



MYTHBUSTING: Tips for Selling Personal Umbrellas to Every Client

By [April Shrewsbury](#), Big "I" Umbrella Program Manager

We may not have a TV show, but here at Big I Advantage®, we enjoy our own type of insurance "mythbusting." Here's a common myth we're about to bust:

- **MYTH:** A personal umbrella is something I only need to offer to wealthy customers.
- **TRUTH:** Because anyone can be sued, everyone needs a personal umbrella.

Both agents and insureds are guilty of thinking that a personal umbrella is only for the wealthy, but that couldn't be farther from the truth. Here are several ways to help your customers understand that they need an umbrella even if their last name isn't Gates or Rockefeller.

TIP #1: Explain in layman's terms what an umbrella is...an affordable way to protect themselves if someone sues them for more than what's covered by their basic policy. Make it simple and don't use insurance jargon that leaves your customer glassy-eyed.

TIP #2: Provide real life examples ([such as these](#)) of claims that have impacted "the average Joe". Most people would purchase an umbrella if they truly understood its value in a personal, relatable way.

TIP #3: Clarify that a single judgment can exceed their savings, the value of their home and other assets...putting their FUTURE earnings at risk. Renters are especially vulnerable to judgments that garnish wages and future earnings.

TIP #4: Advise that an umbrella covers defense costs. Besides the threat of a costly judgment, your customer will also have to pay to defend themselves, even if the suit is frivolous. A defense attorney may charge anywhere from \$100 to \$800 per hour...but a personal umbrella pays defense costs in addition to the insured's limit of coverage.

TIP #5: Show that an umbrella is an affordable way to obtain a lot of coverage. Depending on the insured's location, a Personal Umbrella averages just \$250 in premium...that's just \$20 per month for \$1 million in personal liability protection. You can quote an umbrella in just two minutes at www.iiaba.net/RLI.

Armed with these simple tips, you'll find it easier to write more personal umbrellas, thereby protecting the customers who trust you, increasing client retention, and guarding yourself against "failure to offer" E&O claims. Keep in mind that you have access to the IIABA-endorsed RLI Personal Umbrella, which offers limits of up to \$5M (\$1M in NM) and excess UM/UIM nationwide. Obtain a quote today at www.bigmarkets.com or at www.iiaba.net/RLI.

