



Quick Guide: Insurance Career Overview

Some of the best jobs today can be found in the insurance business; as a trillion-dollar-a-year industry, it keeps 2.5 million Americans working. With continued population growth, as well as growth in personal wealth, the need for insurance professionals will continue to grow.

Insurance is an exciting career for many reasons. Insurance professionals (until recently known as insurance agents) help guide clients in identifying the types and levels of insurance needed and purchasing the correct policy to protect against loss. A client could be an individual, a family, or a business. Some producers work for an insurance company and only sell that company's products. An independent insurance producer, or broker, usually represents several companies.

There are a number of types of insurance, among them property and casualty, life, health, disability, and long-term care insurance. Many insurance producers also sell mutual funds, variable annuities, and other securities. In recent years, many companies are including flood insurance in their product choices.

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What Makes Someone a Successful Insurance Producer?

Insurance certainly involves sales, but it also requires a combination of people skills and a strong knowledge base. Successful insurance professionals will generally have these qualities:



Additional Requirements for Insurance Producers

Every state requires insurance producers to be licensed. Separate licenses are required to sell life and health insurance or property and casualty insurance, and each normally involves pre-licensing education courses and passing state examinations.

A Day in an Insurance Producer's Life

On a typical day, an insurance producer might:

- **Prepare reports and oversee or maintain recordkeeping**
- **Actively look to establish new client relationships**
- **In the event of a loss, help policyholders settle insurance claims**
- **Offer clients comprehensive financial planning services, such as retirement planning, estate planning, or assistance in setting up pension plans for businesses**

Room to Grow

An insurance producer with ability and drive can advance into a management position, perhaps as a sales manager in a local office. With experience, one can become an agency superintendent or fill a similar executive position.

Employment Outlook for Insurance Producers

A Bureau of Labor Statistics study states that in the next 10 to 15 years the industry will grow by 20 to 40 percent. Analysts predict that as risk and liability issues continue to increase, the need for good insurance coverage will rise as well. And, despite possible changes in the regulatory environment, healthcare is expected to continue its rapid expansion, creating more and more available positions for producers. Job candidates who are multilingual, and those who have a strong knowledge of relevant technical and legal terms, will have the best opportunities to find work.

Insurance Offers a Variety of Career Opportunities

Positions in the insurance industry range from front-line sales representatives or asset managers to people behind the scenes, such as underwriters, customer service representatives, or actuaries. Employers prefer to hire college graduates, particularly in business or economics, but might consider hiring a high school graduate who has proven sales ability or obvious potential.



Insurance Job Opportunities

Actuary—Actuaries determine the risk involved in insuring a person's life, property, health, or business. Because their analysis is used to establish coverage risk, actuaries are one of the most important elements of the insurance industry.

A successful actuary understands government legislation and social tendencies that affect risk and often work with government entities or pension management firms.

Broker and Producer—Brokers and producers sell insurance policies to clients who want to guard their assets against liability. Producers must have a detailed knowledge of policies and their limitations. Those who understand business practices and are comfortable talking with a wide range of people can make a good living in the insurance industry.

Claims Adjuster—When a customer has been involved in an accident or suffered a loss, adjusters help determine a fair settlement between all parties involved. A successful claims adjuster will have excellent communication and negotiation skills and be able to arbitrate with grace and empathy. Adjusters spend time in the field, as well as behind a desk.

Service Representatives—Because of their function as a go-between for insurance companies and producers, service representatives must have excellent communication skills and a detailed understanding of insurance products. A successful representative is good at building relationships with producers and other company representatives. A liberal arts education is a solid foundation for a career as a service representative.

Loss Control Specialist—Loss control specialists work in the field inspecting job sites and other business areas looking for hazardous conditions and ways to fix them. Their job is to limit injury, loss, and accident. Ideally, candidates should prepare by obtaining a degree that emphasizes both technical and business skills.

Underwriter—Underwriters determine if an insurance policy applicant is worth the risk of insuring. By assessing how much risk a person represents, underwriters ensure that all policyholders fit company guidelines and often help determine policy pricing.