

# OUR PURPOSE

To provide a program that exceeds our customers' expectations and maximizes their opportunity for **Advancement**.



# THE DRIVE FORWARD!

JANUARY 22ND, 2026 - VOLUME 13

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**About our newsletter:** *This newsletter is designed to inform the entire franchise system. Our goal is to provide an additional forum to communicate changes, distribute information, highlight statistical data, and address items of interest.*



# A MESSAGE FROM MIKE ONDA

Dear Franchise Partners,

The start of a new year is more than just a date on the calendar. It's a reset button and a launching pad for your business. What you do in January, February, and March sets the tone for the entire year. That's why I want to emphasize two things: setting clear goals and getting off to a hot start—especially through tax season.

First, on goals. Every store, every department, and every individual should have specific, written targets for 2026. Volume, gross, portfolio performance, collections metrics, reconditioning cycle time, customer satisfaction—whatever the metric, it needs to be:

- ▶ Clear
- ▶ Measurable
- ▶ Owned by someone

When goals are vague (“do better,” “sell more”), results are usually vague too. When goals are specific (“X applications per week, Y deliveries per month, Z% current in the portfolio”), everyone knows what they're chasing and whether they're on track. I encourage you to set these goals now, communicate them to your teams, and review them regularly.

Second, act on any lessons learned last year. Maybe you saw traffic soften in certain months. Maybe your close rates dipped, or your portfolio performance showed you where underwriting, down payment, or collections practices needed tightening. The worst thing we can do is enter 2026 running the exact same playbook and hoping for different results.

Ask yourselves:

- ▶ What worked last year that we need to do more of?
- ▶ What clearly did not work that we need to stop or fix?
- ▶ Where did we get in our own way—process bottlenecks, slow approvals, reconditioning delays, weak follow-up on leads?

Use those answers to make concrete operational changes now: adjust appointment setting, refine scripts, tighten underwriting discipline, improve teamwork between sales and collections, shorten reconditioning times. Small improvements, multiplied across the year, add up to big results.

Finally, we cannot talk about a fast start without talking about tax season. For our customers this is the single biggest influx of cash many of them will see all year. For our business it is the most important window to:

- ▶ Generate more high-quality leads and applications
- ▶ Strengthen portfolio performance with properly structured contracts

That does not happen by accident. It requires planning. Now is the time to:

- ▶ Finalize your tax season marketing plan—digital campaigns, brand awareness, community outreach, referrals, etc.
- ▶ Make sure your team is ready with scripts, appointment processes, and follow-up plans
- ▶ Ensure inventory, reconditioning, and finance operations are aligned so you can say “yes” quickly to the right customers and put them in the right vehicles

If we treat tax season like just another few months, we will leave sales and earnings on the table. If we treat it like the launchpad for the year, we can build momentum that carries deep into 2026.

Thank you for everything you and your teams accomplished last year. I appreciate the effort, resilience, and professionalism you bring to your dealerships and to the Byrider brand every day. Let's set clear goals, make smart adjustments based on what we've learned, and attack the first quarter—especially tax season—with urgency and focus.

If we do that, 2026 won't just be a little better. It can be our best year yet!



*Mike Onda*

# INDUSTRY ARTICLE

## WHAT INDUSTRY EXPERTS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE ECONOMY — AND WHY IT'S ENCOURAGING FOR BYRIDER

At a recent industry discussion, leaders from Black Book, TransUnion, CarGurus, and the American Financial Services Association shared insights on the economy and its impact on automotive, used vehicles, and consumer credit.

The overall message was clear: while the market remains disciplined, conditions are stabilizing—and in several areas improving—creating opportunity for well-run BHPH operators.

Why this is good news for Byrider franchisees:

The discussion reinforced that demand for reliable transportation remains strong, consumers are adapting to higher costs, and lenders and operators who focus on structure, data, and long-term relationships are positioned to win. Byrider's model—combining in-house financing, disciplined underwriting, and ongoing customer engagement—aligns well with the current environment.

### QUICK-HIT TAKEAWAYS FOR BYRIDER

- ▶ **Consumers still need cars** — affordability matters more than ever, favoring BHPH solutions
- ▶ **Credit behavior is stabilizing**, not deteriorating, especially among customers who are well-coached
- ▶ **Used vehicle values are normalizing**, supporting more predictable deal structure and portfolio performance
- ▶ **Data-driven underwriting and pricing** are separating strong operators from the rest
- ▶ **Relationship-based models** like Byrider are well-positioned in a cautious but improving economy

### BOTTOM LINE:

The economic backdrop continues to reward operators who execute consistently. For Byrider franchisees, this environment supports sustainable growth—helping more customers say “yes” while protecting cash flow and portfolio health.

<https://www.autoremarketing.com/subprime/podcast-4-experts-on-automotive-the-economy/>



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# HOT TOPICS!

## 2026 PLANNING & GOAL SETTING: GETTING REAL ABOUT THE NEW YEAR

As we get ready for 2026, this is the time to slow down, look at the business with clear eyes, and put a real plan in place for the year ahead. Too many people roll into January hoping things “work themselves out.” They never do. **No plan is a plan to fail.**

If we want different results in 2026, we need a different level of intentionality—real goals, real accountability, and a real roadmap that shows us where we’re headed.



### WHY SETTING GOALS ACTUALLY MATTERS

Setting goals isn’t just a feel-good exercise. In this business, goals determine volume, staffing, structure, and cash flow. When the goals are clear, the team knows exactly what winning looks like. When they aren’t, everyone just keeps reacting to fires.

#### Good goals help you:

- ▶ Establish expectations across Sales, Service, and CNAC
- ▶ Keep the team aligned instead of running in different directions
- ▶ Coach from facts instead of emotions
- ▶ Track progress weekly and monthly
- ▶ Build habits and discipline that lead to consistency

And the truth is: **your goals have to be realistic.** Anyone can write a big number on paper. Real operators understand what the business can actually support—and what changes have to happen to reach the next level.

### REVIEW THE ENTIRE OPERATION BEFORE SETTING THE TARGETS

Before locking in 2026 goals, step back and review everything from the prior year. Volume, recon, overhead, charge-offs, pay plans, staffing levels, warranty and policy, sales funnel conversion, DQ trends—every piece matters.

This is where strong operators separate themselves. They don’t set goals based on hope. They set goals based on reality.

# HOT TOPICS!

## A full review helps you understand:

- ▶ What you did well
- ▶ What held you back
- ▶ Where the bottlenecks are
- ▶ Which departments need attention
- ▶ Whether staffing and structure match the volume you want
- ▶ What processes need to be tightened or rebuilt

You can't build a plan for 2026 unless you understand what actually happened in 2025.

## **YOUR PROJECTION MODEL: THE ROADMAP FOR 2026**

One of the biggest advantages we have is the ability to run a projection model before the new year even starts. This tool lets you plug in your assumptions and see exactly what the business will look like if nothing changes—and what it could look like if you do change.

### It shows you:

- ▶ Volume needed to hit income targets
- ▶ Deal structure requirements
- ▶ Overhead on a per-unit basis
- ▶ Charge-off expectations
- ▶ PAC and labor assumptions
- ▶ Warranty costs
- ▶ Cash flow impact
- ▶ Where your real opportunities lie

It also shows you deficiencies—very quickly. Instead of being surprised six months into the year, you can catch it now and make adjustments before the first customer walks in the door.

This is why planning matters. The model gives you a clear map. Without it, you're just guessing.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY: THE HARD PART (BUT THE PART THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING)**

Setting the plan is the easy part. **Holding people accountable to the plan is where the rubber meets the road.**

This is the year to tighten expectations, tighten follow-up, and make accountability part of the culture—not a once-a-month conversation.

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# HOT TOPICS!

## Ask yourself:

- ▶ Who owns each metric?
- ▶ Are they tracking it daily or weekly?
- ▶ Do we review results consistently?
- ▶ What tools are we using to coach?
- ▶ What happens when someone falls behind?
- ▶ What support is provided to fix the problem?

People perform better when they know the goal, they know their role, and they know the standard will be followed up on.

## ***YOU CAN'T GET WHERE YOU WANT TO GO WITHOUT A MAP***

If you don't have a plan, you're letting the year happen to you instead of taking control of it.

- ▶ Your 2026 plan is the map.
- ▶ Your goals are the destination.
- ▶ Your projection model is the route.
- ▶ Your accountability is the engine.

If you put all of that together, the year becomes predictable. And predictable is what wins in this business.

## ***OWN THE PLAN, COMMIT TO IT, AND EXECUTE***

2026 isn't going to magically be better or easier. But it can be more successful—if you build the plan and follow it.

Take the time now to review the business, set realistic goals, build your projection model, identify the gaps, and hold your team accountable every step of the way.

That's how you get the results you want.

That's how strong operators win year after year.



# TIP OF THE MONTH

## BUILDING A STRONGER SERVICE CULTURE: CLEAR COMMUNICATION, REAL EXPECTATIONS & BETTER OUTCOMES

Across our franchise network, the stores winning in Service all have one thing in common: they communicate clearly, set expectations early, and follow a consistent process. When we do these things right, we reduce confusion, protect the portfolio, collect more customer pay, and give customers a better overall experience.

Below are the key principles that help every store strengthen its service communication process.

### 1. IT STARTS WITH THE SERVICE WALK: PERCEPTION IS REALITY

Most customer frustrations don't start in the shop—they start at the sale. What Sales says becomes the customer's expectation, and if the message is wrong, Service pays for it later.

**Every customer should know:**

- ▶ Where the Service Department is
- ▶ What their warranty or VSC covers
- ▶ That **nothing is free**—deductibles and diagnostic fees apply
- ▶ Fees may be waived only if the work is approved

Stores should regularly roleplay and review the Sales → Service handoff. A few unclear sentences at delivery can create days of headaches later.

### 2. GREETING, EMPATHY & THE 3 C'S

Customers want to feel heard first. A strong opening sets the tone for the rest of the repair.

Advisors should always work the **3 C's**:

- ▶ **Concern** – What the customer says is happening
- ▶ **Cause** – What we found
- ▶ **Correction** – What fixes it

And one important rule:

**Never diagnose the vehicle over the phone.**

Asking questions builds trust. Guessing destroys it.

Using **Genie** helps advisors ask the right follow-up questions and stay consistent across the store.



# TIP OF THE MONTH

## 3. REVIEWING THE ESTIMATE: CLARITY BEFORE COST

The estimate review is where approvals are won or lost. The best advisors follow this order:

1. Restate the customer's concern
2. Explain **how we save the customer money**
  - *Lower labor rates*
  - *No parts markup*
3. Then separate warranty vs. customer-pay items

**If the customer can't afford everything:**

- ▶ Fix safety issues first
- ▶ Address dependability next
- ▶ Schedule deferrable items for later

Customers respond well when they understand options—not pressure.

## 4. PRESENTING THE BILL: LEAD WITH VALUE

Before giving the final price, show the value:

- ▶ Start with the **full job value** (what it would cost elsewhere)
- ▶ Explain savings
- ▶ Apply warranty coverage
- ▶ Present the net price

When we clearly present the value we provide—better labor rates, no parts markup, specialized knowledge—it changes the entire tone of the conversation.

We're not just fixing cars. We're protecting their investment.

## 5. CUSTOMER NEGOTIATION & POLICY: EVALUATE EVERY SITUATION

Policy decisions should never be automatic. Every customer and every vehicle must be evaluated individually:

- ▶ Are they a good payer?
- ▶ Have they participated in repair costs before?
- ▶ Have they maintained the vehicle?
- ▶ How severe is the repair?
- ▶ What balance do they still owe?

Approved paths should be followed in order:

1. Outside funding (SNAP / DigniFi)
2. M-DIP with a CNAC interview
3. Last option: Policy Tool

Policy is not the first answer—it's a business decision.

# TIP OF THE MONTH

## 6. CLOSING THE REPAIR: FINISH STRONG

A good close makes the entire process feel professional.

### Advisors should:

- ▶ Restate what the customer said
- ▶ Explain what was fixed
- ▶ Request the survey
- ▶ Set any follow-up appointments

Using Podium or approved texting tools helps keep communication clear and documented.

## 7. DISCOVER NOTES: DOCUMENTATION PROTECTS EVERYONE

Good notes in Discover protect the store, CNAC, and the customer. They prevent misunderstandings and help everyone make better decisions.

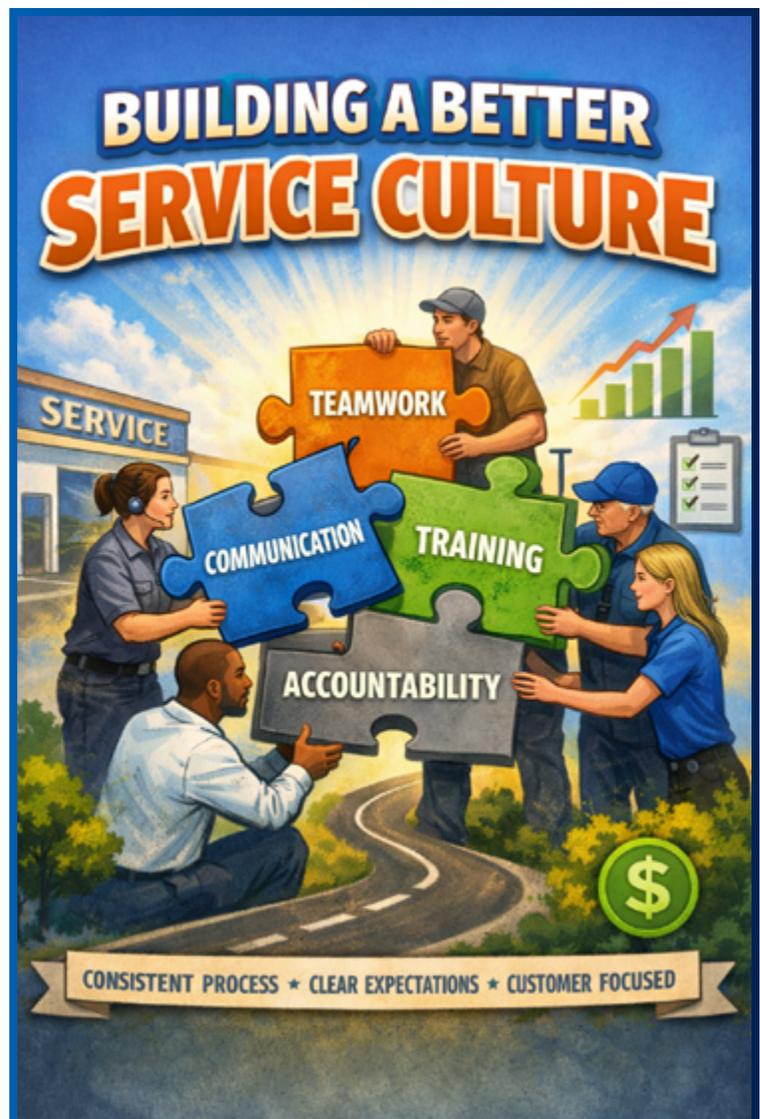
### Document:

- ▶ Every customer contact
- ▶ Who dropped off/picked up the vehicle
- ▶ Parts used (especially when item codes are generic)
- ▶ Expectations set
- ▶ Approvals and payment commitments
- ▶ Follow-up plans

The question to ask yourself:

**“If someone else reads this tomorrow, will they understand exactly what happened?”**

If it isn't documented in Discover, it didn't happen.



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# TIP OF THE MONTH

## 8. CULTURE, COACHING & REPORTING

**Strong communication isn't a script—it's a habit. And habits require practice:**

- ▶ Roleplay regularly
- ▶ Review calls
- ▶ Coach tone and consistency
- ▶ Hold advisors accountable for the full process

**Managers should watch:**

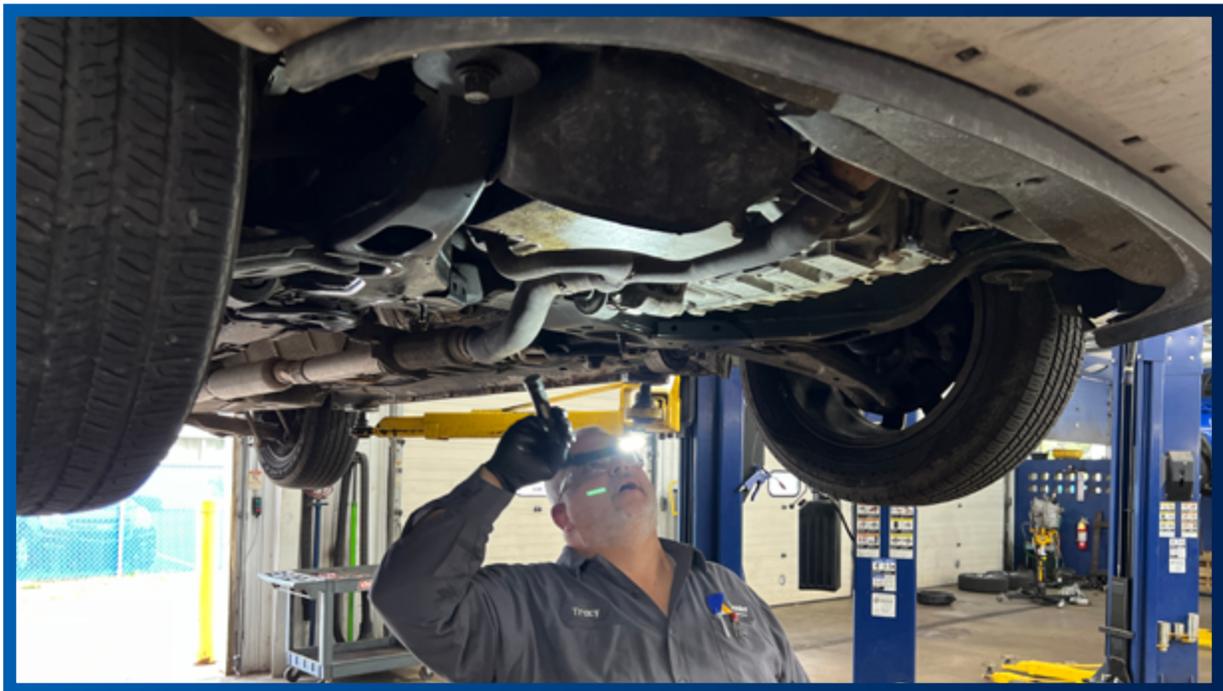
- ▶ Policy vs. Warranty breakdown
- ▶ Service Cash Receipts
- ▶ Service Reports 3
- ▶ Customer-pay percentages

What gets reviewed gets improved.

## **FINAL THOUGHT**

Service communication should never be left to chance. When we set expectations early, stay consistent, and follow a clean process from start to finish, we protect the customer, the business, and the portfolio

**What is practiced is perfected.** Let's keep building strong service cultures in every store.



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# TRAIN-THE-TRAINER RECAP

## SERVICE EXPERIENCE & CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION TRAINING

This session walked through the full **service-to-customer interaction**, emphasizing clarity, empathy, and professionalism.

### Key topics covered:

- ▶ Service Walk
  - *Understanding the customer journey from arrival to repair completion*
  - *Reinforcing transparency and trust at the service level*
- ▶ Greeting, Empathy & the 3 C's / Genie
  - *Establishing rapport and setting expectations early*
  - *Using empathy to reduce tension and improve outcomes*
- ▶ Reviewing the Estimate
  - *Explaining repairs clearly and confidently*
  - *Helping customers understand value, not just cost*
- ▶ Presenting the Bill
  - *Clear communication to avoid confusion or pushback*
  - *Reinforcing previously discussed expectations*
- ▶ Policy Tools & Customer Negotiation Process
  - *Knowing when and how to apply policy*
  - *Balancing consistency with customer-focused solutions*
- ▶ Reporting & Resources
  - *Leveraging available tools and support when challenges arise*

## SALES TRAINING - INTERNAL LEADS TRAINING

This session focused on the importance of **internal lead generation** and how it supports long-term success for both the store and individual sales professionals.

### Key takeaways:

- ▶ More consistent sales volume month-to-month
- ▶ Higher closing ratios from warmer, relationship-based leads
- ▶ Faster sales cycles with fewer missed appointments
- ▶ Greater control over income and commission
- ▶ Less stress and burnout during slower market periods
- ▶ Stronger trust and long-term relationships with customers
- ▶ Increased repeat and referral business over time
- ▶ Higher visibility with management – stand out performance
- ▶ Stronger sales skills that transfer throughout your career
- ▶ Protection from market shifts, advertising changes, and slowdowns

# TRAIN-THE-TRAINER RECAP

## CNAC TRAINING: MECHANICAL LOANS & DEAL STRUCTURE

This training provided clear guidance on **how to properly structure, approve, and manage Mechanical Loans**, while reinforcing the Finance team's role in protecting portfolio health.

### Key topics covered:

- ▶ Mechanical Loan Process
  - *Step-by-step walkthrough of the Mechanical Loan process*
  - *When a Mechanical Loan is appropriate and when it is not*
  - *Importance of helping good-paying customers while managing risk*
- ▶ Finance Team Responsibilities
  - *Ownership of the Mechanical Loan approval process*
  - *Reviewing customer payment history and current account status*
  - *Ensuring documentation, approvals, and system entries are completed correctly*
  - *Maintaining consistency and compliance throughout the process*



## FRANCHISEE BIRTHDAYS

STORE #	FRANCHISE #	NAME	DATE
AL106	AL106	Steve Locklear	February 2
KY103	KY103	Jeff Anderson	February 11
AL106	AL106	Jeff Williams	February 15
FL118	FL118	Jim Thompson	February 18
OH130	OH130	Chris McPhie	February 20
IL115	IL115	Mike Burgstone	February 25

# Happy Birthday!



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# MAJOR MILESTONES (ANNIVERSARIES)

CONGRATUALIONS ON 25 YEARS!



- ▶ VA102 (1/18/2001)  
- Damon Hueston



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# RANKINGS

## TOP 25 LOCATIONS - DECEMBER

### TOP 25 STORES THROUGH DECEMBER 2025

RANK	STORE	LOCATION	CITY, STATE	GROUP
1	OH130	OH140	Mansfield, OH	McPhie / Barrett
2	IA109	IA104	Burlington, IA	Larson / Lee
3	IA109	MO109	Springfield, MO	Larson / Sleeth
4	WI114	WI114	Wausau, WI	Kocourek / Freiboth
5	OH130	OH155	Amherst, OH	McPhie / Barrett
6	IA109	MO113	Joplin, MO	Larson / Sleeth
7	PA116	PA116	Palmyra, PA	Lewis
8	IA109	IA110	Des Moines, IA	Larson / Lee
9	AR102	AR102	Springdale, AR	Hanson
10	OH130	OH142	Wooster, OH	McPhie / Barrett
11	OH130	OH148	Canton, OH	McPhie / Barrett
12	SC105	SC105	Columbia, SC	Gandolfo
13	MI109	MI109	Traverse City, MI	Marsh/Chevalier
14	OH130	OH152	Ashtabula, OH	McPhie / Barrett
15	AR103	IN127	Terre Haute, IN	Enderlin / Aldridge
16	IN116	IN116H	Evansville, IN	Wagner / Gerhart
17	IA109	IA109	Davenport, IA	Larson / Lee
18	ID101	ID102	Nampa, ID	Chalfant
19	SC105	SC115	Greenville, SC	Gandolfo
20	SC105	SC114	Charleston, SC	Gandolfo
21	OH130	OH130	Akron, OH	McPhie / Barrett
22	KY110	KY110	Elizabethtown, KY	Garber/Dodson
23	OH130	OH156	Parma, OH	McPhie / Barrett
24	LA109	IN125	Kokomo, IN	Boyce
25	IN116	IN116C	Bloomington, IN	Wagner / Gerhart



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# TOP PERFORMERS

## TOP SALES LOCATIONS - EOY 2025

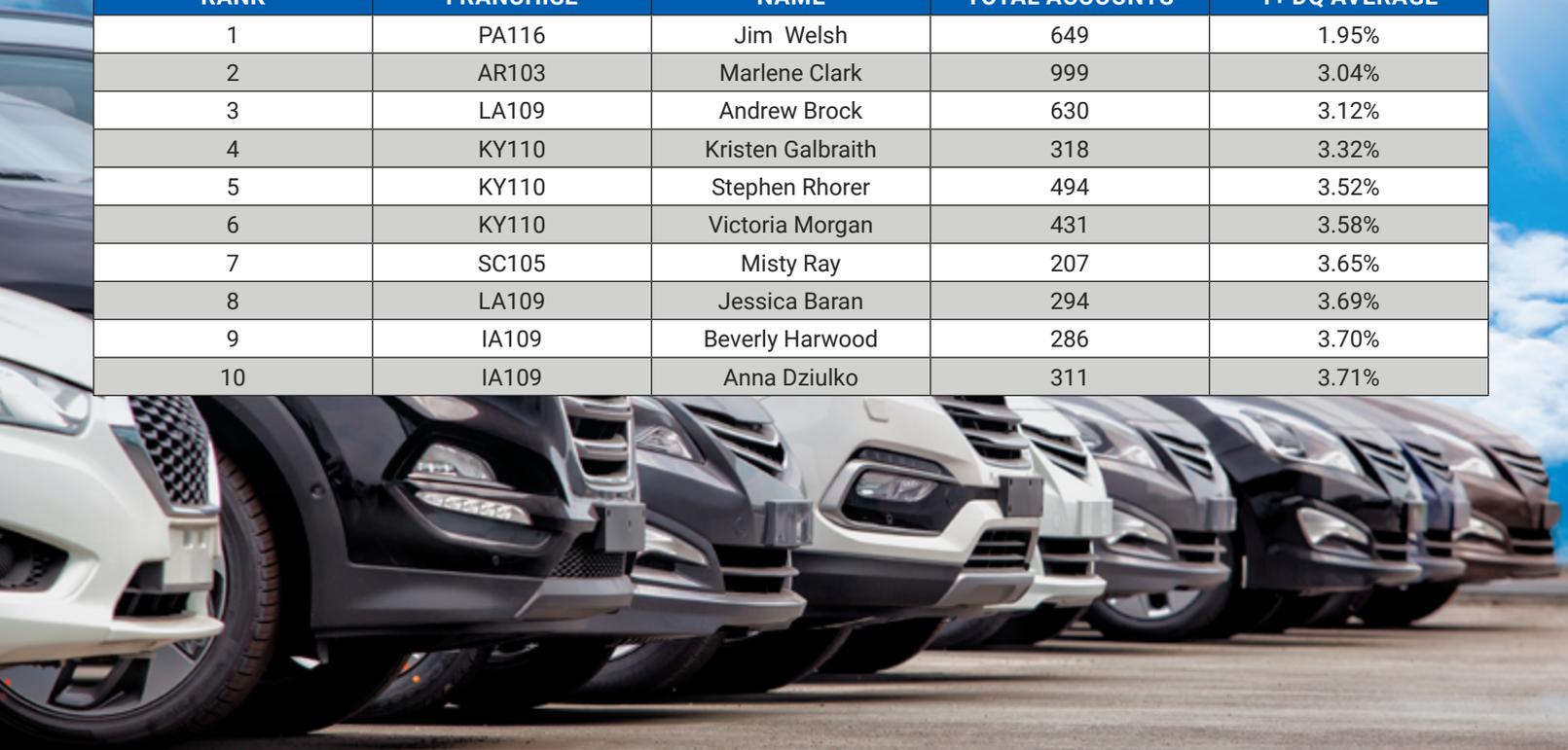
RANK	FRANCHISE	LOCATION	CITY	NET SALES
1	OH159	PA124	Monroeville, PA	731
2	IN116	IN116H	Evansville, IN	532
3	OH159	OH159	Dayton, OH	470
4	AR102	AR102	Springdale, AR	452
5	OH130	OH140	Mansfield, OH	439
6	OH159	OH160	Columbus, OH	416
7	WI101	WI102	Milwaukee, WI	413
8	FL118	FL139	Jacksonville, FL	411
9	IA109	IA110	Des Moines, IA	406
10	IA109	MO109	Springfield, MO	400

## TOP SALES ASSOCIATES - EOY 2025

RANK	FRANCHISE	LOCATION	NAME	SALES
1	IL115	IL133	Dusty Kaster	428
2	IN116	IN116H	Bethany Downing	282.5
3	IL115	IL121	Richard Belanich	272.5
4	OH159	OH161	Jeremiah Vega	271
5	TX118	TX118	Amadou Kane	268
5	MI109	MI113	Steven Hutchison	268
7	MI109	MI116	Brent Pickle	261
7	OH159	OH159	Deangelo Card	261
9	IA109	IA109	Jerry Johnson	253
10	TX112	TX129	Ali Alhachamy	245

## TOP COLLECTORS - EOY 2025

RANK	FRANCHISE	NAME	TOTAL ACCOUNTS	1+ DQ AVERAGE
1	PA116	Jim Welsh	649	1.95%
2	AR103	Marlene Clark	999	3.04%
3	LA109	Andrew Brock	630	3.12%
4	KY110	Kristen Galbraith	318	3.32%
5	KY110	Stephen Rhorer	494	3.52%
6	KY110	Victoria Morgan	431	3.58%
7	SC105	Misty Ray	207	3.65%
8	LA109	Jessica Baran	294	3.69%
9	IA109	Beverly Harwood	286	3.70%
10	IA109	Anna Dziulko	311	3.71%



# ASSOCIATE SPOTLIGHT

## JASON “CHIP” SHELTON

I started with (JD) Byrider back in 1998 at the Greenwood location. After being promoted from Finance Manager to General Manager, I was able to make the “doublewide” a million dollar store. I was then asked to take on UW for Company Store locations. From there I moved into Franchise Consulting. After several years of FC work, I was asked to take over a failed franchise in Memphis, TN. After a 4 year struggle, I left the system to take on other challenges. Since leaving Byrider 6 yrs ago, I have worked as a private consultant and a consulting specialist for Assurant Warranty Services, and as the Finance Director over a new car franchise group on the northside of Indianapolis. One of my biggest accomplishments in the system is the origination, development and implementation of the Tax Program that is still used today. I am looking forward to my return to the system and all the great people who make up that system.



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# ASSOCIATE SPOTLIGHT

## JEFF ANDERSON

After a two year absence Jeff has returned to Byrider. His early career was in banking, but he then spent 24 years at Byrider. First in Franchising where he had roles in Franchise Development, Franchise Support and Franchise Finance during a time of continued franchise system growth. Then after the private equity acquisition he moved over to the company store side to manage lending relationships and build out a securitization platform. During his absence he worked as CFO/Director of Finance at an innovative accounts payable finance company (Tradecycle) and as SVP of Finance at Agora Data where he helped them complete their first rated securitization. Outside of work, Jeff enjoys Purdue Basketball, an occasional cigar, and recently becoming a first time grandparent.



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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## ▶ **SAVE THE DATE:**

### **March 20-Group**

- ▶ March 8th-10th, 2026
- ▶ Marriott Resort Fort Lauderdale
- ▶ Fort Lauderdale, FL



## ▶ **July 20-Group**

- ▶ July 12th-14th, 2026
- ▶ The Chateaux Deer Valley
- ▶ Park City, UT



## ▶ **Convention 2026**

- ▶ November 12th-14th, 2026
- ▶ La Cantera Resort & Spa
- ▶ San Antonio, TX



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# VENDOR OF THE MONTH

## MAXIMIZE THE BENEFITS OF REINSURANCE PRESENTED BY BUCKEYE RISK SERVICES

I recall attending a legal and compliance panel presented by our Executive Vice President Shaun Petersen and two other legal and compliance experts Tom Hudson and Terry O'Loughlin. I heard Terry utter a sentence that caused me, and I'm sure more than a few others in the room, to do a double take. He said, "That which is worth doing is worth doing wrong."

What? Did I hear that correctly? Did I just hear a compliance attorney advocate doing something incorrectly?

After the room settled down, Terry explained that from a compliance standpoint, doing something was much better than doing nothing – even if it's done wrong.

Upon hearing his explanation, I started to think about his comment and subsequent explanation from a dealer-owned reinsurance company perspective. To borrow a phrase from NFL referees, "upon further review..." I echo his sentiment and will apply it here – when it comes to reinsurance, doing something is much better than doing nothing. (I'll delete "even if it's done wrong," and leave that for the compliance attorneys!)

Two questions should come to mind: what is reinsurance? And, why should I do something?

### **WHAT IS REINSURANCE?**

There are benefits that come with having a robust F&I department for both retail and buy here, pay here dealers. Whether it's that service contract or GAP waiver you're selling, the warranty you're offering, or the collateral protection insurance you may be placing, your F&I office can provide customers with voluntary protection products that will benefit them in time of need.

Dealers will frequently work with insurance companies that enter into contracts with your customers when offering these products. The customer will pay a premium to the company, often financed in the retail installment sales contract, and the premium is remitted to the carrier who assumes all the risk – but retains all the profits. If a customer needs to file a claim, the insurance carrier or their administrator handles all claim-processing responsibilities.

Other programs, referred to as "retro programs," are similar. You sell the product, get a commission, remit the premium to the insurance company and, once the premium has been fully earned, you may get some small profit share.



# VENDOR OF THE MONTH

Reinsurance transfers the risk from the “big” insurance carrier to you. How? As a dealer, you can create your own insurance company. The reinsurance company then engages a management company to create a customizable program, set up the corporation, administer the claims, provide accounting services and prepare tax returns. The management company will also train your staff and monitor your programs.

So, when you sell that service contract for let’s say \$1,299, you don’t send the \$1,299 off to an unaffiliated third-party. Because you’re the reinsurer, that money ends up in your hands – minus small administrative expenses and ceding fees.

## **WHY REINSURE?**

You may be thinking, “Ok, but why should I?” Let me proffer just a few of the many benefits you can realize through your dealer-owned reinsurance company.

### **1. AN ADDITIONAL PROFIT CENTER**

Record wholesale prices, inventory shortages, and increased operational expenses are issues seemingly every dealer has faced, especially over the last 12 months and may face into the foreseeable future. As margins on vehicle sales continue to get pinched, finding alternative sources of income in the dealership is more critical than ever. Whether you’re a retail or buy here pay here dealer, having a robust F&I office is a vital tool on a dealer’s belt to offset those tighter margins. Having your own reinsurance company will add tremendous value to your F&I office as a profit center.

Selling third-party products results in you sending premiums and profits elsewhere. Sure, there are commissions and some small profit share opportunities, but the third-party earns the interest on reaps the majority of benefits of the earned premium.

With your own reinsurance company established, you can pay yourself the commission on the sale of the products and take part in 100% of the underwriting profit. Keep in mind, that money won’t just sit idly collecting dust. It will be placed in U.S. banks and earn investment income for you. (More on that below.)

### **2. CONTROL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

As the used car marketplace becomes more competitive, dealership reputation plays an important role in sustained success. Unfortunately, reputation can be damaged when selling a voluntary protection product if claims administration is not handled properly.

Far too often, consumer complaints end up in the hands of the Better Business Bureau, a state/federal regulator’s office, or worse – an aggressive plaintiff’s attorney. These complaints often mirror a similar fact pattern: consumer has a warranty or bought a service contract, experiences a breakdown, and then has a claim under the warranty/service contract denied. These consumers allege that they were duped into purchasing a voluntary protection product that has no value.

When you sell someone else’s product, you lose control over how claims are handled. It is that entity’s administrator who decides what claims are and are not paid. But, in the consumer’s mind, “you” make the decision, because it was “you” that sold the product.

# VENDOR OF THE MONTH

By establishing a dealer-owned reinsurance company, you assume the risks associated with any claims. Because it is your risk, you get to decide how the claims process is handled and what gets paid, consistent with the terms of the product agreement with the consumer. In turn, you get to interact with the customer, manage customer expectation, and appropriately react when a claim is paid or denied.

## 3. BRAND MANAGEMENT FLEXIBILITY

Having your own reinsurance program affords you the flexibility to white label products that are appropriate for you and your customers and determine the scope of terms and coverages. No longer will you have to try to fit someone else's square peg in your circle hole.

Moreover, you can tailor your products to help drive business to your service department. This is another great way to maximize profits. Just make sure you review your forms with your attorney to ensure any tie-backs to your dealership service department are compliant.

## 4. MINIMIZE LOSS

Imagine that you're a buy here pay here dealer who has placed a 6-month, 6,000-mile limited warranty on a vehicle you sold. That warranty covers systems like the engine, transmission, etc. What happens if your customer has a radiator fail, or the vehicle is otherwise inoperable due to a non-covered breakdown?

You know that the likelihood a consumer will keep paying for a broken vehicle decreases significantly. "Car doesn't run, customer doesn't pay." By taking control of the claims process, you can keep running and the customer making payments. And, you can choose how to handle the repair without negatively affecting the cash flow of the dealership or the related finance company.

Buy here, pay here dealers will also reap the benefit of not having the dealership or finance company fund the consumer's voluntary protection product purchase up front. With reinsurance, a pro-rated portion of the consumer's payment is forwarded to the reinsurance trust account to provide funding for claims management. This frees up your hard-earned capital in the dealership/finance company to get more customers in their next car.

Stated simply, a dealer-owned reinsurance company, run by you, will help you minimize your losses and maintain optimal portfolio performance. Why put your destiny in someone else's hands?

## 5. INVESTMENT INCOME AND TAX ADVANTAGES

As your reinsurance trust account grows, you will have the opportunity to invest those funds in accordance with your own risk tolerances and financial needs. You have complete control over the investment strategy because – the funds are yours!

Many are concerned about the credit markets and the availability of capital for dealers to run their businesses. Some dealers may need an injection of cash to stay the course, or perhaps you're looking for capital to fuel growth. A dealer's reinsurance company can lend the dealership earned premium to provide necessary liquidity to take your business where you'd like it to go.

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# VENDOR OF THE MONTH

You may be wondering what tax implications exist if you tap your reinsurance funds. Once premium is fully earned, you may have the ability to use those funds in a tax- advantageous manner. The good news for some is you may be taxed at long-term capital gains rates and not at ordinary incomes.

But, let me emphasize that you should always, always, always consult your tax professional for any advice and tax strategies. That's not just a boiler plate disclaimer, it's sound advice. And, while you're chatting, ask for an opinion on the benefits of reinsurance.

## 6. ESTATE/SUCCESSION PLANNING TOOL

Over my years in meeting and working with independent dealers, I have encountered great entrepreneurs that have built successful businesses from the ground up. At some point, most realize they need succession plan – an exit or retirement strategy.

Your reinsurance company funds can be an integral part of this plan. You can build a large amount of wealth over a relatively short period of time. Your reinsurance entities can allow for multiple owners affiliated with your family members and/or business partners. You can use those earned premiums as a resource to plan for a future in or out of the business.

Let me close with an anecdote from a CPA who specializes in management, finance and taxation of automobile dealerships. The CPA said he discussed reinsurance with a dealership client. For whatever the reason, the dealer was reluctant to form a reinsurance company. After several years of discussing the topic, the CPA finally agreed not to bring up the subject again. One day, the CPA could no longer hold back. He looked the dealer in the eye and said if you don't want to form a reinsurance company, then you're also saying you don't want an extra \$200,000 in additional net claims deposited into a brokerage account for your benefit. The dealer finally saw the light and got reinsurance started.

I'm not sure where the \$200,000 number came from, but for our purposes, it doesn't matter. The point the CPA made is this. If you don't want extra money, then reinsurance isn't for you. If, however, you enjoy having more control, improved customer relations, and more cash, then doing something is better than doing nothing.

To learn more about Buckeye Risk Services and how they can help your dealership, reach out to Shaun or Rob, their contact information is below:

### ROB FOX

Chief Executive Officer

330-770-4727

[rfox@buckeyerisk.com](mailto:rfox@buckeyerisk.com)

### SHAUN PETERSEN

Chief Legal Officer

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# Buckeye

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# Risk Services

# IT UPDATE

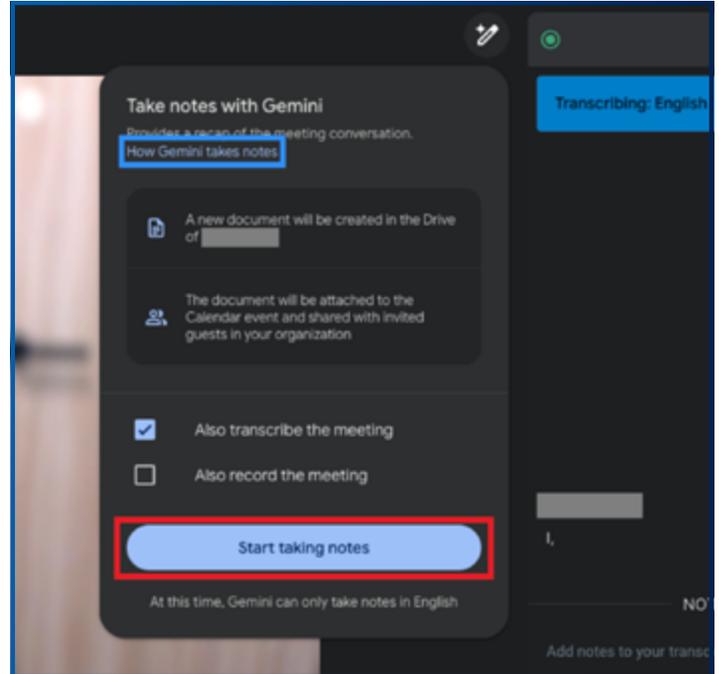
## START YOUR YEAR OFF RIGHT BY TAKING NOTES WITH GEMINI!

Google offers its own integrated meeting note-taking application, Gemini! This is already included in your current Google packaging and is easy to use!

The “Take notes for me” feature in Google Meet uses AI to automatically transcribe and summarize meetings, allowing you to focus on the conversation.

### How to Use It:

1. Click the **Take notes with Gemini** icon (a pencil or sparkle icon) at the top right of the screen.
2. Choose your **Notes length** (Standard for a concise summary or Longer for detailed points).
3. Click **Start taking notes**. *Note:* All participants will see a notification and a pencil icon indicating that notes are being captured.



## AUTOMATE NOTE-TAKING FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

As of January 2026, hosts can set Gemini to take notes automatically for all meetings they host:

4. Go to **Google Calendar** and edit your meeting event.
5. Click the **gear icon** (Video call options) next to the Meet link.
6. Select **Meeting records** from the left menu.
7. Toggle on **Take notes with Gemini** to enable it automatically for future recurrences.

## ACCESSING THE NOTES AFTER THE MEETING

Gemini generates a Google Doc that is automatically shared following the call:

- ▶ **Storage:** The document is saved in the **Meeting Owner's Google Drive**.
- ▶ **Distribution:** An email with a link to the notes is sent to the meeting organizer and the person who started the feature.
- ▶ **Calendar:** For scheduled meetings, the notes document is attached directly to the **Google Calendar event** for all internal participants.

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# MARKETING UPDATE

## MARKETING UPDATES & WEBSITE PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

As we begin 2026, the Byrider Marketing Department is reviewing budgets and evaluating the tools we provide to our locations. As part of this process, we're taking a closer look at **CallRevu**, a platform currently available to every store.

### WEBSITE & SEO PERFORMANCE UPDATE

December marked an important milestone—the **first month all locations were live with their own websites**, with **SEO content published across every store**. In total, we published **240 articles** network-wide.

Even while Phase 3 and Phase 4 content continued to be indexed by search engines, we saw strong performance across the network.

- ▶ **Total traffic sessions (December 2025): 348,350.** This represents an increase of nearly **21,000 sessions** compared to December 2024.
- ▶ **Organic traffic (December 2025): 80,236 sessions.** Compared to **94,477** sessions in December 2024, this puts us at **85% of the volume of a fully established site**, despite many new sites launching in late November.

Please note that **market conditions directly impact overall search volume**, which can influence these results.

### HEALTHIER TRAFFIC MIX & LEAD PERFORMANCE

We're also seeing a **healthier traffic mix**, making us less dependent on paid media—an important long-term goal. While traffic levels are influenced by consumer demand and marketing spend, the trend is moving in the right direction.

- ▶ **Website conversion rate:** 14% (Includes form fills and click-to-call activity)
- ▶ According to the **DEP dashboard\***:
  - **79% of total leads** came from the **finance form**
  - *Customers who complete **Step 1** of the finance application complete **Step 2 77% of the time**, indicating a **high-quality lead funnel***
  - **Trade-In Value** ranked as the **third-highest performing lead form**, which was a *pleasant surprise and may present a future growth opportunity—more to come on that.*

\*May include duplicate leads

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# MARKETING UPDATE

## NEW MARKETING PORTAL & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

We've launched a **new marketing portal** that provides in-depth reporting, including:

- ▶ Website analytics
- ▶ Leads with 90-day attribution
- ▶ Google Search Console data
- ▶ Google Business Profile (formerly Google My Business) insights

To help you get the most out of these tools, we're offering the following live training sessions:

### WEBSITE ANALYTICS TRAINING

Wednesday, February 4 | 12:00 – 1:00 PM (CT)

### WEBSITE DASHBOARD, BANNERS & PAGE DEVELOPMENT

Wednesday, February 25 | 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM (CT)

### HOW TO UTILIZE GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE

Tuesday, March 10 | 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM (CT)



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## BYRIDER MARKETING

Get the latest marketing information.



# COMPLIANCE UPDATE

## OSHA REPORTING REMINDER DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 1ST

Each Byrider business location is required to maintain OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration) records including the OSHA 300 log. Compliance was made mandatory as of January 1, 2015. OSHA provides instructions and interactive calculators for the three required forms featured in this article. Take a few minutes today and make sure that you are complying.

Work-related injuries and illnesses that result in death, loss of consciousness, days away from work, restricted work activity, transfer to another job, or medical treatment beyond first aid must be recorded on the OSHA forms.

### THERE ARE THREE REQUIRED FORMS WITH ASSOCIATED REPORTING.

- ▶ **OSHA Form 300** – Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses
- ▶ **OSHA Form 301** – Injury and Illness Incident Report
- ▶ **OSHA Form 300A** – Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses

Information about each work-related injury or illness is compiled on an OSHA Form 300, Log of Work Related Injuries and Illnesses.

For cases involving a fatality, you must report the fatality to OSHA within 8 hours of learning of its occurrence. For OSHA recordkeeping purposes, medical treatment is any treatment for an injury or illness except diagnostic procedures, observation and counseling, and first aid. First aid includes items such as non-prescription medication, wound coverings, and hot and cold treatment. You can access the complete list at <https://www.osha.gov>

**OSHA's Form 300 (Rev. 04/2004)**  
**Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses**

**Note:** You can type input into this form and save it. Because the forms in this recordkeeping package are "fillable" PDF documents, you can type into the input form fields and then save your inputs using the **free Adobe PDF Reader**. In addition, the forms are programmed to auto-calculate as appropriate.

**Attention:** This form contains information relating to employee health and must be used in a manner that protects the confidentiality of employees to the extent possible while the information is being used for occupational safety and health purposes.

**Year 20** \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

**Please Record:**  
- Information about every work-related death and about every work-related injury or illness that involves loss of consciousness, restricted work activity or job transfer, days away from work, or medical treatment beyond first aid.  
- Significant work-related injuries and illnesses that are diagnosed by a physician or licensed health care professional.  
- Work-related injuries and illnesses that meet any of the specific recording criteria listed in 29 CFR Part 1904.8 through 1904.12.

**Reminders:**  
- Complete an injury and illness incident report (OSHA Form 301 or equivalent form for each injury or illness recorded on this form. If you're not sure whether a case is recordable, call your local OSHA office for help.  
- Don't try to use this form for a single case if you need to.  
- Complete the 3 steps for each case.

**Step 1. Identify the person**

(A) Case no.	(B) Employee's name	(C) Job title (e.g., Welder)	(D) Date of injury or onset of illness (e.g., 2/15)	(E) Where the event occurred (e.g., Loading dock north end)	(F) Describe injury or illness, parts of body affected, and object/substance that directly impacted or made contact (e.g., Slipped/ Dropped item on right forearm from assembly bench)
Blank					

**Step 2. Describe the case**

**Step 3. Classify the case**  
SELECT ONLY ONE circle based on the most serious outcome.

Result of Work			
Death (1)	Days away from work (2)	Job transfer or restriction (3)	Other recordable illness (4)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Step 4. Enter the number of days the injured or ill worker was:**

Away from work (K)	On job transfer or restriction (L)
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Step 5. Select one column:**

Days					
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<input type="radio"/>					
<input type="radio"/>					
<input type="radio"/>					
<input type="radio"/>					
<input type="radio"/>					
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**Page Totals** ▶ 0 0 0 0 0 0

**Add a Form Page**

**Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including time for reviewing the instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, reviewing and checking the collection of information, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this data collection, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Washington Headquarters Service, Paperwork Project (0198-0101), U.S. Department of Labor, OSHA Office of Statistical Analysis, Room 1030A, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20510. Do not send this information to the office.**

**Be sure to transfer these totals to the Summary page (Form 300A) before you post it.**



## COMPLIANCE UPDATE

On the right side of the Form 300A, fill in the location's information. A company official must certify that the entries on the summary are true, accurate, and complete. The certifying official must be the owner of the company, an officer of the corporation, the highest ranking company official at the establishment, or that person's supervisor.

You must post a copy of the annual summary in each establishment in a conspicuous place or places where notices to employees are customarily posted. You must post it no later than February 1 of the year following the year covered by the records and keep the posting in place for three months until April 30. The forms must be retained for five years.



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# RECRUITING UPDATE

## QUITE QUITTING: MEANING, SIGNS, AND HOW TO PREVENT IT

### WHAT IS QUIET QUITTING?

Quiet quitting refers to employees who gradually disengage from their work before eventually leaving. Rather than formally resigning, they reduce effort, avoid extra responsibilities, and show less enthusiasm for their job.

### HOW EMPLOYEES DEFINE IT

Survey findings show employees view quiet quitting as: doing only what's in their job description (40%), setting firmer work boundaries (24%), or a slow way to get fired rather than quit (23%). Remote workers are most likely to quietly quit (81%), compared to hybrid (61%) and in-office workers (38%).

### MAIN CAUSES

Employees cite their manager (57%), mental health (55%), and compensation (51%) as key factors affecting their work ethic. Other causes include lack of recognition, poor work-life balance, limited growth opportunities, and toxic work culture.

### WARNING SIGNS

HR professionals identify red flags like constant complaining (44%), unwillingness to do extra work (41%), missing deadlines (40%), isolation (35%), and minimal colleague interaction (32%).

### SOLUTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

- ▶ Ask better interview questions to identify unmotivated candidates
- ▶ Conduct regular check-ins with employees
- ▶ Monitor employee morale through surveys
- ▶ Provide better work-life balance opportunities
- ▶ Let employees focus on their interests
- ▶ Offer fair compensation
- ▶ Conduct "stay interviews" before employees decide to leave

The article emphasizes that addressing quiet quitting requires proactive engagement and understanding of employee needs before disengagement becomes resignation.

<https://www.paychex.com/articles/human-resources/quiet-quitting>



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