Cupola



Close to the work.

Positioning platform and audience message matrix. One account of who Cupola is, written for the five audiences that need to hear it.

FOR THE EXECUTIVE TEAM AND EVERYONE WHO WRITES OR SPEAKS FOR CUPOLA
DECEMBER 2026

THE POSITION

Specialty casualty from the carrier that learned risk on the shop floor.

POSITIONING STATEMENT

Cupola insures the businesses that make, move and maintain things. For nearly forty years we have covered their workers and paid for what goes wrong on the job. We bring that knowledge of how work is really done to every liability account we underwrite and every program we back.

IT REPLACES

"Protecting the People Who Keep Southern Industry Working"

True in 1994. Today it describes one line, one region and one audience.

THREE TESTS IT HAD TO PASS

- True of all three units, not only the newest
- Short enough for a broker to repeat
- Something a comp agent of thirty years would nod at

THE LINE

Close to the work.

It says where Cupola came from and how it underwrites. It is as true of a loss control visit to a foundry as it is of an audit at a program administrator's office.

Who it is for, and who it is not

For

- Retail agents placing workers' compensation for manufacturers, fabricators, processors and distributors
- Wholesale brokers with primary or excess liability for the same kinds of business
- Program administrators in casualty classes built on skilled service work

Not for

- Buyers who want the lowest price this renewal
- Classes where Cupola has no feel for the work: property catastrophe, commercial auto, professional lines for offices
- Program teams without a record in their class

WHY IT IS TRUE

Six facts carry the position.

Every claim Cupola makes in the market should trace back to one of these. Each is a fact about how the company is built, supplied by management. None is a promise about results.

1987

It started with the workers.

Cupola was formed by Alabama foundries and metal fabricators to insure their own people. It has handled workplace injury claims every year since.

14

Loss control staff who visit the operation.

Fourteen loss control consultants spend their weeks in plants, warehouses and shops. They now support specialty casualty accounts as well as comp.

In-house

Cupola's own people handle the claim.

Workers' compensation and specialty casualty claims are handled by Cupola staff. Program claims are handled by Cupola or by administrators it appoints and audits.

$59M

It gave up premium before it gave up price.

Workers' compensation premium is $59 million lower than in 2021 because management would not follow rates down on accounts it judged underpriced.

40%

It keeps a share of every program.

Cupola retains at least 40% of each program for its own account, reviews each administrator's underwriting on site at least twice a year, and keeps claims and reinsurance decisions.

A-

One financial strength rating covers both insurers.

Both insurers are rated A- (Excellent), stable outlook, as one rating unit, with $312 million of consolidated surplus.

What Cupola does not claim

The fastest quote, the lowest price, the broadest appetite or the newest technology. Others can say those things. Cupola's claim is narrower and easier to prove: its people know the work.

VOICE

Write the way a good underwriter talks.

Plain

Short words and whole sentences. If a foundry owner would not say it, do not write it.

Specific

Name the class, the limit, the state, the person. "Primary and excess liability for manufacturers" beats "tailored casualty solutions".

From the floor

Use the vocabulary of the insured's work where it helps: shift, line, dock, guard, pour. It shows the reader where Cupola has been.

Straight about no

Say what Cupola does not write as clearly as what it does. A fast, clear no is part of the service.

Before and after

HOMEPAGE HEADLINE, 2014 Protecting the People Who Keep Southern Industry Working	→ HOMEPAGE HEADLINE, 2027 **Close to the work.**
APPETITE SHEET, 2025 Cupola Specialty is an A- rated non-admitted carrier offering creative solutions for hard-to-place casualty risks.	→ APPETITE PAGE, 2027 **Cupola Specialty Casualty writes primary and excess liability for manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors. Wholesale brokers only.**
DECLINATION EMAIL, TYPICAL Unfortunately this risk falls outside our current underwriting appetite at this time.	→ DECLINATION EMAIL, 2027 **We do not write lithium battery products, so this one is a no. If the insured's other lines need a home, send them over.**

Words we use, and words we leave out

SAY	DO NOT SAY
Program administrator	MGA partner, unless the firm is one in law
Surplus lines	Non-standard, non-admitted carrier, E&S paper
Wholesale brokers only	Select distribution
We do not write that	Outside our appetite at this time

NAMES, PAPER AND RATING

The approved wording.

These lines are used exactly as written. They are owned by Cupola's legal and compliance staff, who approve any change. Marketing keeps them in every template so nobody has to retype them.

USE	WORDING
Company name	Cupola
Unit names	Cupola Workers' Compensation. Cupola Specialty Casualty. Cupola Programs.
Descriptor	Specialty casualty, workers' compensation and programs.
Entity line Every page, sheet and email footer	Workers' compensation is underwritten by Cupola Employers Insurance Company, an admitted insurer. Specialty casualty and program business is underwritten by Cupola Specialty Insurance Company, a surplus lines insurer.
Surplus lines notice Wherever specialty or program business is described	Surplus lines policies are placed through licensed surplus lines brokers and are not protected by state guaranty funds.
Rating statement	Cupola Employers Insurance Company and Cupola Specialty Insurance Company are rated A- (Excellent), stable outlook, as one rating unit.
Access, Specialty Casualty	Wholesale brokers only. Retail agents, please work through your wholesaler.
Access, Programs	Each program is underwritten by an independent program administrator within Cupola's guidelines.
Appetite caveat	This is a summary of appetite. It is not a quote or a commitment to offer terms, and underwriters decide each account on its own facts.

Three rules

- Never write "Cupola Specialty" on its own. Use the unit name or the full company name.
- Never state the rating without naming both insurers.
- Update the rating statement on the day of any rating action, and not before.

Who signs off what

Legal and compliance: entity line, surplus lines notice, rating statement. Underwriting: every statement of appetite, limits and terms. The CEO: the position and the line. Marketing writes, maintains and applies all of it.

MESSAGE MATRIX, PART ONE

What each audience needs to hear first.

	RETAIL AGENTS	WHOLESALE BROKERS	PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS
What they are asking	Is Cupola still committed to workers' compensation, and to me?	What do you write, on whose paper, and who do I send it to?	Will you be here in five years, and how will you treat my authority?
Lead message	Same underwriters, same claims people, same login. A shorter name for the company you already know.	Primary and excess liability for manufacturers and distributors. Wholesale only. Search the class and you will know in thirty seconds.	Bring us a program you know better than we do. We keep a share, we audit properly and we plan to stay.
Proof	$193 million of workers' compensation. In-house claims. Fourteen loss control consultants.	Published classes, limits and minimums. An underwriter who decides. One rating for both insurers.	Five programs since 2024. At least 40% retained. On-site reviews twice a year.
What we ask of them	Keep sending the accounts you send now. Tell your insureds nothing about their policy has changed.	Check the finder before you send. Send the submission to the unit address.	Start a conversation through the Program Partners page.
Where they meet it	Letter before launch. Agent login page. Agents' Conference.	Launch bulletin. Appetite page. Quarterly appetite update.	Program Partners page. Partner update. Bylines on delegated authority.
What we never say	Anything suggesting comp is the old business.	"Creative solutions", "hard-to-place", or any appetite an underwriter has not approved.	"Capacity", as if Cupola were lending its paper. Any promise about approval or timing beyond the published steps.

MESSAGE MATRIX, PART TWO

The audiences that judge the whole company.

	EMPLOYEES AND RECRUITS	REINSURERS AND RATING ANALYSTS
What they are asking	What is this company becoming, and is there a place in it for me?	Does management have a coherent account of the business and where it is going?
Lead message	Cupola is one company with three ways of doing the same thing: insuring work it understands. Comp built it. Specialty is growing it.	A casualty carrier with a disciplined workers' compensation book, a wholesale specialty book built by experienced teams and a small number of closely supervised programs.
Proof	280 people, two offices, three units. Premium up from $252 million to $420 million since 2021.	Premium by segment, line and issuing company, reconciled and reported the same way every quarter.
What we ask of them	Use the name, the templates and the entity line. Send good people our way.	Nothing. Finance leads these conversations. Marketing supplies consistent materials.
Where they meet it	Staff note from the CEO. Unit sessions. Careers page. LinkedIn.	Meet Cupola overview. The website. Trade coverage.
What we never say	That any unit is the future and another the past.	Anything about results, reserves or capital that Finance has not supplied.

Boilerplate

ABOUT CUPOLA, 25 WORDS

Cupola insures the businesses that make, move and maintain things, through three units: Workers' Compensation, Specialty Casualty and Programs. It is based in Birmingham, Alabama.

ABOUT CUPOLA, 60 WORDS

Cupola is a specialty casualty carrier built on four decades of workers' compensation. Formed in 1987 by Alabama foundries and metal fabricators, it now writes workers' compensation through retail agents, primary and excess liability through wholesale brokers, and casualty programs with independent program administrators. Cupola is based in Birmingham, Alabama, with a specialty casualty office in Atlanta.

Boilerplate is always followed by the entity line, the surplus lines notice and the rating statement from the approved wording table.