



11500 Northlake Drive, Suite 305
Cincinnati, Ohio 45249-1662
Phone: 513-791-0303
www.wardinc.com

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Ward Group Recognizes 2008 Ward's 50 Top Performing Insurance Companies

The list of Ward's 50 top performing insurance companies was released by Ward Group, a consulting firm that specializes in the insurance industry and the leading provider of benchmarking and best practices services.

Annually, Ward Group analyzes the financial performance of insurance companies domiciled in the United States and identifies the top performers in both the life-health and property-casualty segments. This group of top performers is called the Ward's 50 for the year. Each Ward's 50 company has passed all safety and consistency screens and achieved superior performance over the five years analyzed. Over 3,000 property-casualty insurance companies and over 850 life-health insurance companies were included in the analysis.

Over the last decade, the insurance industry has changed dramatically with new technology, changing customer and employee demographics and increasingly competitive market conditions. "It is important for companies to remain focused on meeting revenue goals while maintaining an efficient operating model that enables them to meet customer demands," explains Jeff Rieder, President of Ward Group. "The best companies excel at balancing expense management, technology deployment and customer service." The Ward's 50 property-casualty insurance companies produced an 18.7% return on average equity from 2003 to 2007 compared to 14.6% for the property-casualty industry overall. The Ward's 50 life-health insurance companies produced a 17.5% return on average equity from 2003 to 2007 compared to 13.1% for the life-health industry overall.

The Ward's 50 benchmarks are available in *Ward's Results*, an insurance industry financial reference series. For a complete list of the 2008 Ward's 50 companies and to learn more about the Ward's 50 and Ward Group operational benchmarking and consulting services, visit www.wardinc.com.

For more information, contact:
Betty Cornelius
513.791.0303
bcornelius@wardinc.com

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