

## 3 Reasons New Producers Go Bad

Every year the NFL has a draft. There are 32 teams, and each has seven picks for a total of 224 football players drafted into the NFL. Each of those 32 teams has a recruiting staff that evaluates their picks.

Here's the crazy fact, only 53% of first-round draft picks have success in the NFL, according to 2018 article in The Riot Report. "What should be made clear at this point is just how bad we are at judging talent, even at the highest levels," Vincent Richardson wrote in this article.

That's enough



By Randy Schwartz

to take the wind out of your sails if you're an agency owner looking to grow your agency. But do not get too worried. You have to put this in context. We're talking about professional sports, in this case, the NFL. The standards for success are off the charts. You can't just be good. You've got to be one of the very best in the world to make it in the NFL.

As a producer in the commercial insurance industry, your average competitor has a \$300,000 book of business.

That book is loaded with many small and medium-size accounts so you don't have to be the most world-class talent to do well. But don't

let that sway you to think anyone

can make it. It does take drive, intelligence and a ridiculous amount of self-discipline.

Here are the three reasons why most newbies don't make it.

### Bad Cultural Fit

Compare Pete Carroll of the Seattle Seahawks with Bruce Arians of Tampa Bay Bucs.

Pete hired Michael Gervais, a sport psychologist. Michael's job is to make sure that the Seahawks' heads are as sound as their bodies. He makes sure that the coaches can understand the players at a deep level, their psyche.

The belief is simple: if the coaches can connect with the players on what motivates them with personal and family issues, they can be more successful at getting the players to be the best they can.

In contrast, Bruce Arians, who visibly loves his players, hugs them and tells them he loves them. But he also cusses at them like a dog (no offense intended to dog owners.) And I suspect we could throw in a little Bill Belichick, who has a whole different style.

These are three different cultures that affect players in different ways. It's essential that as you recruit new producers, you talk about the authentic culture, which like the professional NFL coaches, is driven by you.

### 'A bad cultural fit is sure to be a loser, sooner or later.'

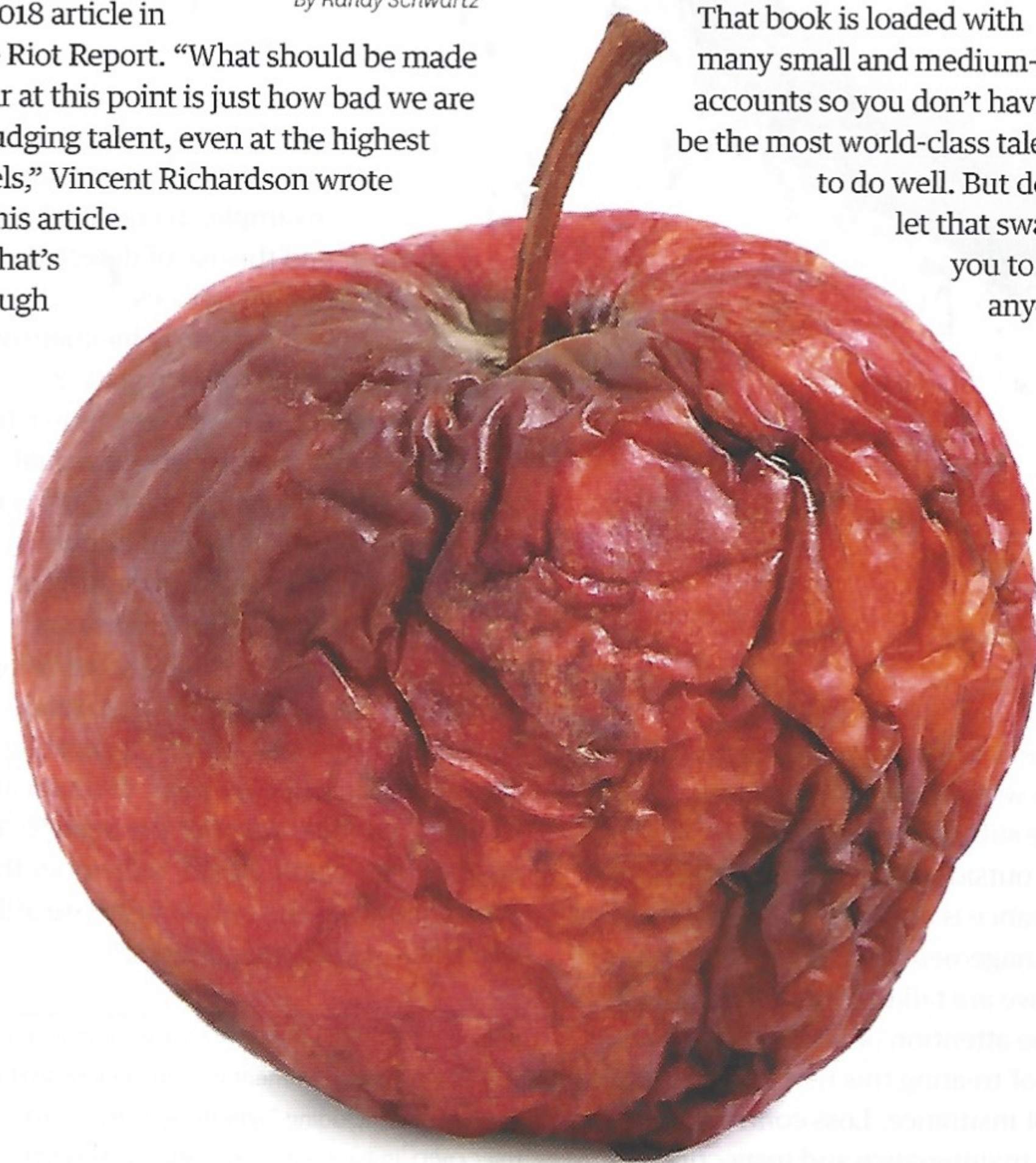
If you're an in their face, demanding leader – then let them know. On the other hand, if your leadership style is hands-off, "we give you tools, and you fail or succeed on your own" – then tell them that.

A bad cultural fit is sure to be a loser, sooner or later.

### Onboarding and Training

In my very simplified version, producers have three jobs:

- They must prospect to set appointments.
- They must sell and win the account.
- They must retain their accounts and grow their books to significant levels (\$1 million).



If your onboard and training process is “loosey-goosey” your newbie will be dazed and confused.

They won’t know how to build a database of quality prospects. They won’t know how to convince and persuade a prospect to set an appointment with them. They won’t know how to win the business. They won’t know what differentiates them. They won’t have “supreme” confidence.

That means they will probably fail.

If you are not training your producer like a sports coach trains their athletes, they will probably fail or grossly underperform.

#### Bad Fit

Real producers are different than the average human being walking down the street.

Producers must be extraordinarily resilient and driven to put up with rejection after rejection and stay focused on achiev-

ing their goal. That is in their personality DNA and can be measured with a test.

They must be extraordinarily self-disciplined to keep doing the mundane but necessary tasks that lead to high performance. This is work ethic and there is no test. You have to discover this in your interview process.

They must be highly skilled to set appointments, win the business and retain it.

#### 3 Things to Consider: Personality, Work-Ethic and Skills

If you’re missing any one of the above, your new hire will be a bad fit and more than likely fail or underperform so badly you’ll want to fire them.

Almost every day, I’m on the phone with an agency owner that is asking the question, “how do I find great producers?” Most of them have suffered huge losses by hiring someone’s retreads.

They really liked hiring that person, but their newbie didn’t have the fire in the belly to go after it every day. Or they hired someone when they didn’t have the tools to train them to prospect and sell.


I encourage them to restate the question this way.

“How do I manufacture great producers?”

To reduce the chance that your number one draft pick will be a flop, do these three things.

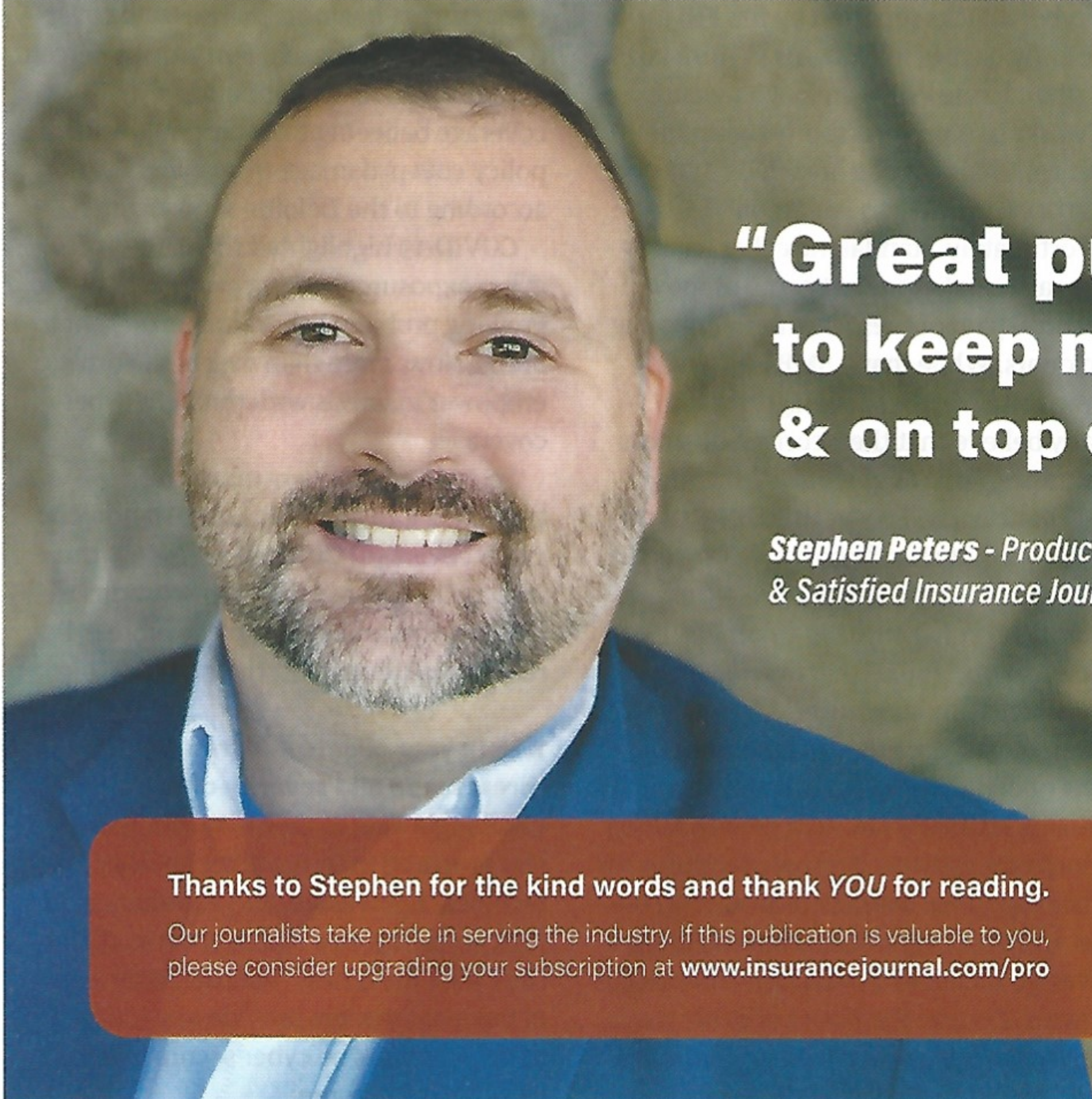
Make sure the producer is the right fit, and has the right personality and work ethic.

Train them like an athlete.

Make sure it’s a good culture fit, so your personalities match up. 

---

Schwartz is founder of The Wedge Group. He’s also the author of the book *Agency Growth Machine*, <https://thewedge.net/free-book>. Phone: 214-446-3209. Email: [randy@thewedge.net](mailto:randy@thewedge.net).



**“Great publication to keep me informed & on top of my game.”**

*Stephen Peters - Producer at Hamrick Insurance Services & Satisfied Insurance Journal Subscriber*

Thanks to Stephen for the kind words and thank *YOU* for reading.  
Our journalists take pride in serving the industry. If this publication is valuable to you, please consider upgrading your subscription at [www.insurancejournal.com/pro](http://www.insurancejournal.com/pro)

**INSURANCE JOURNAL**