



New Agent Top 5 Non-Negotiables

The high failure rate of new agents in the insurance industry is no secret. Life insurance sales can often feel like a revolving door—agents come in quickly and leave just as fast. One reason is the low barrier to entry: in some states, you can go from having no knowledge of life insurance to becoming a “licensed agent” in just a few days. But having a license is like being handed the keys to a race car—it doesn’t mean you know how to drive it.

Over the course of my career, I've had the privilege of training, mentoring, and supporting thousands of agents. Through those experiences, I've identified my top five non-negotiables for new independent agents. Here's a tip though: even if you're not new to the industry, it's never too late to apply these strategies. They're straightforward, actionable, and if you've been in business for a while but still struggle to achieve the success you're aiming for, chances are you're missing one or more of these key points.

#1 - Bank Account

You need a separate business bank account. It doesn't matter if you're just operating as one individual. **Many agents wait until it's too late to separate their business money and personal money.** First, your accountant will appreciate this, and second, if your commissions and lead purchases are co-mingled with your electric bill and pet food purchases, it will be much harder to get a clear picture of how your business is operating, if you're cash-flowing, and what your profit margin is. The best part is that it doesn't cost any money to do but it will have a major impact on you operating like a business instead of a hobby.

#2 - Due Diligence

Interview at least three marketers/uplines/mentors. **Don't jump at the first flashy opportunity you see.** Recruiters recruit. At the end of the day, we all have basically the same carrier and product access and lead opportunities. The real difference comes in the training, support, and mentorship you will receive. Everyone has different needs, and making sure that you are connecting with an upline or organization that is a good fit for your personality is important. There's no universal “best” option, so really take the time to understand the group that you are joining. While you may not stay at your first organization forever, the more educated decision you can make up front, the better off you will be in the end.

#3 - Leads

Warm market sucks. Project 100 sucks. Marketing to your friends, family, and circles of influence sucks. Letting them know what you do? That's awesome, but I never bought into the “if you can't sell to your friends and family, how will you be able to sell to a stranger?” nonsense. I sold to thousands of strangers before I ever sold to my warm market. And guess what? It was much more impactful because by that time I was knowledgeable and didn't “need” their business so the transactions were more genuine. **Bottom line - you need a consistent flow of fresh leads every week, regardless of how, when, or where you are working.** When you are starting out, your lead flow equals your cash-flow, so you can't cut corners. And when I say “leads” I mean people that have actively (either now or in the recent past) expressed interest in life insurance. Cold-calling, cold-knocking, B2B drop-ins, tabling, etc. can have its benefits, but they all have a dreadfully low return in terms of time spent per acquired client. Having conversations with prospects that are actively in the market for the solutions that you're providing is the fastest way to get traction and have early success.

#4 - Schedule

The most powerful free tool you can use in your business is your calendar. I heard the phrase “be a slave to your schedule” early on in my career, and I just stuck with it. **Bottom line, if it’s not on my calendar, I don’t do it, but if it is, I am accountable to it.** Using a program like Calendly will also help you stay extremely organized. I also pair a daily to-do list with my schedule, and it keeps me on task and on time. I put personal items on my schedule as well - whether it’s a soccer game for the kids or dinner with my wife - it doesn’t matter. It also frees up mental real estate because I don’t have to remember anything, and it keeps me in the rhythm of maintaining an accurate calendar. Nothing worse than *knowing* you have to go pick your kid up from school but then someone else books in that time slot because it showed as available on your calendar!

#5 - Savings

This is #5, but it might be the most important - so we can just say that we saved the best for last. Let’s face it. **Of the supposed 92% of agents that “fail” out of this business, I would venture to guess that essentially all of them did so due to poor or non-existent cash-flow, chargeback debt, or some other financial struggle.** I have a simple solution for this. Notice how I said simple, not easy. A lot of the allure of life insurance sales is the advance commission - but it’s that same advance commission that can be the downfall as well. The majority of us come into this business on a shoestring, behind on bills, and hungry for deposits. I was absolutely one of those agents. The trouble is, if you’re spending your advance commission - which don’t forget is just a loan from the insurance company - as fast as you get it without moving any of it off the table, you WILL run into issues. Guaranteed.

My simple 20/20/20 strategy works. You MUST have separate accounts for this as well, and ideally the separate accounts aren’t at your main financial institution - this is to avoid you from making “instant” transfers back to your personal accounts with the push of a button. For instance, let’s say you bank with Wells Fargo or Bank of America - open your savings accounts with Capital One or Ally. The key to your success is doing this DAILY! Weekly or even worse, monthly, will not work because the amounts are too large. Every day, look at your deposits - let’s say you were paid \$1,000 today - 20% goes to your chargeback account (this gets funded until it has \$5,000), 20% goes to your tax account (this is a good ballpark for first year, since a lot of your income isn’t earned yet anyway, you can keep it in advance for your next year’s quarterlies), and 20% goes to your personal savings. That gives you 40% to work with for everything else. If that isn’t enough to live your life and run your business, then you need to sell more insurance, not cut back on those contributions. Once your chargeback account reaches \$5,000 you can shift that money back into your business or other investment vehicles. I can assure you that if you don’t operate this way, the only person you will hurt will be yourself and you will become a statistic before you reach the end of your first year.

With all this being said, everyone’s situation is different, and I could add another dozen items to this list if I wanted to go even more in-depth, but for me, if a new (or seasoned) agent checks all of these boxes, they will have no choice but to experience long-term, sustainable success.

Happy selling!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'B' or 'B.' with a flourish.