

ED NOTE January 2023

Word of the month: Kaizen

Kai·zen

/ˈkɪz(ə)n/

Noun

a Japanese business philosophy of continuous improvement, a concept referring to business activities that continuously improve all functions and involve all employees from the CEO to the assembly line workers

Happy New Year!

I am thrilled to have a new year, a new start. 2022 was a challenging year for me personally, I had many unexpected curve balls thrown my way. In the process of forging ahead and getting through day by day, I came to some realizations not just about the insurance industry but the country and maybe even the world.

No matter how you feel about COVID and the impact, it is real. The number one issue I hear from agency owners and industry managers is how do I find quality people to hire. This is not just true in the insurance world. This is happening in most industries. I have seen it first hands in the restaurant, medical and retail industries too. This has intensified over the past few years.

Though we are in the age of artificial intelligence (ai), human capital is so very important and hard to find. Attracting people to our industry is paramount. What independent insurance agents do, and how they do it, does matter. The human touch, communication, empathy, and knowledge is paramount to protecting insureds, their families, and assets.

Of course, this issue has been a hot topic for several years as we have over 400,000 people expected to retire from the insurance industry in the next few years. Due to COVID retirement and just the idea of changing one's priorities has escalated and impacted our agencies at a more rapid pace. We are in a talent crisis.

How can you be a part of the solution?

Well, I am happy to share the Nevada Independent Insurance Agents (NIIA) and the Emerging Leaders have been working with the Universities and Junior Achievement developing relationships and supporting programs to increase the awareness of the insurance industry and opportunities. Now is the time for you to join us. There are job fairs both virtual and in person, networking events and mentoring opportunities lined up over the next few months. If you or anyone in your agency is interested in getting involved to support the independent insurance channel or to promote an opening at your organization, get in touch with membershipservices@niia.org immediately. There have been over 14 students from these programs who were hired last semester between carriers and agencies in both Southern and Northern Nevada.

In addition to finding talent, the path to success needs to be created and supported. NIIA provides access to [educational and professional programs](#) for entry and seasoned level employees. Along with the Nevada Emerging Leaders, NIIA partnered with Marla Cormier, Emerging Leaders Training to offer [Leadership Superpowers](#), a 4-session program for not only employees but also agency owners and management to identify with their superpowers and how to implement them in their personal and professional lives. This program is set up so an individual may take one or all the classes that fit their schedule. The first session received raving reviews by attendees and principals. It was in person in both Las Vegas and Reno this past November. The second and third sessions will be virtual and held on February 9 and April 13 with the fourth session to be in person at the [NIIA Annual Convention](#) in June 2023.

For the benefit of our membership, the NIIA has been utilizing Kaizen philosophy to implement small steps of improvement to establish programs that will improve the functions of agencies and benefit our membership profoundly over time.

NIIA and the Nevada Emerging Leaders is not a club for just a dozen of the industry leaders, it is a community where with everyone's efforts we will see that continuous improvement is built on the foundation of people courageously using their creativity for the betterment of the industry.

The Spirit of Kaizen—a proven system for implementing small, incremental steps that can have a big impact in reaching your goals.

I am proud to say NIIA is Creating Lasting Excellence One small step at a time.

Respectfully,

Susan Bauman
NIIA Executive Director