

# Insurance

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C A N A D A

# Elite Brokers

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Canada's top 30 brokers revealed  
for the first time



## **MAKING YOUR CASE**

BEST ARGUMENT FOR USING A BROKER

## **MARKET MAKEOVER**

ECONOMIC TURNAROUND FOR NICHE PRODUCT

## **DEMUTUALIZATION**

WHY YOU'RE STILL WAITING



**TOP 30**

*Elite  
Brokers*

**Insurance Business proudly presents the results of** the Elite Brokers survey, an exciting new program that has been embraced by the brokering community.

Although earning power is important, we also took a look at those brokers who are taking advantage of technology – moving boldly into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

One of the questions asked of brokers was whether they leverage mobile technology. A full 66 per cent of those who participated said they did – underlining the need for brokers to take advantage of the “tech tools” at their disposal.

Those producers managing business on the road versus the office were varied, with numbers stretching from zero per cent to 100, but with the majority of those falling between the 40 to 60 per cent median.

But looking beyond the numbers, we were not simply inviting applications from the most advanced and senior executives working at high-profile, well-resourced brokerages. We were also aiming to reward brokers from smaller firms and niche industries who were punching above their weight and achieving big things.

“Forward thinking brokers leverage their brokerage-management systems and business intelligence tools to define opportunities,” says Purdy.

“When brokers differentiate themselves the opportunities are endless. Specialization allows brokers to gain market share while others are trying to catch up.”

As a strong supporter of the Top 30 Elite Broker list, Applied Systems sees the value in highlighting and celebrating the best that Canada’s insurance industry has to offer.

“We are excited to partner with Canada’s Top 30 Elite Brokers program to help create a forum for excellence for the Canadian broker channel to share best practices and empower the broker of tomorrow,” he says.

“There is tremendous talent and potential within the Canadian brokerage community and there are many success stories to celebrate.”

## Top-performing insurance brokerages recognize the importance of investing in the latest brokerage management and mobile innovations

Jeff Purdy, the senior vice president of Applied Systems

# JUST WHAT MAKES AN ELITE BROKER?

The nation's top insurance players are front and centre for the inaugural Elite Brokers ranking by Insurance Business, a new initiative that rewards and grades the top 30 leading brokers in the Canadian insurance market

**Our inaugural Elite Brokers ranking attracted entries** from all corners of the country, as we sought to evaluate and rank the top 30 individual insurance brokers from across Canada. So exactly how was each applicant assessed, you may ask?

## METHODOLOGY

The ranking system is a comprehensive and independent means of ranking the best-performing insurance brokers in the country. Due to the advanced and detailed information needed, each broker was required to supply their own details to Insurance Business to be eligible.

In order to rank performance, however, we were not simply inviting applications from the most advanced and senior executives working at high-profile, well-resourced brokerages. We were also aiming to reward brokers from smaller firms and niche industries who were punching above their weight and achieving big things.

Our yardstick for success included:

- Premium income
- Revenue per client
- Industry awards and recognition
- Number and value of policies written
- Number of new clients introduced to the business
- Industry awards and recognition
- Number and value of policies written

## THE KEYS TO SUCCESS



When interviewing our top 30 brokers several common strategies for success became clear:

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

An unwavering commitment to customer service is essential, from first point of contact with a potential client through to follow-up after a claim has been processed.

### RELATIONSHIPS

With clients, colleagues, insurers and other brokers, if you want longevity and success in your brokerage career, you need to nurture your relationships across the board.

### PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

It's no longer acceptable to sit behind a desk and correspond via email. If you want to be a cut above the rest in today's market, you need to hit the phones, visit clients in person and make a genuine connection.

### INTERNAL TEAMWORK


Every broker bar none agreed that continued success is not possible without a qualified and supportive team to back you up.

- Number of new clients introduced to the business during the 2012 calendar year.

Entries for the Insurance Business Elite Brokers ranking, collected throughout October and November this year, went through an evaluation process. Beyond the pure numbers of profit, there were other considerations as well – which spoke to the technological advances now available in the industry:

- The percentage of personal lines new business coming through an online channel
- If the brokerage was leveraging mobile technology and
- The percentage of producers managing business on the road versus in the office.

A place in the Insurance Business Elite Brokers ranking is clear recognition of each broker's professional standing as one of the leading brokers in the Canadian insurance market.

However, in interviews with our inaugural top 30, the consistent message received was that they couldn't have achieved such successful results without a strong network of support staff and stakeholders. 

## ELITE TOP 30 BROKERS LIST

Rank	Name	Company	Location	Revenue
1	Danny Sgro	Jones DesLauriers Insurance	Toronto, Ont.	\$3,493,000
2	Kevin Stedman	Jones DesLauriers Insurance	Toronto, Ont.	\$2,271,425
3	Jeff Rodin	Nacora Insurance Brokers Ltd.	Markham, Ont.	\$1,997,754
4	Chris Sikorski	Renfrew Insurance	Calgary, Alta.	\$1,293,000
5	Tony Di Corpo	Racine Chamberland Inc.	Montreal, Que.	\$1,102,712

Rank	Name	Company	Location
6	Joe Palmer	Palmer Atlantic Insurance	Hartland, N.B.
7	Mike O'Grady	O'Grady & Associates Insurance Services Inc.	Tilsonburg, Ont.
8	Brock Longworth	Cornerstone Insurance Services	Prince Albert, Sask.
9	Norm McIntyre	Jardine Lloyd Thompson Canada	Toronto, Ont.
10	Andrew J. Kilpatrick	Mitchell Sandham Financial Services	Toronto, Ont.
11	Mark Jackson	The Insurance Market	Toronto, Ont.
12	Debbie G. Khan	KRG Insurance Brokers	Toronto, Ont.
13	Mark McKay	Highcourt Partners Ltd.	Toronto, Ont.
14	Ron Lamon	Algoma Insurance Ltd	Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.
15	Don Normandeau	Le Bon Ami Insurance Brokers	La Broquerie, Man.
16	Don Hatton	Hatton Insurance Agency Ltd	Duncan, B.C.
17	Angela R Walton	Wilson Insurance Ltd.	Fredericton, N.B.
18	C.J. Nolan	Munn Insurance Limited	St. John's, N.L.
19	Michael Delaney	RIO Insurance Brokers	Toronto, Ont.
20	Susan Thirkill	Cambrian Insurance Brokers	Sudbury, Ont.
21	Judy Bell	Beyond Insurance Brokers Inc.	Whitby, Ont.
22	Royle Leung	Broker Team Insurance	Richmond Hill, Ont.
23	Rod Tidsbury	Nauroth & Associates Insurance Brokers Ltd	Prince George, B.C.
24	Victoria Blodgett	Darling Insurance and Realty	Peterborough, Ont.
25	Aaron Beattie	Hoffmann Kool Insurance	Saskatoon, Sask.
26	Bill Moretti	Tredd Insurance Brokers	Toronto, Ont.
27	Tereen Mowrey	Henderson Insurance	Moose Jaw, Sask.
28	Michael Abraham	Paisley Manor Insurance	Toronto, Ont.
29	Jimmy Murphy	Lloyd Sadd Insurance Brokers	Edmonton, Alta.
30	Andrew Clark	Marsh Canada Limited	Toronto, Ont.

### BY THE NUMBERS:

Group	Average(\$)
Top five collectively	\$9,006,175
Top five average	\$1,801,235

### BY PROVINCE:

Province	Brokers
Ont.	18
Sask	3
N.B.	2
B.C.	2
Alta	2
Que.	1



### NUMBERS FOR THE TOP FIVE

Total Policies:

**6,086**

Total Clients:

**3,960**

Average Years Experience:

**23.4**

### TOP 30 TOTALS

**\$16.3**

million in revenue

average of

**\$542,461**

### TOP 10 TOTALS

average of

**\$1,247,890**

# KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES

Canada's Top Broker might be more accurately described as top brokers, with two Jones DesLauriers professionals finishing atop the Elite List



# 01

**Danny Sgro,**  
PARTNER, CHIEF SALES OFFICER  
TECHNOLOGY AND SPECIALTY  
RISK ADVISOR,  
JONES DESLAURIERS INSURANCE  
TORONTO, ONT.

**There must be something in the water at Jones DesLauriers**, as two Toronto brokers from that firm posted some big numbers to take first and second spots in the Top 30 Elite Broker Survey.

Leading the charge for Jones DesLauriers was Chief Sales Officer Danny Sgro who broke the tape

first almost \$3.5 million, outpacing his closest competitor and colleague by more than a million.

Along with being a partner and producer at Jones DesLauriers, Sgro is also the relationship manager for some of Jones DesLauriers' key insurance companies and a mentor to the young producers.

"My success can be attributed to hard work and dedication," Sgro told Insurance Business, who got his start by graduating from the University of Toronto with a degree in chemical engineering.

"I knew I wanted to move into the business side but still utilize my engineering experience," he says.

"My strategic plan was to work in loss prevention and risk management, gain a strong underwriting background, work in marketing and sales on the insurance company side of the business, and then move to the broker side. I am very fortunate that this came to pass as per the script."

Fellow partner Kevin Stedman, chief sales officer at the firm gave Sgro a good run for his money, posting numbers \$2,271,425. Like Sgro, Stedman attributes his success to staying focused, being well organized and delivering results – but certainly had no intentions of entering insurance when he first got his start.

"Growing up with a family in the insurance business, I swore I would never get into the industry," says Stedman.

"When I graduated from the business program at Sir Sandford Fleming College, I was soon after presented with an opportunity to work with a direct writer. The position was intriguing so I welcomed the opportunity, and began my career and appreciation of the insurance industry."





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**Kevin Stedman,**  
PARTNER, CHIEF SALES OFFICER  
TRANSPORTATION,  
MANUFACTURING AND  
CONSTRUCTION ADVISOR,  
JONES DESLAURIERS INSURANCE  
TORONTO, ONT.

Each see the shrinking of the broker channel as one of the biggest challenges facing the industry, and urge brokers to recognize the growing sophistication of the customer.

“With fewer insurance companies and fewer brokers due to consolidation, we will likely see larger, more sophisticated brokers and insurance markets in the near future,” says Stedman.

“Clients are becoming more sophisticated in their insurance and risk management knowledge and requirements. The industry will have to respond accordingly to stay ahead of the game.”

Evolving to meet the customers’ needs is crucial to maintaining the health of the broker channel, agrees Sgro.

“The broker landscape has changed dramatically in the last 10 years and will continue to evolve,” says Sgro.

“Client expectations of their insurance brokers have increased dramatically. Brokers who will thrive will need to leverage their past experience and knowledge, to provide sophisticated insurance advice and specialized, sector specific products to their clients.”

Almost every broker has a story of a mentor who helped guide them through those early, difficult years. For Sgro, there were three.

“Gary Boileau, now with Affiliated FM, hired me straight from university and worked with me in my early years of development,” says Sgro.

“Then Judy Maddocks promoted me ahead of my time at Kemper Insurance to a senior position and worked with me to excel in that role. When I came to Jones DesLauriers Insurance, it was Bob Jones who gave me the opportunity and mentored me in my transition into the broker side of the business.”

For Stedman, his support system starts at home and ends with his brokerage team.

“First and foremost is the support of my family, wife and children, then the support of a superior service team at Jones DesLauriers Insurance,” says Stedman.

“There are a number of individuals throughout my 24 years in the insurance industry who have guided and supported me, and those individuals know who they are.”

## Rodin credits hard work

Jeff Rodin, the vice president of Nacora Insurance Brokers Ltd. in Markham, Ontario, racked up some impressive numbers for 2012 – placing him firmly in the rarified air of the top five brokers in Canada.

Taking third place with \$1,997,754, Rodin is proof positive that hard work in the commercial and personal sector can reap great rewards.

“I have been in the insurance industry as a broker for 31 years having obtained my RIBO license on June 1, 1982,” says Rodin.

“I have grown organically, having never purchased a book of business throughout my career.”

Focusing mostly on the commercial market, Rodin’s personal lines book also focuses on the movers and shakers in the commercial market.

“My production is 90 per cent commercial with 10 per cent personal lines,” says Rodin.

“The personal lines clients written are mostly that of the commercial principals, directors, officers or a family member.”



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**Jeff Rodin**  
VICE PRESIDENT  
NACORA INSURANCE BROKERS LTD.  
MARKHAM, ONT.

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BROKERS 2013



04

**Chris Sikorski**  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, PARTNER  
RENREW INSURANCE LTD.  
CALGARY, ALTA.

## Client time is time well spent

Chris Sikorski secured fourth spot in the hotly contested top five broker survey, not by running the race more quickly, but by taking the time to get to know the clients' needs.

"I invest a significant amount of time getting to know the client and their business," says Sikorski. "Placing their business is just the beginning of that relationship in which I spend the time necessary to develop their trust and develop open lines of communication. Doing so allows me to match the needs of my clients; provide the proper coverage, terms and conditions, with the insurance supplier."

Insurance isn't about reinventing the wheel, says Sikorski, but finding new and innovative ways to make their services indispensable.

"In order to succeed, brokers must distinguish themselves from their competitors by having access to a broad scope of markets, recognizing and managing client risk and advocating for clients," he says.

"The insurance industry is complex and constantly evolving, so professional development of the broker is key to ensuring that the client's needs are met."



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**Tony Di Corpo**  
INDEPENDENT BROKER  
RACINE & CHAMBERLAIN  
MONTREAL, QUE.

## A never-give-up attitude

For Tony Di Corpo of Racine & Chamberlain, the secret to his success is no secret at all.

"I dedicate myself 100 per cent to my business with passion. I work hard, I never give up and I always push myself to go one step further," he says. "To manage the inevitable stress and to keep the needed energy to achieve my goals, I stay physically active by jogging on a regular basis. Also, I make sure to maintain a pleasant atmosphere at the office so I can continue to enjoy practicing my occupation. In fact, to this day I still believe that I have the best job in the world."

Rounding out the Top 5 of the Elite Broker list with \$1,102,712, Di Corpo offers these words of advice to the independents that are looking to get ahead in the industry.

"They need to never forget that insurance brokering is a service industry; never take a client for granted," he says.

"Someone wise once told me that 'if you don't serve your client, you can be sure that someone else will.'"

Like so many other brokers, Di Corpo credits his wife and family support system. But he also looks back fondly to when he started out in the industry.

"I owe a debt of gratitude to the Late Mr. Daniel Racine who hired me, believed in me, who pushed me to be and do my best and who was definitely a source of inspiration," he says. 