

Outlook: Seattle

Business Profiles

The Advantage Group™

The Strength of a Large Insurance Agency, the Attention of a Small One

The call came in at 12:40, while Gary Niehl was eating lunch. A client's dry cleaning plant was on fire. Putting his sandwich aside, Niehl drove across town to the building, which was now fully engulfed in flames. Within minutes, he had completed the paperwork. The insurance claim was being processed even before the fire was out.

"I didn't think twice about rushing over there," says Niehl, a partner with The Advantage Group (TAG). "We do things like that. Our customers deserve nothing less."

With 15 independent local offices in western Washington – and customers throughout the Pacific Northwest – TAG is the 16th largest insurance broker in the area, according to the *Puget Sound Business Journal*. From auto and homeowners insurance to medical benefits, retirement plans, business, farm and marine insurance, with a deep specialty in contracting, TAG represents more than 25 of the strongest insurance companies in the United States. As such, it has the resources and connections to obtain the most comprehensive, affordable coverage for virtually any business or personal insurance need.

"We're not a typical agency," says Executive Director John Carmody. "TAG customers truly get the best of all worlds. We combine the sophisticated capability of a large agency with the personal attention of a small, community-based agency."

Take, for example, the woman whose husband died recently from an aneurysm. Ernie Meier, a manager with TAG, had been handling the man's business coverage,

but his life insurance was through another agency. Even so, Meier helped the widow sort things out.

"I felt I had an obligation to help," he says. "That's what insurance is all about – TAG partners work hard to be trusted advisors."

That kind of neighborly concern is prevalent at The Advantage Group. In an industry that has received its share of negative publicity, TAG is working to change perceptions, by doing what's right, not just profitable. From the front desk to the corner office, every staff member at every agency adheres to the highest principles.

"We hold ourselves to a high standard," says manager Dean Smiley. "We have a fiduciary obligation to look out for every client, whether they are big or small."

"We're not 1-800-who-cares?" adds Vern Cohrs, a manager. "We're local in each of our communities, and customers know how to reach us. They're not just a number. They're a name and a face."

Treating people right breeds loyalty and generates new business. It also attracts new partners who share TAG's customer-first philosophy, and believe cooperation is more important than competition.

"TAG is looking to expand its membership. All of our partners are autonomous, and help one another," says Bob Wallin, supervisor of The Advantage Group. "Our combined premium volume gives us considerable carrier respect and influence that benefits our customers. Successful, growing, profitable agencies and their clients will find a TAG partnership a very rewarding experience."



"Successful, growing, profitable agencies and their clients will find a TAG partnership a very rewarding experience."

— Bob Wallin, CIC, CIA.
Founder and Supervisor

Blaine Insurance

Blaine, WA • 800.795.7301

Bob Wallin Insurance

Bellingham, WA • 800.562.8834

Insurance Now

Bellingham, WA • 360.676.4749

Magas Insurance

Bellingham, WA • 800.274.4569

Cornerstone Financial Services
Mount Vernon, WA • 800.894.3608

Duane Sammons Insurance Center

Bellingham, WA • 800.676.0090

Durney Agency

Hoquiam, WA • 800.690.0905

Durney Agency

Ocean Shores, WA • 360.289.3727

Eric N. Wagner Insurance

Marysville, WA • 360.653.3737

Meier Insurance

Bothell, WA • 800.258.7600

Niehl Insurance Agency

Bellevue, WA • 800.261.7365

Northwest Insurance Group

Seattle, WA • 206.932.2500

Rich Haynie Insurance

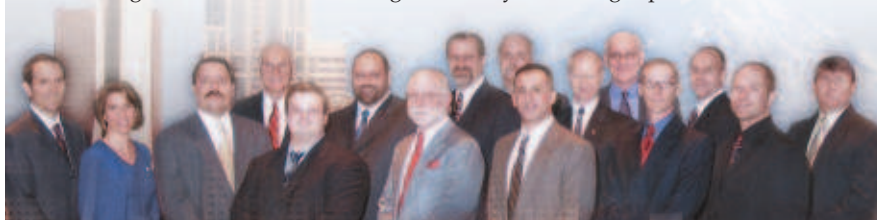
Seattle, WA • 800.688.7016

Smiley Insurance Services

Mount Vernon, WA • 800.210.2224

Vic's Insurance Center

Woodinville, WA • 800.254.7969



ADVANTAGE

GROUP, LLC

Insurance choice

For more information, visit www.the-advantage-group.com.