

*five*  
*steps to*  
*extraordinary*  
*growth*

**iWin** Agency  
Growth  
System <sup>TM</sup>  
Transforms potential to profit  
for *serious* insurance agency owners

# Can anyone

# beat?

# the market

## Agency growth,

like investments, usually follows the economy. When the economy and markets are up, your agency and profits grow. When the economy is sluggish, revenues and profits fall. Most agency owners, like most investors, dream of beating market trends. I know it's possible to grow your agency, even in a stagnant or soft market, because my clients are doing it!

The first step to producing sustainable, organic growth is the hardest. **Commit to grow.**

It sounds simple. But many successful, established agencies have difficulty making that commitment. For lots of reasons. Partners may want to pocket profits rather than reinvest. Handling low and non-performers is always a problem. And maybe the most difficult hurdle to dynamic growth is simply that it takes so much effort and the compensation for all that hard work hardly seems worthwhile. As a result, high performers grow their book. Mediocre performers retain what they have. And the low performers slowly deteriorate until one day they go away.

But for those hearty souls willing to change and commit to growth – even in the face of the current economic conditions, the soft market in P & C and the uncertainty of tax and regulatory changes – there is not only hope, but a reason to believe. Without much thought or reflection, it's probably clear to you that almost every significant thing that you've ever achieved came from making a commitment and sticking to it, and sticking to it even when the going was tough. That's why the #1 most important step to **extraordinary growth** is **COMMITMENT.**

You're going to hit a few walls; everyone does. Cantankerous producers. Failed pipeline systems. Overvalued accounts that are small or insignificant. Poor hiring strategies. Ineffective sales meetings. Less-than-part-time sales leadership. Lifestyle partners. And this is only a partial list.

If you truly want to be one of those agencies that grows - regardless of market conditions - you can be. Not everyone is cut out for the challenge. But the rewards can be extraordinary.

*“In 1994 when we first started working with Randy, Higginbotham stood at \$4 million revenue.*

*It was a milestone year the first time that we reached \$1 million in new business. But then it climbed to \$6 million annually in only five years.*

*Now in 2015, we're at \$13 million in new business and \$140 million total, and we're not slowing down. Our organic growth averages in the double digits over a 20-year period.*

*It's a remarkable journey, and it's got Randy's footprints all over it.*

*Anyone who leads an agency and who's determined to grow should seriously consider Randy's iWin Agency Growth System. The proof is in the numbers.”*

*Rusty Reid  
Higginbotham & Associates*



*Some agencies only ride bull markets. Are you ready to commit to extraordinary growth?*

I have a few questions for you. Who's driving sales in your organization? How are they compensated? How much time is dedicated to what is probably the single most important task in the agency? Now, what is that job worth?

Consider this. Add another two-five percent annually to the growth of your agency and project what that incremental growth is worth in five years or 10 years, both in agency profit and your personal wealth. Are you willing to continue making that level of financial sacrifice by putting it off?

I was at lunch with a client, Jack Wagner of USI. With all the options for sales and sales management training, I asked him, "Why pick us?"

Jack replied, "Randy, there's a lot of good sales training out there. Most of it will help you keep up with the market. In a hard market you'll grow; in a soft one, you won't. But The Wedge, with its ability to help us take business from the incumbent in **any** market, helps us grow regardless of what's going on in the economy. That's why we chose The Wedge Group. It's our commitment to growth!"

Jack's agency, and many others, have committed to growth. And by doing so, they've achieved dynamic and sustainable growth in revenue and producer income.

When you **Commit to Growth**, you also need to commit to two other things in a very real way. It will make the path much easier.

1. Become a proactive services company
2. Help all of your producers double their income in three to five years, while reducing the number of accounts by half.

Three things can give your agency a competitive advantage – price, coverage and service. But is **price or coverage** a sustainable advantage? Probably not. Why? Because it's too easy for the incumbent agent to match!

The third component is **service**. We break that down into two types – **Reactive Service** and **Proactive Service**. When I ask agencies about their service advantage, most describe their ability to react. In other words, they are great at getting out certificates of service or helping with a claim. They are quick to respond to questions and answer phone calls promptly. On the employee benefits side, they help with questions about coverage and are good at enrolling new employees in the health insurance program.

The problem with all of this is that almost all of your competitors are equally good at responding to the client's needs. That's why **Reactive Service** is not really a strong competitive advantage. In fact in most cases, it's the minimal acceptable standard.



With Reactive Service, the client asks and the agency answers. There really is no competitive advantage. The client-agency relationship is stuck in neutral.

I've never met an agency that didn't say they were proactive. The problem comes when I ask the question, "What do you do that is proactive?"

Why is having **Proactive Services** so important?

1. When your proactive services are well defined, they become the basis for a written service timeline for your best clients. Then you can Wedgeproof them from your competitors.
2. Proactive Services address specific areas where your prospect has pain. Since the incumbent doesn't provide them, winning new business is easier for your agency.

3. Once you've sold your clients and Wedgeproofed them with your written service timeline, your clients become much better sources for **Red Hot Introductions**, leading you to the very best new prospects.

If you offer only reactive service – responding to claims and calls – your agency is the same as every competitor. **Proactive services** take time, energy and resources to develop and deliver in a way that is both tangible and understandable to the customer. But a strong **Proactive Service Program** builds your agency and puts producers in a position to win and win consistently.



In any sales team of five or 50, 20% are top producers. You might also have a bottom tier who under produce. Then there's the middle 60% who are comfortable with their success, but could certainly do more for themselves ... and you! This is untapped potential, ripe for growth!

**Commit** to helping your producers double their income in three to five years while reducing the number of accounts by half.

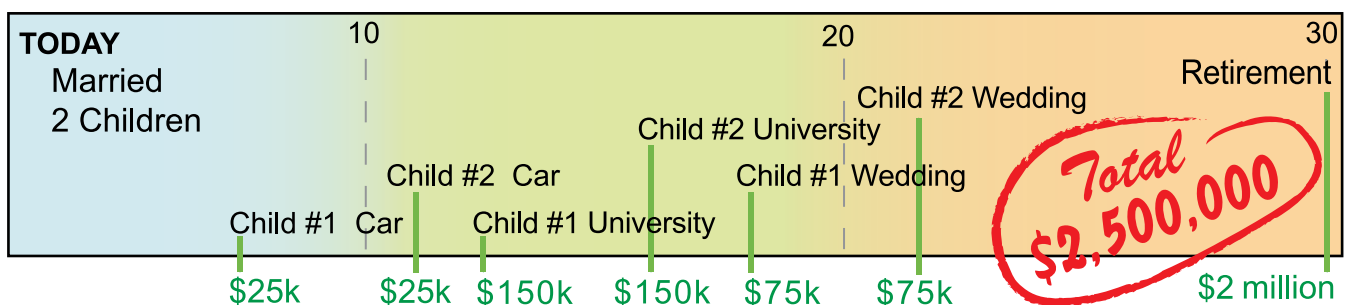
"What's your goal?" It's a question I've asked thousands of producers. Some give me a number, but few have a goal that is meaningful to them. So I ask them to develop a simple, 30-year Life Plan.

**On a 30-year life plan** each producer charts the significant life events in his or her future:

- marriage & children
- education & transportation for each child
- children's weddings
- the producer's retirement

Next, we put price tags on these events and add up the numbers. How many after-tax dollars will it take to fund these goals? This basic exercise reinvests producers in their own careers and helps them to set income and sales goals that are meaningful, relevant and important to their lives. It puts them, and your agency, on the road to dynamic growth.

### THIRTY YEAR LIFE PLAN



# two

Once you commit to producer success and a philosophy of proactive service, you'll need a process that makes it happen. That's your second step. Why do you need a process? Because it's almost impossible to drive an idea, but you can **drive a process**.

Think of it as a playbook. Just as a sports team has one to tell each player where to be and what to do, a business process allows key players on your team to understand their roles and make all the right moves. We call it a **flight plan**.

Now that your top clients understand your proactive service plan, you are in position to leverage the relationship by asking for an introduction to a colleague who might benefit from a similar level of service. Instead of cold calling, you can meet your next prospect through one of your best and most satisfied customers. We call that a **Red Hot Introduction**.

As you develop relationships with your clients that are based on professional services that support their business goals instead of wine and cheese baskets, they will be pleased to help you and their colleagues by introducing your agency's higher level of services.



In business as in travel, the number of takeoffs should equal the number of successful landings. The goal of The Wedge process is not just to generate more leads and submit more proposals, it's to land more sales.

Pilots know that a successful flight begins on the ground. The groundwork that precedes every Wedge sales call is crucial to success.

Begin by identifying your largest, most profitable accounts – your top 20% – and putting those accounts onto your **proactive service plan**. Outline your proactive service plan in writing for these key customers and define each critical action. Name your plan and name each step or action it includes.

A **Pre-Call Strategy** is key to closing new accounts. Use sales meetings and mentoring sessions to whiteboard information on the prospect and your competition. Repeat the process with each new sales opportunity, and you'll develop a library of winning tactics. Know the strengths and weaknesses of all the players and develop a strategy to help your producer **bust the incumbent relationship**. Repeating this process with each new prospect will enhance your understanding of the competitive marketplace and help you to differentiate and build on your strengths. Equally important, you learn how to **exploit your competitors' weaknesses**, leading to more AOR/BORs and quicker, more predictable wins. It also is essential preparation for the next part of the flight plan — **The Wedge**.

It's always the same when you're the new guy. The incumbent generally gets one last chance.

If you're not careful, the incumbent matches your "price and coverage" and you get rolled. It's been going on forever and it's seen to be how business works by many, but not the best.

Almost all traditional selling systems, books and training focus on relationship building and a consultative approach. Build relationships, create trust, uncover unmet needs and deliver your solution to them in proposal form. If you do all this, you will be rewarded with a new client. Maybe. What these sales experts leave out is the basic fact that every piece of quality business you want already belongs to an incumbent agent. For you to WIN, someone has to LOSE. So, not only do you need to be good at building relationships, you better have a strategy to bust the *incumbent relationship* or there is a great chance you'll get ROLLED.

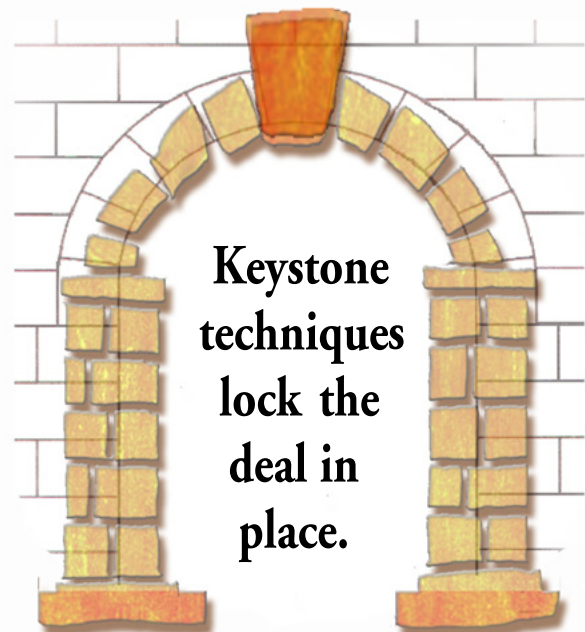
The heart of **The Wedge** is a skill set which helps you drive a wedge between the incumbent agent and your new prospect. It is not based on discounted pricing or better coverage, but on fair pricing and the right coverage and most importantly, the specific *proactive services* that your agency can provide (not provided by the incumbent) which make managing risk significantly more predictable for your prospect. Master the process and CLOSING Ratios can average 50, 60 and 70%. Don't do it and suffer a lot of hard work and the misery of heartbreak when someone steals your best ideas, matches your price and you get rolled.

Of course, nothing is perfect and we are dealing with people. Plus, there is always Murphy's Law – what can go wrong, will. For those eventualities, we use another technique called **Keystone**.

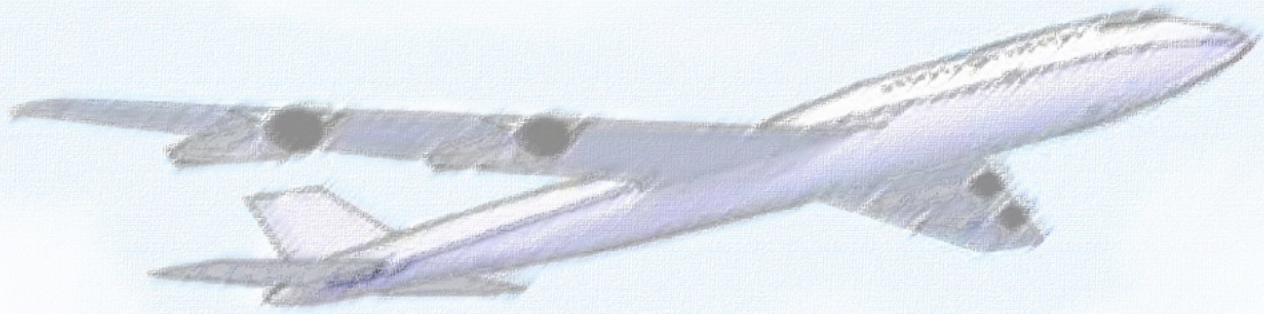


Do you know any commercial airline pilots? Every year they do extensive training. Ever wonder why? They already know how to fly! They spend hours and hours in a simulator preparing for what could go wrong: electronic failure, hydraulic failure, wind shear, ice on wings, snow on run way, terrorism and the list goes on. They have one goal, takeoffs must equal landings.

**Keystone** is more than how to present a proposal, it is preparing like a pilot for what could go wrong and having a plan for the predictable problems that the incumbent will create to make sure you land safely, **WIN** the account and get paid. Last we all checked, second place doesn't pay very well.



What made ancient Roman temples, aqueducts and bridge structures stand the test of time was the contour and balance of the Roman arch. The strength of the Roman arch is based on a single, specially-shaped stone – the Keystone, that locks everything into place.



**A**fter the sale has closed and contracts are signed, **Wedgeproof** the account. No producer wants the new gun in town to beat him at his own game.

While researching, strategizing and winning the account, you learned which reports and services are most important to this client. Tweak your **proactive service plan** to enhance those deliverables. Prepare a written outline and timetable of the customer's proactive service program and commit to helping achieve his goals. Then immediately start **cross-selling**.

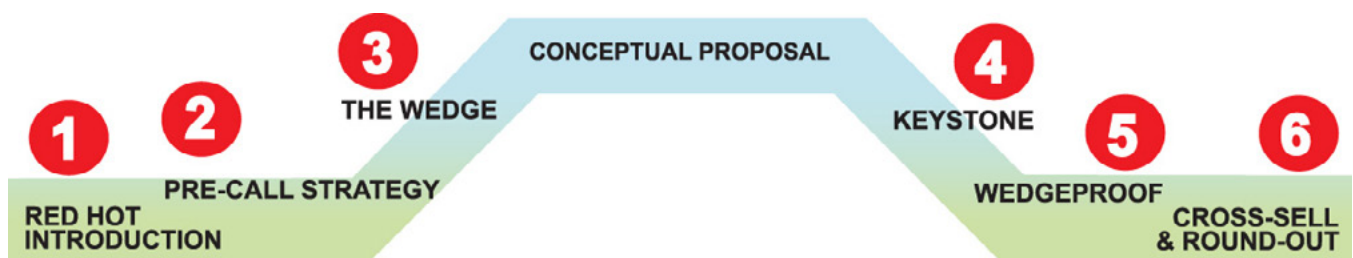
In most agencies, there are thousands, even millions of dollars in commission left on the table waiting to be cross-sold. For some agencies, it's the source of riches, for some it's the key to survival and for others it's the Holy Grail. One thing is certain. Unless **cross-selling** is truly part of your business process or playbook, it will remain a nice idea that occasionally converts to money. However, when it is part of your process and culturally driven, it will produce amazing amounts of revenue and equally important, increase retention.

*“ We heard about Randy and read his books years ago. Like most agencies we never took action. I got a chance to hear him speak and everything he said made sense. The way he described the typical sales call, the typical sales meeting, I thought he'd been watching us. But, he hadn't, he just knows this business so well.*

*We joined **iWin**. His coaching is remarkable, his tools invaluable. ”*

Mike Miller  
Valenti Trobec Chandler, Inc.

Our flight plan is a simple six-step process that just happens to work! Now all you have to do is get it implemented.



**T**Training. Admit it, no one really wants to do training, particularly if you're a seasoned producer. If you've been producing for five, 10 or 20 years, what is new to learn other than a few changes in law or coverage.

However, training is the Mother of skill building. If your producers have already developed great skills in developing written service timelines on their accounts, then formal training would be a waste of time. If your producers are actively working their clients for introductions into their very best prospects and have a full pipeline of quality opportunities, training would obviously be a waste of time. If your producers are "killing the incumbent," selling the majority of their accounts by AOR/BOR, getting massive leverage from the big investment your agency has made in competitive services, then there is simply no reason to waste a moment training. However in most agencies, this is not the case.



three

And that's why you're reading this. You want a solution to becoming an EXTRAORDINARY GROWTH firm. Training is the third step.

Here's a problem worth considering you can send someone to a two-day class somewhere and expect them to have the competence to excel? Probably not! And, if they don't have the skills, they probably won't have the confidence to take consistent action, and you'll get to deal with all the excuses. So, pick your poison.



**iWinBiz.com**  
*Sales training  
for grown-ups*

### **iWin Agency Growth System Transforms potential to profit**

Deal with the resistance of training for skills, competence and confidence or deal with all the excuses associated with inactivity and ineffectiveness at putting revenue on the books.

Here are some questions you might want to consider about training:

1. Are your training objectives for your producers defined for the next three, six or 12 months?
2. Does the curriculum really support your business process or playbook?
3. Is your training scheduled?
4. Does your entire team participate?





## Commitment. Process. Training.

The fourth step to extraordinary growth is converting skills into *action*. Even when you do a great job of training your producers and they have the skills they need to prospect, beat the incumbent and grow their books of business, they still need a head coach. A great coach drives the process and converts producers' knowledge and skills into actions and behaviors. How? A lot of great work can happen in your sales meeting if you have the right structure. But, before we talk about the structure of a great sales meeting, let's talk about the typical sales meeting.

Imagine a sales meeting where the newest guy on the team has miraculously landed an appointment with one of the biggest prospects in the market. We get out the whiteboard and write the name of the prospect and his company, along with the name of the incumbent agent. Everybody offers suggestions for effective wedges, advice about the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the incumbent and the key strengths of your own agency. But, it's not just a brainstorming session, it's a well organized and structured process, that not only helps the new guy, but helps the seasoned producer as well.



Many sales meetings start by reviewing the numbers, looking at who sold what and how much. Then on to the excel spreadsheet with the upcoming accounts. The leader scans them one by one, asking producers questions like, "How are you doing with this account? Need any help? What are your chances of closing it?" Throughout the process, the producer is giving mostly one word answers. "Good. No help needed. High chance of closing." "Mostly, these sessions tend to become Liar's Clubs where no real information is exchanged other than getting help on the "hot market." Very little strategy on how to use differentiation to take out the incumbent is ever discussed. And other than pleas to get more referrals and boost the pipeline, nothing happens that challenges producers to be their best. By the way – most of the business that producers say will close never actually does. Your top producers avoid these meetings if they can because they would rather sell than listen to the "Liars' Club."

We have a different idea – **C.R.I.S.P.** or *Continuous Rapid Improvement Sales Process*. What if every sales meeting became a think tank where each producer's experience and knowledge was laser focused on helping a producer BEAT the incumbent, one account at a time?

# SALES MEETINGS

The collective wisdom of the team focuses on knocking out the incumbent and closing the big one. Winning becomes a habit. Leveraging your differentiation becomes a habit. Helping the guy sitting next to you becomes a habit. Keep it up for a year or two and you've transformed your entire agency sales culture, creating a path to hire new producers and opening the door to explosive growth.

What does it cost an agency to go through the entire quote process for a new account? One group of 50 agency principals calculated the cost at \$2,150 to quote one \$100,000 account.

This is why we believe that a *Pre-Call Strategy* session is an investment of time and resources that you can't afford NOT to make. Whether it's getting *Red Hot Introductions*, creating effective *Wedges* or developing *Pre-Call Strategies*, **C.R.I.S.P. Sales Meetings** make it happen for both producers and agency. If you're going to take producers off the street for a sales meeting, make it one that builds their skills and confidence and puts money in their pockets. But, maybe you already have this mastered.

# Accountability

**Accountability.** How do you create accountability if you can't count what's going on? Not long ago if you wanted to check your stock portfolio, you had to wait for your statements to come out or call your broker. Even your broker couldn't tell you accurately, because he didn't have the systems. Today, you just go online and see up-to-the-minute information about your account balances. The same is true for your checking account. Go online and you immediately know what is going on and manage your accounts in real-time.

However, in most agencies, if you want to know what your pipeline really looks like, you may have to deal with five different systems. The 3x5 index card, sticky notes, yellow pad, excel spreadsheet, plus the producer who keeps it all in his head. Producers will complain when you try to systematize the business, particularly prospecting activities and pipeline management. If you don't have a significant commitment to growth, they will overwhelm you with their gripes – too hard to use, too confusing, don't have time to enter it, like my own system, don't want big brother breathing down my back. If you listen to it all, you'll be back to yellow pads, spreadsheets, sticky notes and 3x5 cards. You'll wake up early one morning and want to take a peek at what's going on with sales – and you can't!

If there are no consequences, there is no accountability. If I don't make my new business goal four years in a row, don't use your system, don't participate in your training or your sales meetings and I get paid just like everyone else, you've sent a strong message. Do what I want, when I want and you're going to treat me with the ultimate respect, just like everyone else. I can screw up your culture and your growth initiatives, you don't care. It doesn't matter if my book isn't growing as long as I am not perceived to be costing you any "real money."

If the only consequence your sales team experiences for their individual success or failures is a little up and down commission income, you're leaving revenue, profits and wealth on the table. Expectations must have some consequences – that includes everything from new commission goals achieved, growth in book of business, attendance at your C.R.I.S.P. sales meetings, to utilization of your information and pipeline system. For extraordinary growth, eliminate the excuses. To grow the way you dream of growing, YOU must take step five: commit to a no excuses culture.

So can you count? Accurately, in real time? Most agency principals and sales managers can't. In addition to wasted time, your consequences include revenues, profits and agency values that simply never happen.

When it comes to counting, it's largely a system thing. You either have one that is working for

you or you don't. There are several good programs out there but don't buy one yet. The problem is that most of the CRM and pipeline management programs that are used for tracking and prospect management are stand-alone things. You can't run a sales meeting with them. You can't do training with them. They don't match your proactive service culture. They don't help producers in their quest to double their personal income. There's no goal setting integrated into them. If you want to get a list of all of your competitors and which accounts they write, you'd be hard pressed. If you want to drive red hot introductions or referral generation – oops, not designed for that. For the most part, they are electronic databases that offer precious little productive use. And for what little they offer, you'll pull your hair out getting utilization.



In summary, there are **Five Steps to Extraordinary Growth**:

1. Commit to Growth
  - a. Commit to Proactive Service
  - b. Help every producer double their personal income
2. Adopt a business plan, process or play-book that works
3. Train to build skills, competence and confidence
4. Convert those skills into actions with your sales meeting format
5. Create a *no excuses* culture

For do-it-yourselfers, you've got a road map to success. However, there is a big gap between a road map and successful implementation. Real growth only comes from successful implementation. So, if you're serious about growth for your agency ... take a tour of our new, 2nd generation **iWin Agency Growth System**.

one  
two  
three  
four  
five

I've spent millions perfecting this system, specifically for insurance agency owners and their producers.

This system has it all – in ONE place. All of the processes, wedges, prospects, competition, training modules and also LIVE training and phone training.

We've built it to help you grow to extraordinary heights.

If you're serious about growth and ready to join my iWin Team ... **complete the application**. We'll review it and get back to you right away.

If you're unsure where you stand, just **fill out the Growth Readiness Review forms**. We'll review it and discuss where we think you are and what needs to be done to get you ready to join the iWin Team.

Contact us at the address, phone or email below and we'll be happy to assist you.

Randy Schwantz, *President and CEO*

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“*I thought about it a lot before we committed to **iWinBiz**. I knew we needed to track and measure sales; we needed a system to help us move to the next level. **iWinBiz** has already impacted our agency in positive ways. Closing ratio up, new business is up. My producers are more committed to themselves and growing their own book of business. Now I've got a plan and accountability. It makes all the difference. I'm very glad we made this choice.*”

Brad Forney  
BCF Group

5

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