

## Insurance Jobs

Bucking a national trend that saw the national unemployment rate spike to a 14-year high, U.S. insurance industry payrolls gained 2,500 positions from September to October, according to seasonally adjusted data released Nov. 7 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. For the month, the industry's payrolls rose to 2.319 million, from a seasonally adjusted 2.316 million in September.

### Jobs by Sector

The Bureau of Labor Statistics also provided detailed data by industry segment on an unadjusted basis for September 2008.

Sector	# Employees	% Change From a Year Ago
Agents and Brokers	673,100	↓ 0.70
Property/Casualty Insurers	493,100	↑ 0.06
Health Insurers	441,400	↑ 3.00
Life Insurers	360,100	↑ 1.60
Third-Party Administrators	131,000	↑ 0.50
Title Insurers	81,300	↓ 14.80
Claims Adjusters	51,600	↓ 4.40
Reinsurers	31,300	↑ 11.00
Other Segments	48,300	↓ 6.90

### Average Earnings

Average weekly earnings for the industry's nonsupervisory positions rose 1.51% from September 2007 to September this year, from \$848.54 to \$861.32.

Sector Employees	Average Weekly Earnings	% Change From a Year Ago
Health Insurers	\$897.56	↑ 4.34%
Life Insurers	936.32	↑ 3.13%
Property/Casualty Insurers	982.42	↑ 2.72%
Claims Adjusters	886.88	↑ 2.03%
Title Insurers	842.64	↑ 1.11%
Agents and Brokers	733.79	↓ 2.56%
Third Party Administrators	756.07	↓ 2.61%
Reinsurers	729.76	↓ 5.02%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



## Career Wise

By Gregory P. Jacobson

**Question:** What can the industry do to raise its profile in order to compete for talent?

Positioning insurance as an industry of choice is a long-term challenge that requires effort and commitment industrywide. We are fighting an uphill battle against the media and some politicians who prefer to lay economic and personal challenges at the doorstep of the "big bad insurance industry." Only a united front on behalf of industry companies, associations, academia, and political and charitable organizations can demonstrate to the public that the industry is comprised largely of good companies that are run by good people and provide both social and economic benefits.

Re-branding the industry is a grassroots effort and starts with individual companies distinguishing themselves as top employers. This endeavor must begin with executive management, include clear goals and be woven into the organizational framework. Recruitment programs should be far-reaching and should reflect a premium on skills over background. Talent does exist beyond the insurance space, and transferable skills can be applied to many insurance roles. Furthermore, top employers must recognize that retention programs extend beyond compensation to organizational culture, corporate citizenship, dress codes and even job titles.

Most importantly, the industry needs to work together. The industry and academia should develop stronger ties. Universities can essentially be the outsourced training programs the industry seeks, while companies can develop internship programs that allow students to apply their knowledge and break into the industry. Companies also should take an active role supporting industry societies and investing in the various foundations that focus on providing students with scholarships, internships and information.

One thing is clear: This will not be an easy task. However, banding together to brand insurance as an industry of choice will make a positive impact on its future.

*Gregory P. Jacobson is chief executive officer of The Jacobson Group, a national professional and human capital services firm providing executive search, professional recruiting and temporary talent solutions to the insurance industry. He can be reached at gjacobson@jacobsononline.com.*