

THE RE:GENERATION REPORT 2025

FREE
Insights

THE INSID ST RY

What new talent thinks
about working in insurance.

FREE

THE INSIDE VIEW ADDS A NEW PERSPECTIVE TO THE TALENT CRISIS

FOREWORD

Insurance is at a crossroads. We face a double (and possibly triple) challenge when it comes to the talent.

Too few entrants are joining the profession at a time when a wave of veterans are looking at retirement. But how are we doing with keeping the talent we have? This report shines a light on the reality inside our industry. It shows that while satisfaction is high, retention is not guaranteed. Satisfaction today doesn't mean loyalty tomorrow.

What connects this year's inside story to last year's outside view? Perception. From the outside, insurance looks invisible and unappealing. From the inside, even satisfied employees struggle to explain its value.

How well insurance businesses tackle their perception problem will determine how well they weather the talent crisis.

Olga Collins | CEO WBN



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HIGH SATISFACTION ≠ HIGH RETENTION

INTRODUCTION

In 2024, the Re:generation Report uncovered the stark reality of the insurance talent crisis.

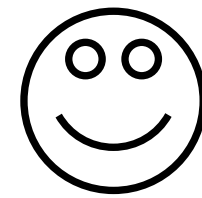
- A generation of professionals heading into retirement, with too few young people coming in to replace them.
- Insurance barely registers on young people's career radar, and **52%** said they had little idea what a career in insurance would involve.
- Not one insurance business featured in the top 100 graduate employer rankings.
- More than two-thirds of young people thought a job in insurance would be boring.

And yet, the very things young people said they wanted from their careers – balance, growth, purpose, fun – are exactly what insurance can deliver. They just don't know it.

That was the outside view.



THIS YEAR, THE INSIDE VIEW REVEALS A PARADOX



94%

are at least
somewhat
satisfied

72%

are very
or extremely
satisfied

Happy, but leaving?

That's the paradox this report will unravel.

At the heart of it lies perception. The Re:generation Report 2024 showed how the perception of the industry blocked attraction. This year we see it's behind the retention risk too. It's something HR alone can't solve. The perception problem is, first and foremost, a brand problem.

Before we start, let's look at who we surveyed.

Half

are uncertain about
their future in
the industry

29%

are searching
or considering
leaving soon

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This report is based on original research conducted by FREE in June and July 2025.

We set out to capture the inside view of people who have recently chosen insurance as their career – in contrast to our 2024 Re:generation Report, which examined perceptions from outside the industry. You can discover more about FREE on page 32 of this report.

Here's the breakdown of the participants we surveyed...

Respondents

321

professionals currently working in brokers, carriers, InsurTechs and MGAs

Career stage

0-5

years of experience in the industry and representing a wide age range

Geographies

UK&US

the two largest and most mature insurance markets. Responses were weighted to give a 50:50 split between UK and US perspectives

This sample provides a balanced, credible view of the early-career insurance workforce, the very people who will form the perception of the industry.

So, what did they reveal?

EVERYONE WANTS THE SAME THINGS^{IN} PRINCIPLE

FINDINGS

The same priorities young people talked about as they envisaged their careers – balance, growth, purpose – are echoed this year by employees in insurance. And, if anything, they value them even more highly.

	Young people	Recent joiners
Learning and growing	86%	90%
Work life balance	89%	88%
Job security and good pay	77%	86%
Helping others	79%	86%
Meaningful work	78%	84%
Fun and social environment	71%	76%

THE TOP POSITIVES ARE A CLOSE MATCH



When asked what they enjoy most about working in the insurance industry, the top 5 most selected options were

1

Helping others and making an impact

2

People and relationships

3

Variety and learning

4

Flexibility and work environment

5

Personal growth and skills



I like that we help people protect
what matters most – their health,
homes, and futures.

Survey respondent



THE PATH IN IS EASY IF YOU HAPPEN TO FIND IT

95% said it was straightforward to get into insurance.

But how people discover it is the problem.

You're twice as likely to hear about insurance from parents or friends than from a university lecturer, and three-and-a-half times more likely than from a teacher or careers advisor.

That makes discovery a matter of luck, not design. The industry is relying on inheritance and chance, not visibility and advocacy, to bring people in.

THE VISIBILITY GAP

Likelihood of discovering insurance as a career option

Family and friends

University lecturer

Career
advisor

Insurance has what it takes to be a destination career, but it's barely visible.

Our 2024 Re:generation Report found that more than half of young people don't know what a career in insurance would look like.

KEY TAKE-OUT

Businesses need to step up their efforts to become known. Few invest meaningfully in building their employer brands, yet it's the only way to make insurance a career people actively seek out, not just stumble into.



I was introduced by a family member and never looked back.



THEY'RE OVERWHELMINGLY SATISFIED IN INSURANCE

Respondents told us they're
happy with their choice of
insurance as a career.

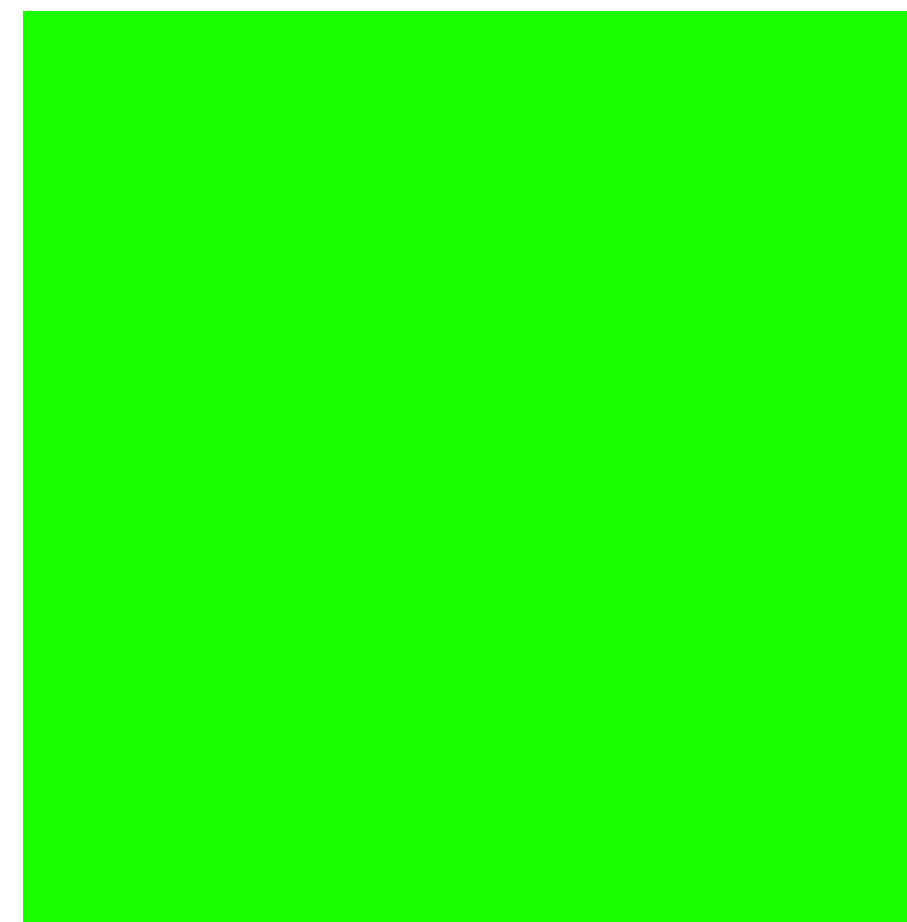
72%

are very or
extremely satisfied



94%

are at least
somewhat satisfied



Only

1%

say they're not
at all satisfied



“

I value the impact we have on people's lives – giving them financial protection and peace of mind when the unexpected happens, and helping them recover when it does.

”

EMPLOYERS FALLING SHORT ON WHAT MATTERS MOST

PROBLEM

Employers are delivering on many fronts. Respondents said employers were meeting expectations when it comes to flexibility, work-life balance, values and using their skills.

But when it comes to the priorities that matter most to them, the gaps widen. The numbers may not look large, but they strike at the foundations of confidence in a long-term career.

Falling short here plants a seed of doubt — and that doubt can open the door to deeper frustrations, as we’re about to see.



KEY TAKE-OUT

High satisfaction masks important gaps which create the conditions for re-evaluating insurance as a career.

PAY ATTENTION TO RETENTION

Nearly a third of respondents said it's likely they'll leave the industry, a warning that retention is as urgent as attraction.

29%

don't see themselves staying in the industry

16%

actively looking

13%

considering moving soon

Even among those who said they're extremely or very satisfied, 11% are looking outside insurance for their next move.

That apparent contradiction — satisfied, but still thinking about leaving — is the paradox at the heart of this report.

WHY THEY SAY THEY'LL LEAVE

When asked what their reasons for considering leaving the industry were, three factors rose to the top.

57%

said their own work lacks connection to a larger purpose

41%

pointed to pay and benefits not being competitive with other industries*

It's not that people doubt the value of insurance as an industry. They recognise its role and impact.

38%

cited the poor public perception of insurance

But when that purpose isn't visible in their own roles, when pay feels uncompetitive, and when public perception of what they do is poor, their satisfaction unravels.

*It's worth noting that this finding may partly reflect the early-career stage of our respondents, or the pay bands of the roles they occupy. Nonetheless, the perception of being underpaid compared to other industries is real – and perception itself drives behaviour.

THE ISSUE ISN'T TODAY'S JOB IT'S TOMORROW'S STORY

People want to see how their day-to-day roles connect to a bigger purpose. They want recognition for their part and to feel proud telling the story.

But they're not getting that. More than half of those considering leaving **(57%)** say their own work lacks purpose or meaning. Add in uncompetitive pay **(41%)** and unclear career progression, and doubts creep in, even when satisfaction is seemingly high.

That disconnect creates uncertainty about the future. Employees may believe in insurance at an industry level, but if they can't see their own place in the story, they start to question whether they belong in it.

Meanwhile, tech and finance recruiters are drawing people in with promises of clearer career paths and faster advancement, making their future look more tangible.

That's why perception matters as much inside the industry as out. If employees don't see a compelling future story in their own roles, it fuels the same doubts that keep young people from choosing insurance in the first place.

KEY TAKE-OUT

The perception problem hasn't gone away. Inside or out, the absence of a clear story makes some doubt their future in insurance.

THE ISSUES ARE RECOGNISED MORE WIDELY TOO

When we asked all respondents how they would make a career in insurance more appealing, their top three areas to improve echo the issues raised by those considering leaving the industry.

- 1 Compensation and benefits
- 2 Improving perceptions
- 3 Career development

“I would focus on modernizing the image of the insurance industry and highlighting the wide range of opportunities it offers.”



CLOSING THE GAPS THAT COST YOU TALENT

STRATEGY

The gaps uncovered in this report aren't abstract – they're costing insurance businesses real people.

For employers, each departure comes at a high price. Gallup estimates that replacing an individual can cost between **50-100%** of that person's annual salary once you include recruitment, onboarding, training, and lost productivity.

To compete, firms must address the frustrations that push employees away and amplify the positives that make them stay. Or other industries will continue winning the talent insurance needs to thrive.



GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

Without these hygiene factors, attraction and retention will always falter.

Address practical concerns

Pay and benefits (compared with other industries) were the number one improvement employees said would make insurance more appealing, and was cited by **41%** of those considering leaving the industry. If businesses don't address this, purpose alone won't keep people.

Connect roles to purpose and progress

Employees want to see how their day-to-day work makes a difference, and where those roles can take them. Too often, they see the industry's broader purpose but don't feel it reflected in their own jobs. Unless purpose and progression are made tangible at the role level, doubts about the future creep in even when satisfaction is high.



SHIFTING PERCEPTIONS OF YOUR BUSINESS THROUGH YOUR BRAND

This is the bigger opportunity. Insurance already delivers on purpose, variety, and impact – but the story isn't being told.

Almost half of respondents **(49%)** said the industry should talk more about helping people and making a social impact. The positives exist – employees recognise them – but they're not seeing them promoted enough outside the industry.

The task now is twofold: tell a stronger story externally, and equip employees internally to carry it.

Externally

Use employer brand and recruitment campaigns to recast your business as a place where careers have purpose, growth and impact.

Internally

Keep telling the stories to equip your people with the language and information that helps them advocate for a business they're proud of.

KEY TAKE-OUT

Insurance doesn't need a new story. It needs to tell its true story better. And every business can start by amplifying the positives their people already feel.

WHY BRAND MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

RATIONALE

Changing perceptions and telling stories is what brands are built to do. Yet few commercial insurance businesses use their brands this way — even though competitors in other industries do. In insurance, brand isn't a nice-to-have. It's a must-have for growth.



FROM TALENT STRATEGY TO GROWTH STRATEGY

A key driver of growth in insurance is buying in people, teams, and businesses. That means you're not just competing for clients, but also for reputation and respect across the industry.

In this environment, focusing on brand is more than a talent strategy. It's a growth strategy. Being the business people want to work for delivers a competitive edge: attracting the best talent, strengthening culture during integration, and making you a more attractive partner in the market. And when employees are proud of where they work, that pride carries through to the customer experience.



Think longer term

Brand building can no longer be left at the margins or expected as a hopeful byproduct of other marketing initiatives.

It needs its own focus, goals, and metrics. While formal brand tracking (reporting on awareness, consideration, preference, associations) is commonplace in other industries, it's rare in commercial insurance. But businesses can start by monitoring simpler proxies as they invest in brand building.

Measuring what matters

— Visibility and demand

Are people seeking you out? Track share of search, branded search, direct traffic.

— Reputation and influence

What is the industry saying about you? Monitor social media share-of-voice, sentiment, earned media value.

— Talent impact

Are more people applying to join and staying once they do? Measure applicants per role, time to fill, staff turnover.

Brands are built over years, not months. Payback typically begins between years two and three. CEOs and CFOs should consult with their marketing and HR leads now on how to treat brand building as a multi-year initiative.

KEY TAKE-OUT

In insurance, brand must be more than branding. Done right, it can be the lever that shapes talent, reputation, and growth.

THREE STEPS TO BECOMING

THE BUSINESS EVERYONE WANTS TO JOIN

SOLUTION

Recasting your business to be the one people want to join takes more than policies and pay. It takes a clearly articulated brand, rooted in truth, told imaginatively and consistently inside and out.





REDEFINE YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

Establish what makes your business a place people want to join. Align what talent values most with what you offer to create an employer brand that can effectively attract and retain them.

HOW FREE CAN HELP

Through research, discovery, and workshops, we can help you develop an employer brand platform, messaging and talent campaign framework that your marketing and HR teams can put to work immediately.



DELIVER THE STORY

Turn that platform into a visible, consistent story that connects purpose, growth, and impact to the roles people actually do so careers in your business feel real and rewarding.

HOW FREE CAN HELP

We can help you find that big campaign idea and create all the elements that bring it to life. From recruitment marketing to internal advocacy, together we can get your story out there and keep building it.



KEEP IT ALIVE

Ensure your employer brand delivers over the long term. Measure what matters, track shifts in perception, and refresh the story so it stays relevant, consistent, and fresh.

HOW FREE CAN HELP

We can help you track brand health indicators, which together with your talent pipeline metrics and our ongoing talent research, directs how we evolve your campaigns and improve effectiveness.

THE ULTIMATE ADVANTAGE IN A TALENT-CONSTRAINED INDUSTRY.

For firms looking to become more attractive to industry talent, peers, rivals and investors, this work we recommend isn't cosmetic.

Brand building strengthens culture, makes integration smoother, and elevates your reputation in the market. The result is a stronger business. One that attracts talent, retains it, and stands out as a partner of choice.

FROM SATISFACTION TO ADVOCACY

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

CONCLUSION

The inside story is clear. Professionals are satisfied, motivated, and positive about their work. But a surprising number are uncertain about staying. Satisfaction alone won't keep them.





FREE

Last year's report showed us how insurance looks from the outside. Invisible, misunderstood, often dismissed.

This year's findings reveal the inside: a workforce that values purpose, impact, and growth, but doesn't always see those promises connected to their own roles.

Meanwhile, tech, finance, and other sectors are actively targeting insurance professionals with the promise of clearer career paths and faster progression. If businesses don't invest in telling a compelling story, they will keep losing ground to competitors who sell the future better.

The winners will be the businesses that act first. The ones that turn their impact into advocacy, and visibility into a competitive advantage.

For leaders, the message is clear. Solving the talent crisis isn't just about people policies. It's about brand, and those who act now will own the future of the industry.

At FREE, we help insurance businesses turn inside truth into outside advantage. If you want to become the business people want to be part of, let's start the conversation.

A BIT MORE ABOUT FREE

FREE is the brand-building creative agency dedicated to insurance.

We help UK and US businesses across the chain turn complexity into powerful narratives.

The industry’s talent problem is primarily a perceptions problem. Our role is to help businesses reshape how they’re seen inside and out.

Since 2012, we’ve helped ambitious businesses create distinctive brands and high impact campaigns that get results.

If you’re looking to attract talent, strengthen your reputation and unlock growth, let’s talk.



HOW WE CAN HELP YOU?

Our strategic consultancy and creative services have been developed over the years to deliver immediate impact, and sustainable growth.

Outstanding brands

Brand vision, mission and values

Brand naming

Brand positioning

Brand identity

Brand messaging

Brand behaviours

Environment design

Website design

Website copy

Tone of voice

Brand guidelines

Standout campaigns

Audience research

Competitor research

Value propositions

Creative concepts

PR

Messaging

Advertising and content

Video scripts and production

Event design

Employee value propositions

Employee engagement

GET IN TOUCH

To start attracting more talent into your business, get in touch with Lorraine and let us put a proposal together for you.

lorraine@freebrands.co

[LinkedIn](#)



THERE'S METHOD IN OUR METHODOLOGY

Approach

This study captures the views of 321 early-career professionals (0–5 years in the industry) working in carriers, brokers, MGAs, and InsurTechs across the UK and US. Responses were weighted to provide a 50:50 balance between the two geographies, ensuring a representative view of the two largest and most mature insurance markets.

By focusing on those who have already chosen insurance, the research offers a valuable “inside view” that complements last year’s findings on external perceptions.

Questions explored their motivations for joining the industry, their day-to-day experiences, their satisfaction levels, and their future intentions.

Sample

The survey responses represent a broad spread of roles and businesses within the UK and US insurance markets. While the size and composition of the sample give us confidence in the findings, voluntary surveys always carry a risk of self-selection bias, as those with stronger views may be more likely to respond.

Ethics

Participants were recruited via an online panel and completed the survey independently. They were informed about the purpose of the research and assured that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential. This approach helps to ensure honest and unbiased feedback.

THANK
YOU

Together we can beat
the insurance talent crisis.

FREE