

Briefing

## Insurance Jobs

The U.S. insurance industry lost 3,400 jobs in October, the 12th consecutive month of losses, according to seasonally adjusted data released Nov. 6 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The overall national unemployment rate topped 10%, the highest rate since April 1983. Industry payrolls were 2.244 million in October, down from a seasonally adjusted 2.247 million in September. The September data was revised downward from the 2.249 million jobs reported last month, changing September's job losses to 3,000. In the past year, the industry has lost 67,100 jobs.

### Jobs by Sector

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics also provided detailed data by industry segment on an unadjusted basis for September 2009.

Sector	# Employees	% Change From a Year Ago
Agents and Brokers	649,100	↓ 2.8%
Property/Casualty Insurers	473,200	↓ 3.2%
Health Insurers	461,400	↑ 2.3%
Life Insurers	345,400	↓ 2.9%
Third-Party Administrators	121,800	↓ 6.5%
Title Insurers	67,500	↓ 13.0%
Claims Adjusters	46,400	↓ 12.3%
Reinsurers	28,000	↓ 1.8%

### Average Earnings

Average weekly earnings for the industry's nonsupervisory positions increased in most industry categories from September 2008 to September 2009.

Sector Employees	Average Weekly Earnings	% Change From a Year Ago
Property/Casualty	\$996.10	↑ 1.4%
Life Insurers	989.23	↑ 5.7%
Health Insurers	917.58	↑ 1.8%
Claims Adjusters	870.87	↓ 1.3%
Title Insurers	823.15	↓ 2.3%
Reinsurers	813.60	↑ 11.5%
Agents and Brokers	750.00	↑ 2.3%
Third-Party Administrators	749.05	↓ 1.3%
Other	811.06	↑ 0.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



## Career Wise

By Gregory P. Jacobson

**Question:** What role does a well-thought-out on-boarding process play in a new employee's success?

The first few months of an employee's tenure set the tone for the employee/employer relationship. Employers should aim to create an integration plan that recognizes the importance and perils of bringing new personalities into an organization's culture and yields the best opportunities for success. Companies that build a formal, accepting and candid on-boarding process are most likely to achieve mutually beneficial relationships.

Well before the new hire's arrival, it is essential that those working closely with the new employee are prepared to accept the cultural impact to their work environment. Employers must clearly define the new employee's role and the effect it will have on the organization. It is common for teams to have set routines; the addition of a new hire may jeopardize this familiarity.

At the outset of an employee's tenure, it is important for hiring managers to be candid with the employee when sharing evaluation criteria, defining the role, outlining objectives and identifying challenges. It is crucial to develop open lines of communication that foster both positive and critical feedback. There is equal give-and-take in the employment relationship; feedback from the new employee should be expected and encouraged.

In all situations, there are preconceived notions of what the new hire will bring to the table. The new hire's success in the interview process has most likely influenced the expectations for his/her first few days on the job. However, both parties must realize that no one will make the intended impact immediately.

As the transitional stage concludes, the employee's effectiveness will increase, as will satisfaction for both the employee and the organization. The on-boarding process is a two-way street and requires acceptance and patience from both sides.

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