

CASE STUDY

ESPN-Style Recognition Show

From Office Walk-Arounds to Broadcast-Quality Content

American Income Life / Globe Life · 2019 – 2022

John Hays · Social Media Manager · portfolio.johnphays.com

2 Phases

Campaign Evolution

Facebook & Instagram

Platforms

Editor → Manager

Role Progression

High Share Rate

Agency-Wide Reach

Overview

What started as a straightforward assignment became one of American Income Life's most-shared social content series. I was tasked with producing monthly Top-10 recognition videos, and I shaped how they looked, who was featured, and how they were edited. As I moved into the Social Media Manager role, I reimagined the entire format into an ESPN SportsCenter-style broadcast production — complete with scrolling tickers, side-panel graphics, and a studio desk. The series took off and was shared widely by agencies across the division.

Challenge

- **Low-impact recognition format:** The division's monthly Top-10 recognition — celebrating top-performing agencies and agents — was delivered as static lists or basic announcements. It didn't generate the excitement the achievements deserved.
- **Missed engagement opportunity:** Recognition content has natural shareability (people love celebrating wins), but the existing format wasn't designed to be shared or talked about on social platforms.
- **Audience expectations:** American Income Life's field force skews sports-passionate. The recognition format didn't match the energy or competitive culture of the audience it was meant to motivate.

Phase 1: Office Walk-Arounds (Social Media Editor)

I was tasked with producing the monthly Top-10 recognition videos. I decided how to execute it — choosing to film divisional leaders in their offices reading the results on camera, then shaping everything in post-production.

- **Production ownership:** I selected which leaders to film, scheduled the shoots, and handled all filming and post-production solo.
- **Post-production in Premiere:** Edited video in Adobe Premiere Pro — adding subtitles with agent first names, dollar amounts, and rankings. I intentionally omitted last names to preserve privacy while still making the recognition feel personal.

- **Immediate upgrade:** Even this first version was a significant step up from static lists. Putting real leaders on camera added authenticity and made recognition content something agencies actually wanted to share on their social channels.
- **Proof of concept:** The format's engagement validated that recognition content could be a high-performing social series, not just a routine announcement.

Phase 2: ESPN SportsCenter Format (Social Media Manager)

After being promoted to Social Media Manager, the company invested in a green-screen studio. I saw the opportunity to completely reimagine the recognition series and conceived the ESPN SportsCenter-inspired format.

- **Creative vision:** I conceived the SportsCenter concept — leaders at a broadcast desk, scrolling ticker along the bottom with agent names and performance data, side-panel graphics with stats and rankings, and broadcast-style opens and lower-thirds. The format matched our audience's sports-obsessed culture perfectly.
- **Collaborative execution:** The video team shot the studio segments with divisional leaders at the desk, working from the concept. My social media team then handled post-production — building the broadcast graphics package, ticker animations, and rankings overlays to complete the finished pieces.
- **Broadcast-quality output:** The finished videos looked and felt like real sports television. Opens, lower-thirds, scrolling tickers, and polished graphics turned routine monthly recognition into must-watch, prime-time moments.
- **Scalable production:** Once the graphics template was established, the team could produce new episodes each month efficiently — swapping in fresh data and leaders while maintaining the broadcast-quality look.

Results

● Agency-Wide Sharing

The series was shared widely by agencies across the division on their own social channels. Being recognized in a broadcast-quality format motivated agents and agency owners to amplify the content publicly, dramatically extending organic reach beyond company-owned channels.

● Elevated Team Credibility

The production quality changed how the division — especially agency owners — viewed the social media team. It signaled that social wasn't just a posting function but a creative partner capable of producing high-impact content. The team earned significantly more respect and trust across the division as a result.

● Recurring Engagement Driver

The monthly cadence created anticipation. People looked forward to each episode and engaged consistently, providing a reliable anchor for the content calendar.

- **Template for Scale**

The format became a reusable production template, enabling the team to deliver broadcast-quality content monthly without reinventing the creative each cycle — critical while managing 25+ channels across 6 divisions.

My Role: IC to Leader

Phase 1 (Social Media Editor):

Videographer

Editor

Producer

Phase 2 (Social Media Manager):

Concept Creator

Creative Director

Team Lead

This campaign illustrates my growth within a single project. In Phase 1, I was given the assignment and made all the production decisions — who to film, how to shoot it, and how to shape it in post. I executed every piece solo. In Phase 2, I brought the creative vision for the SportsCenter upgrade, and the video team and my social media team brought it to life at a level that wouldn't have been possible alone. The shift from doing all the work to leading the creative direction — while trusting my team with execution — is how I approach social media management.

This project was part of a broader content strategy that contributed to growing Globe Life's social reach from **<1M to 14M+** across all channels during my tenure, while scaling the social media team from **3 to 9** members.

Tools & Production

- **Video:** Adobe Premiere Pro (editing, subtitles, graphics, ticker animations)
- **Graphics:** Adobe Photoshop (broadcast overlays, lower-thirds, branded templates)
- **Scheduling:** Hootsuite (cross-platform publishing and analytics)
- **Project Management:** Adobe Workfront (cross-team coordination and delivery timelines)
- **Platforms:** Facebook, Instagram (optimized for feed and story formats)

Learnings & Takeaways

- **Improve what you're given.** Phase 1 was an assignment, but I owned the creative decisions that made it work. That track record of elevating routine content earned the trust to push bigger ideas in Phase 2.
- **Match the format to the audience.** Knowing our field force was sports-obsessed made the SportsCenter concept resonate immediately. Actively understanding your audience opens up creative directions that feel obvious in hindsight.

- **Recognition content is engagement gold.** People want to celebrate and be celebrated. Giving them a format worthy of their achievements turned passive viewers into active sharers and turned recognition into a content pillar.
- **Build for your team, not just yourself.** Designing the Phase 2 format as a repeatable template meant the team could own monthly production — essential when managing 25+ channels across 6 divisions.

John Hays · johnphays@gmail.com · (972) 672-6856 · [linkedin.com/in/johnhays](https://www.linkedin.com/in/johnhays) · portfolio.johnphays.com