



BY RICK MCCORMICK

# What Kind of People Are We?

When a customer encounters a true F&I professional, they are pleasantly surprised and the level of trust leads to open discussions and great outcomes for everyone involved.

*“Successful people are always looking for opportunities to help others. Unsuccessful people are always asking, ‘What’s in it for me?’” – BRIAN TRACY*

**F&I managers are egotistical, self-centered, inconsiderate, and deceptive.** That is how we are portrayed in every type of media from sitcoms to cartoon strips. However, the top performers of our profession couldn’t differ more from that. Therein lies much of their strength to enable more customers to see the value of the products we offer. When a customer encounters a true F&I professional that is a caring individual with a genuine interest in them and an ability to make the process fun, they are pleasantly surprised, and the level of trust leads to open discussions and great outcomes for everyone involved.

Here are four characteristics of the kind of people that are successful in our profession.

**1 THEY ARE MODEST AND EXHIBIT HUMILITY.** You read it correctly. Great F&I managers don’t brag about their talents or how they can do the impossible. Most of the time you will find them bragging about how their customers make wise decisions and how other members of the team are a big part of their success. It is just like interviewing a quarterback after a great victory. They always brag about the offensive line, the great receivers, the defense, and special teams. I have watched sports for more than 50 years, and I have never heard a successful quarterback brag about themselves.

**2 THEY ARE CONSCIENTIOUS AND LEAVE NOTHING TO CHANCE.** Researching, studying, practicing, and seeking feedback from others are a part of their daily routine. They know that leaving the results to chance creates a path to laziness and a process that is filled with pressure tactics and partial truths. Anything to get something sold. Conscientious F&I managers are always looking for more effective ways to help customers make good decisions that will positively affect their ownership experience. They provide insight, which is something you cannot get online and can only get from an expert. That expertise is wanted and appreciated.

**3 THEY ARE EXTREMELY CURIOUS.** They always want to learn more. Every time they run into an uncertain objection they don’t know how to overcome, it triggers an urgency to re-



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search and find information that will make them more prepared the next time they encounter it. If a credit union sells a service contract to a customer that replaces the one we sold them, they want to know exactly what plan they are offering, as well as its limits, strengths, and weaknesses. Not so they can undermine the credit union, but rather so they can make sure their customers get the best coverage. They provide detailed information to customers, not generalities that smell like exaggeration.

**4 THEY ARE HIGH ACHIEVERS.** They set high goals every month that stretch their abilities, demand laser-like focus, and build the intent to make it happen. They know every day how they are tracking in relation to their goals and are always honest with themselves. They know that the person responsible for their production everyday is themselves, and blaming others is something they don’t allow. They are committed to consistent improvement and the work needed to make it happen.

I have met multitudes of F&I champions across the country over the last 15 years, and these characteristics are what sets them apart. We all have bad days, and even a bad month occasionally. However, our customers deserve our best, and we deserve the fruits of giving it our best. Count me in with those that know we must consistently improve, and let’s change the perception of what kind of people we are, one customer at a time. ■

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rick McCormick is the national account development manager for Reahard & Associates, which provides customized F&I training for dealerships throughout the U.S. and Canada. He has more than 20 years of auto retail and finance experience.