



Don Verdicanno, Producer at Blumberg & Associates, in the company's Baton Rouge, La., office.

## AGENT, DON VERDICANNO, BELIEVES EQUAL SERVICE FOR EXISTING AND NEW CLIENTS IS THE KEY TO BUSINESS SUCCESS

**D**on Verdicanno has spent the last four decades in the insurance industry, relocating to four different cities over the course of his career. Today, Verdicanno is happy to call Louisiana—and Blumberg and Associates—home. It wasn't always

easy, relocating and learning the ropes at a new company, but all the experience he gained learning through each company's different business approaches, has given him one key insight— "You've got to take care of your accounts." Verdicanno has spent the last 10 years as a producer with

Blumberg and Associates, a full-service insurance agency with three locations in Louisiana specializing in mid to large commercial accounts. Much of Blumberg and Associates business is largely concentrated in the East Baton Rouge, Livingston, and Tangipahoa parish areas,



Don Verdicanno (right) with one of Blumberg & Associates' owners, Jeanette Canchola (left), in front of the Baton Rouge, La., office.

but the agency has business throughout the rest of Louisiana, as well as Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Florida.

After a long tenure in the insurance industry, Verdicanno has a lot of proud moments, but he takes the greatest pride in the accounts he's had the opportunity to serve. Although he's relocated quite a bit, he is blessed to have an account that's been with him since the very beginning of his career.

"Their grandfather signed with me, then their kids, and now their grandchildren," said Verdicanno. "It's been very special and I thank God every day. I'm looking out for them, but it sure feels like they're looking out for me."

A strong, meaningful relationship is what Verdicanno strives for with each of his clients, but as a younger producer, he struggled with the "hunger" to close new accounts. He recalled a time when he started with an agency and quoted 40 new accounts, but didn't close any. At the time, he didn't understand what he was doing wrong and wondered if he just wasn't cut out for the industry. A manager who really believed in him offered this advice: Always follow through and do your very best. Ready to try again, Verdicanno adjusted his attitude and a few months later he closed his first account. That same year he became the lead producer. Verdicanno also reflected on an anecdote that same manager shared to demonstrate the importance of each and every customer.

"He put two dollar bills in front of me and said 'The dollar on the left is a renewal client and the one on the right is a new client.' He then asked 'What is the difference between the two?' It was clear there wasn't a visible difference and my manager said, 'Exactly. There is no difference.' He went on to explain that your new client has the potential to grow you, but your renewal client is your base and if you want to grow, it's just as important to take care of your foundation."

Verdicanno said that lesson reminds him to serve his clients to the best of his ability regardless of whether they are existing or new—everyone gets the same level of service.

Part of Verdicanno's success during his 10 years at Blumberg and Associates has been the culture of the agency itself. For Verdicanno, working in a service industry means the work you do is never done until your client is completely taken care of. Although he works hard, he knows his colleagues at Blumberg and Associates are willing to help when there are particular challenges with an account.

"The owners, Barry Blumberg and Jeanette Canchola, are straight shooters and very easy to work with," said Verdicanno. "When I need assistance on an account, they're always there to consult and give me a different opinion." That sort of work relationship is important because the service they provide is unique to the client they are working with. "No two accounts have the same exact challenges, so it's good to have partners with different experiences and viewpoints." Verdicanno believes his decision to join the agency 10 years ago was one of his best moves, and he has no regrets.

During the Great Flood of 2016 in Baton Rouge and surrounding areas, Verdicanno recalls the challenges they faced as their own agency took on two feet of water. "Our office flooded, but since we have two other offices, all of our calls were forwarded to those two locations," said Verdicanno. "Our staff commuted to those offices every day with no complaints. It was outstanding how we were able to rally and get back up as quickly as we did to be there for our policyholders."

Much like his praises of the culture at Blumberg, Verdicanno feels the service minded staff at LUBA Workers' Comp is what sets them apart. He says they are always helpful with the claims process, and they treat their policyholders very well. "I find LUBA's staff to be extremely

responsive and responsible, and you see that all the way from the top down. I know I can call anyone there and they will pick up the phone and help."

In taking good care of his clients, Verdicanno also strives to help his policyholders with loss prevention. "LUBA is willing to provide free loss control consultations to help protect their employees and save them money in the process. It's very important that we can offer that," said Verdicanno. "Loss prevention is key, but I know firsthand that LUBA has a great claims department should the unfortunate occur." When asked about his strategy in helping policyholders with claims, Verdicanno said, "Do not procrastinate. Address it, do it right, and move on."

Today, Verdicanno says he stays motivated because it makes him happy to help people. "As I've gotten older and more experienced, I find myself acting more as an advisor instead of a sales person," said Verdicanno. "I get a great deal of satisfaction when I get to help someone with an insurance question, even if they aren't a client." 