

The Collector Chronicle

NORTH AMERICAN RECOVERY

NOVEMBER 2016

Utah, Colorado, Idaho, & Ohio's
Collection Authority

LAST MONTH'S LUCKY WINNER

The lucky winner of our client prize for October is Foot & Ankle Clinics of Utah. They have been using our agency since 2015!

We will be sending Becky an Amazon gift card. Enjoy!



THIS MONTH'S PRIZE

This month we will be giving away a gift card to Texas Roadhouse!

Each client who sends new accounts during the month of November will have their name entered into a drawing. At the end of the month, we will draw a name. If it's yours, you'll win the prize.

Don't miss out on your chance to win.
Send new accounts in November!
Good Luck!!



SEND US EVERYTHING

BY DAVID J. SAXTON
PRESIDENT, NORTH AMERICAN RECOVERY

Every time we start collecting for a new client they ask, "What documents do you need when I assign an account?" So this month I thought I would discuss this topic.

The answer is: *everything*.

If we receive everything up front, we will do a much better job collecting the account quicker. What is everything? Start with a complete itemized statement of all charges, payments, and adjustments. We also need a copy of all applications and signed financial agreements.

The following list should be the minimum demographic information you collect from every consumer (and of course, it's the information we need when you assign the account):

- Full legal name: this includes first name, full middle name—not just the middle initial—last name, and any suffix (Jr., Sr., II, III, etc.). We don't want to be collecting from John Doe Sr. when we should be collecting from John Doe Jr.
- Social Security Number
- Date of Birth
- Name of employer (including the employer's address and telephone number)
- Marital Status and spouse's name
- Spouse's employment information (including the company's name, address, and phone number)
- Driver license number
- Home address and telephone number
- Cell phone number
- Name, address, and phone numbers of two relatives not living with the consumer
- Previous address (if at current address for less than one year)
- Email address

These are the minimums. You can always ask for more, but as long as you "collect" the information listed above, it's a good start. Most of you likely gather this information already; however, the email address is a relatively new addition to a person's identifying information and may have been overlooked by some.

With the recent growth of social media websites, blogs, personal websites, and other online sites, most people now have a very extensive online identity. When

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someone creates an account online, their email is connected in one way or another. Providing us with a consumer's email addresses does more than just give us another means to contact them, it connects us with their online accounts and any useful information they may have posted. A consumer's email address has become the number one most important piece of skiptracing information you can provide.

While initially sending the aforementioned information is the ideal way to assign an account, we realize that it may not be practical for some clients. It is important, however, that you send as much information as possible up front.

Now the question becomes: When should I collect this information? The answer is: the day the consumer walks into your business for the first time. Even though this isn't the most obvious place to think about a potential collection account, it is by far the most important exchange you will have with the consumer. If you don't collect enough information during your first contact, you may not have the opportunity to do so when they stop paying.

In addition, since a portion of your consumer base will regularly relocate and change jobs, you should update your records annually or when they ask to increase their credit limit or receive new goods or services. These are perfect opportunities to re-verify all personal information and update anything that has changed.

I realize I'm telling you something you already know, and I understand that sometimes you can't get the information you need. But if the culture in your business is that you always obtain and verify all information, you will be helping the collection process immensely.

In addition to collecting and updating personal information, you should ALWAYS make sure the consumer signed your financial agreement. Acquiring the consumer's signature is critical because people want to see what they signed. Even though we can still collect from a consumer if they didn't sign anything, it's better when we can send the consumer a copy of a contract/financial agreement with their signature on it.

Okay, you've collected personal information and made sure the consumer signed your agreement. But they've stopped paying and it's time to send the account to collections. At this point, you will make copies of everything and send the account to us. We'll start working

the account, and some consumers will inevitably dispute the debt and request verification. Since you've sent us everything up front, we can immediately send the consumer complete copies and continue collecting. (If we didn't have the documents, we would have to stop collecting until we received them from you.) In addition, when we have the documents, we can discuss everything in detail, over the phone instantly. This ability improves our credibility with the consumer and usually results in us collecting the account. When they have access to the complete file, it's much easier for collectors to overcome consumers' objections.

We also need copies of documents when we take legal action. The courts must see the signed financial agreement, and we must provide a copy to the consumer when we serve them with a summons. If we already have the documents when we initiate legal action, all you have to do is update your records to reflect the pending lawsuit. If we don't already have the documents, we put everything on hold, request them from you, and then wait. This ultimately delays the legal process, and that's the last thing we want to do. The legal process is slow enough!

Okay, I think by now you're probably convinced that we need all the documents up front. But what if you don't have any? Well, it's not the best situation, but we've had a lot of success collecting from people who never signed anything. It's difficult, and it takes longer, but it can be done. If you have accounts that fit this description, send them to us and we'll use our best efforts to collect the account.

There you have it. Collect as much personal information as possible and update your records frequently. Then send us *everything* when you assign the account to our office. It may take more time up front, but it will pay off in the end.



The Collector Chronicle is published by NORTH AMERICAN RECOVERY for prospective and current clients. The owner, David Saxton, welcomes your questions or comments.

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