

# Business Insurance

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## SPOTLIGHT Readers Choice Awards

### BI readers head to the ballot box to pick the best in the business

*Business Insurance's* 2007 Readers Choice Awards recognize the best overall commercial insurance industry companies in 11 categories.

2007 marks the third year of this award program. *BI* launched the Readers Choice Awards in 2005 to let readers vote for the companies that they believe offer the best combination of service, value, quality and innovation.

The categories are:

- Best admitted property/casualty insurer.
- Best employee assistance program provider.
- Best employee benefit consulting firm.
- Best insurance wholesaler.
- Best managed care organization.
- Best property/casualty reinsurer.
- Best reinsurance intermediary.
- Best retail brokerage.
- Best risk management consulting firm.
- Best surplus lines insurer.
- Best third-party claims administrator.

This year, *Business Insurance* partnered with Erdos & Morgan Inc., an internationally respected business-to-business market research firm, to devise an electronic ballot and tabulate the results. *BI* invited readers of the news magazine

as well as *BusinessInsurance.com* to cast their votes on confidential ballots. Balloting closed June 13, and the results were tabulated and analyzed to determine the winners as well as runners-up.

To view profiles of this year's winners as well as those in the previous Readers Choice Awards competitions, please visit [www.BusinessInsurance.com/ReadersChoice](http://www.BusinessInsurance.com/ReadersChoice).

## Investing in employees pays off

### Crawford & Co. Inc.

1001 Summit Blvd.  
Atlanta, Ga. 30319  
800-241-2541;  
Fax: 404-845-3142  
[www.crawfordandcompany.com](http://www.crawfordandcompany.com)

Crawford & Co. Inc. is experiencing a rebirth of sorts, thanks largely to a commitment to improve client service by investing in its employees.

"We're coming back stronger than we ever were before," said Tom Crawford, president and chief executive officer of the Atlanta-based third-party administrator, which has been voted best TPA in *Business Insurance's* 2007 Readers Choice Awards.

"There was a period of time in the late '90s where we failed to invest in our associates in the way we should have," Mr. Crawford said.

"If you've got service or quality issues, it usually comes from leadership and leadership's lack of knowledge about the importance" of a company's employees to the success of the organization, Mr. Crawford said.



The TPA has been working hard to overcome its "slippage in the '90s," and "the feedback we get from our clients is that there has been an amazing change in the quality of Crawford," he said.

Since he joined the TPA as its president and CEO in 2004, the company has made strides in enhancing connectivity between senior management and employees under leadership of Mr. Crawford, who is not related to the family that formed Crawford & Co.

For example, every two weeks, 10 employees—from new hires to 20-year veterans and from adjusters to administrators—are invited to the executive offices in Atlanta to meet with Crawford's senior officers and address any pressing questions. It's vital that every Crawford employee "know what we're doing, why we're doing it and where we are going," said Mr. Crawford.

And the TPA is looking to go big places.

It's already reaping the benefits of its purchase last year of Plantation, Fla.-based Broadspire Services Inc., the largest acquisition in Crawford's 66-year history. The deal more than doubled the company's revenues from self-insured clients. Broadspire, which was merged with Crawford Integrated Services last October, reported 2006 revenues of \$367 million from self-insured clients. Broadspire was ranked the second-largest TPA according to *BI's* 2007 ranking in February.

In addition to expanding in scale, the company intends to grow its diversity of offerings. While its core business will remain centered on claims management, the TPA will eventually expand to call centers and legal claims administration, such as class action settlements, Mr. Crawford said.

But regardless of size, Crawford plans to stay committed to its workforce. "There is nothing stronger to a company than its associates," Mr. Crawford said. "Investment in people is not a short-term project."

—By Rupal Parekh

### Crawford & Co. Inc.

2006  
REVENUES: \$900 million

2006  
EMPLOYEES: 10,000



'The feedback we get from our clients is that there has been an amazing change in the quality.'

Tom Crawford,  
president and CEO