helping agents understand their goals.
- A team-based approach will be the model of the future. Agents will be organized into teams, with each member having a specialized role.
- The organizations that will succeed are those that find a balance between independent and affiliated distribution models.
- There will be a greater emphasis on direct-to-consumer approaches, with a shift towards call centers.

## The New Generation of Advisors

As technology like AI advances, maintaining human connections becomes increasingly vital. It's about more than just using technology to solve problems. Understanding and motivating people requires a nuanced approach.

The new generation of advisors connects to a larger, 'purpose-driven' goal. Early specialization benefits newcomers by providing clear paths for growth. Continuous improvement in storytelling is essential to highlight the reasons people enter the business, fostering agents to overcome challenges.

Government policies significantly influence the insurance industry. The trend of leveraging life insurance for tax benefits is likely to continue. Additionally, companies need to adapt to societal changes, such as extended lifespans, rising costs, and climate change, by integrating these factors into their pricing models and solutions.

The organizations that will succeed are those that find a balance between independent and affiliated models. Relying solely on traditional captive distribution or the fully independent model presents risks. The key will be to build a strategy around teaming, not just expanding current agents teams, but also attracting new talent with the intent to build robust teams from the start. ***Firms that can grow organically from the first agents will be well-positioned for success.***

## The Era of Gen AI

*"Magic happens when you combine technology with people,"* a senior leader observes. Learning how they fit together is the future of the insurance business. Advances in AI are set to streamline sales processes, introducing a new level of efficiency. This technology empowers agents to offer more nuanced support throughout a client's life journey.

Consider this scenario: a client's child is starting high school soon, naturally leading to discussions about college planning. Here, artificial intelligence comes into play, enabling informed, proactive conversations. Imagine an advisor noting, "Your child Mia is starting high school this year. Have you thought about college planning?" Such insights are driven by accessible data. AI helps agents put pieces together, like deducing that Mia would be entering high school, paving the way for relevant, timely advice.

## Team Players Trump Solo Reps

There will be a greater emphasis on direct-to-consumer approaches. While the traditional representative's role will persist, its nature is set to change. Instead of representatives handling the entire process themselves—from prospecting, client acquisition to interviews, sales, and servicing—there will be a shift towards a more call center-oriented model. Representatives will become part of a team.

The Chief Marketing Officer of a prominent insurance company anticipates a significant disruption: "Teaming is poised to become a cornerstone of our industry. Representatives will be grouped into cohesive units, with each member excelling in a specific role. For example, one might focus on prospecting, while another specializes in arranging interviews. Commissions will be shared among team members upon closing a deal, fostering a spirit of joint success."

This model, integrating specialized roles within a team framework, supplemented by a robust digital presence and a client contact center offering virtual assistance, represents the future of insurance sales.

# INSURANCE SALES AGENTS: A CAREER ON THE RISE!

The job scene for insurance sales agents is set to pop with an 8% growth from 2022 to 2032 – exceeding the average job growth rate! This surge is expected to create roughly 48,300 job openings for insurance sales agents annually, with the majority of these positions being filled by Millennials and Gen Z candidates. And with the pros transitioning to retirement, there's room for new talent to step in.

## INSURANCE SALES AGENTS

Percent change in employment, projected 2022–32

### Insurance Sales Agents



### Sales Representatives Services



### Total, all occupations



Note: All occupations includes all occupations in the U.S Economy.

Source: U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections Program



# AI ISN'T HERE TO REPLACE AGENTS



“The agents of the future will want the same tools at work as they have at home.”

---

**TROY KORSGADEN**

Insurance Carrier Consultant, Korsgaden International

The agents of the future will want the same tools at work as they have at home. They don't want to come to work and be limited. However, most insurance companies, even today, still have tools that are not user-friendly. Consequently, most of their day is spent trying to patchwork a bunch of technology.

When you're young, you want it easy, you want it fast. We have to create an environment where it's easy and fast for them because their attention span is short. They were brought up in a world where everything happens instantly. We need to train them to pause and be still, to stop for a moment and turn everything off.

Therefore, creating an environment is crucial, encompassing tools, business setup, and workflows. As we consider the agents of the future, there are individuals who want to be involved in their communities, wanting to make a bigger difference than yesterday. We need to empower them to have the lives they desire, beyond just going to work every day.

## The Rise of AI in Insurance

Insurers must update their legacy systems to newer ones, unify their tools, and employ AI to attract the younger generation. This will enhance customer service, underwriting, claims processing, fraud detection, among other areas. AI streamlines insurance agents tasks, automating marketing plans and scheduling, allowing them to focus on building relationships and offering personalized advice.

Of course, AI isn't here to replace agents. The insurance industry is built on human interaction, and human agents are here to stay. If anything, AI will act as a helping hand and should be embraced as something that can propel us forward, assist in rebranding to attract new talent, and deliver better experiences for our customers.

*Troy has over three decades of experience in the Insurance Industry. He has authored several books about insurance, including **Net Gain Growth**, **Inflection Point**, **Discussion Partner**, & **Power Position Your Agency**, among others.*



# BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

---

## DEBRA GROMMONS

Principal Writer and Editor, The Write Words

### A Snapshot:

- Conducting workshops and teaching sessions in colleges on finance and financial security is crucial.
- We have to foster a culture of 'team-based selling' and to move away from the perception that insurance is an old, stuffy, and boring job.
- The industry has to help young agents overcome their fear of commissions.

### The Right Recruitment Tools to Guide the Next Gen

There is a need for rebranding in how the insurance industry is perceived by the next generation. Millennials and Gen Z are particularly interested in roles where they can make a meaningful impact on the world. We have to change the perception of the industry to attract not only younger individuals but also women and people of color. We often hear from college students that recruiters only show up once a year for a college fair, which isn't sufficient for them to understand the industry. Therefore, conducting workshops and teaching sessions in colleges, focusing not just on finance as a profession but also on financial security, is crucial.

The industry should foster a culture of 'team-based selling' to move away from the perception that it's an old, stuffy, and boring job. New agents thrive in a collaborative environment. One intern I spoke with highlighted how she didn't initially realize the extent of support she would receive from experienced agents, as well as from the firm and company teams. It's no longer necessary to know everything or learn every aspect of the job individually.

***Many companies are transitioning to team-based selling, which benefits those who may not feel entirely confident in their abilities.***



## Being Tech-Smart

Younger folks tend to view the insurance industry as old-fashioned and out of touch with modern technology. This creates a significant gap in expectations when it comes to technological advancements. When you're trying to recruit Gen Z or younger Millennials, using outdated technology won't do you any favors.

We really need to step up our game and focus more on improving the experience for our agents. After all, they're the ones bringing in the business. Of course, we can't forget about our clients, but we need to make sure that newcomers have a better experience too. And a big part of that is embracing technology. Some companies have legacy and modern systems running concurrently. They have to teach people how to navigate both systems.

## Balancing Commission and Salary

In the coming years, the focus will be on enhancing the agent experience, whether through onboarding technology or making their work more manageable so they can better serve their clients.

***We should aim to provide better training for young agents without overwhelming them.***

There's a lot they need to learn, but expecting them to absorb everything in 30, 60, or 90 days is unrealistic. We need to assess their immediate needs and ensure that the resources they require are readily available in a format they are willing to engage with.

One of the primary concerns for younger individuals is having a guaranteed salary. We need to help them overcome their fear of commissions. Additionally, it's important for young individuals to understand that they don't necessarily have to start in a pay for performance role. There are firms where they can be employees, and if that's their preference, that's perfectly acceptable. Once they establish a clientele, agents can enjoy a steady income and even work fewer hours than they did initially. ***Modernizing the compensation structure and helping individuals overcome their apprehension towards commissions requires a shift in our language and presentation, as well as addressing cultural concerns.***

**Debra Grommons** possesses a unique knack for crafting the perfect narrative—an ability honed over three decades in the insurance industry. Her journey began in technical training within an insurance company, where she honed her skills for 14 years. Transitioning to a pivotal role at GAMA (now Finseca), Debra spearheaded the development of training programs and contributed to industry research. Leveraging her expertise, she has supported the insurance and financial services sectors for over four years, collaborating with organizations like Korsgaden International.



# WHAT IS ON YOUR WISH LIST FOR 2024?

"Many insurers express a desire to technologically advance, but real commitment is often lacking, mainly due to financial constraints. I'm hoping for more proactive adoption of tech improvements in 2024 and 2025, particularly in areas like enhancing the agent experience and streamlining the underwriting process."

The most obvious reason the insurance industry struggles to retain Millennials and Gen Z agents is that the technology isn't advanced enough. This generation is accustomed to instant gratification. If I want food, I order it and it's here in 20 minutes. If I want a pair of jeans, I order it and it arrives the next day. This efficiency hasn't impacted the insurance industry as much as I'd hoped by 2024. So, my wishlist is about actual progress, not just the intent."



**STEPHEN DOUGLAS**

Head of Sales & Partnerships for Asia at Medix Global.



# ‘MILLENNIALS ARE LEADING THE WAY NOW.’



---

**FAYE WILLIAMSON**

Member Relations Director, LIMRA

**THE BRIDGE**

In 1982, TIME magazine named the personal computer its "Machine of the Year." That same year, Faye Williamson joined the insurance industry as an agent. Over the last four decades, much has changed. Paper and pen have been replaced by digital notes, and in-person meetings have evolved into hybrid interactions. Now, in early 2024, we are firmly situated in what has been dubbed the 'Era of AI'.

Ms. Williamson has worn multiple hats: from an agent, a sales manager, and one of the first female agency managers to an independent producer, culminating in over two decades at LIMRA in various roles. She shares her journey from agent to member relations director, insights on the future of distribution, and strategies to attract and retain young agents.



## FAYE'S OBSERVATIONS -

- The industry should promote its cause and community work to attract Millennials and Gen Z.
- AI can assist in identifying prospective agents for recruiting, but there is a need for guardrails to protect insurers and agents.
- Companies should actively pursue hiring diverse candidates. Diversity needs to be more than a feature in brochures; it must be a reality.



## Then and Now

"I've seen the insurance business even before computers were a part of the process," she reminisces. Back then, agents were seen as the 'product knowledge people.' She calculated group rates for insurance by hand and carried rate books for life insurance premiums. Then came computers, illustration systems, and the rest is history. At one point, she had a mini computer and a printer with a roll of paper. Everything else was on a yellow pad. "When we meet with someone today, we don't bring a wheelbarrow of visual presentation; it's gotten lighter meeting with clients," she laughs.

Now, the power dynamics have shifted. Distribution is king, and consumers steer the course. Agents must listen to their customers and meet their needs.

The tools used by agents have also evolved. Once there were phone books; now there are social media platforms. Ms. Williamson wishes she had similar tools when she was a new agent transitioning from social work, having never sold anything before. "Having a mechanism for making contacts and knowing who is in my area is easier now."

## Cautiously Optimistic About AI

AI can help identify prospective agents for recruiting, says Ms. Williamson. "There are just so many possibilities out there!" She encourages companies to explore AI but emphasizes the need for guardrails to protect insurers and agents.

## The Human Connect

An agent can read people better when physically present, Ms. Williamson feels. Environmental cues like family pictures and trophies on walls offer better insights than a camera frame on a Zoom or Webex call. Building relationships is easier in person. "I love running meetings in person to watch the interplay between people, which you don't get with little boxes on your laptop. It's different."

***Technology enhances productivity, as agents can meet more people in a day without spending money or time traveling.***

## Time for the New

Ms. Williamson believes not enough has been done to promote the values and community work of the insurance industry. "That's what attracts Millennials and Gen Z. They want to join firms that do well for the community, but no one's telling them what insurance does."

***"There's a need to attract young people by being more transparent and using simpler language."*** Our industry's language has driven a wedge in understanding.

The bright spot is the younger leadership in insurance. More Millennials are leading the way now. The larger companies are embracing Insurtechs, integrating them into their practice. Brilliant people are joining the industry to work with Big Data.

## CRMs as 'Drop Dead Box'

CRMs are as good as the data inputted. "I strive to use our CRM as if it's a drop dead box. If I were to drop dead tomorrow, someone else could see what I've done, with whom, and what needs to be done next," says Ms. Williamson. CRMs facilitate collaboration, especially with teams spread across the country, allowing seamless work among members in different locations.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

"About 34% of the insurance industry is women," shares Ms. Williamson. "I have conversations with executives analyzing their pipelines – where are the diverse candidates and women, and why?" She notes that many companies want to hire and promote from within, but to do so effectively, they must first bring in diverse candidates.

***"Diversity can't just be featured in brochures; it must be implemented in reality."***

A robust benefits program, particularly for women, can make a company more inclusive. Team structures, as opposed to solo practices, provide support for women returning from maternity leave, helping them to reintegrate effectively. "Often, women self-select out when presented with an opportunity," Ms. Williamson observes. She emphasizes that it's the responsibility of insurance companies to alter this trend and afford women the same management opportunities as their counterparts.

Ms. Williamson envisions a more diverse future for the insurance industry. She believes increased diversity will make insurance products more accessible to a wider audience. "I hope that we will become a more diverse, more inclusive industry and help more consumers of diverse backgrounds secure the benefits they need."



CURATED BY



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

