

Declaration of Independents: Marianne Speakman

BY OLIVIA OVERMAN



Marianne Speakman

Owner

Speakman Agency LLC

Iselin, New Jersey

Starting out in the insurance industry in 1981 with The St. Paul Insurance Company in New Jersey right out of high school, Marianne Speakman worked her way up from file clerk to independent agency owner.

“Back in the day, it was either you get a job, learn a trade or go to college. I started at a community college, but I already had a taste for the insurance industry—and for earning my own living—so I began working full time as a filing clerk and worked my way up to underwriter.” Speakman has since returned to school and will be receiving a bachelor’s degree from Thomas Edison State University in the spring of 2022.

How Did You Gain Expertise?

The knowledge and understanding I acquired while working for different agents provided life-changing lessons. Then, I was able to understand both sides of the

fence in the industry.

Advice for an Inexperienced Insurance professional?

In 2014, I was named the Chairman of the Board for Big “I” New Jersey. The best advice I can give to any insurance professional is to make use of the resources that are offered by the Big “I” and Trusted Choice®.

Biggest Challenges?

COVID-19 has forced more change in the industry in the past year than ever before. We are a business dedicated to people and the trust between us. When life shut down, things were challenging—but not impossible—to stay in front of current customers and get in front of

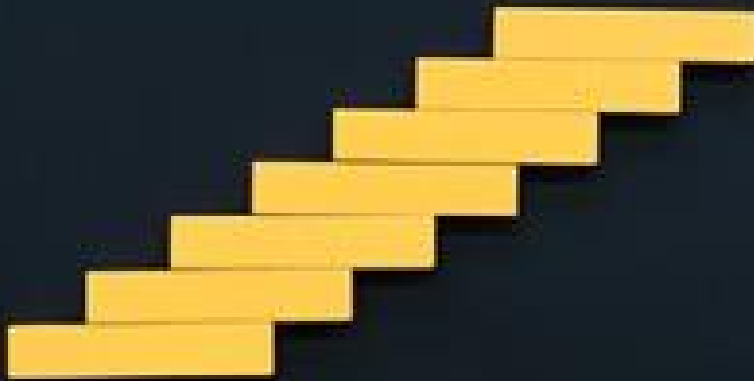
new ones. Having a greater understanding of insurance products and passing that information to the consumer is what a Trusted Choice agent is all about.

Additionally, where the major challenges lie are in the area of technology and the changing and evolving customer relationships. The Big "I" and Trusted Choice® have increased their digital footprint, which has helped agents increase theirs on many levels too. And while as an industry we were behind the eight ball from a digital standpoint for many years, I think we must continue to move forward because it is just too easy today for people to buy insurance on the internet.

Olivia Overman is IA content editor.

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