

Game Changer

ALIGNED Insurance is changing the industry with its fee-for-service brokerage model

In 2001, I was involved in a serious automobile accident and was sued for \$2.2 million. That was pretty life-changing for me and really opened my eyes to what this industry is all about, which ultimately is helping people at times when they need it most. At that point, I started to investigate the industry a little bit further. I was getting close to finishing university and made the decision that I wanted to join the industry. I joined Aon in 2004 as an associate broker. I was actively pursuing numerous professional designations and quickly transitioned into an associate account management role, which gave me a feel for the client side of things—something I definitely fell in love with. In 2007, I joined Marsh and spent seven years there. Those were critical years for me, working on some of the largest accounts in the country, learning D&O and E&O—really, all product lines—in a very intense, technical setting.

I ultimately decided to start ALIGNED because I believe that the client is looking for a better insurance experience. I thought I could build a model that added more value, was a bit more nimble and was really focused on educating and informing clients. I launched ALIGNED in March of 2014. We're a 100 percent commercial lines brokerage, working in all industries and all product lines. There are really 18 points that differentiate ALIGNED—our core value proposition—but the cornerstone of that is our fee-for-service model. We start our conversations with prospects and clients by discussing what they would like from their broker and the cost of the services that they will receive. We offer multiple packages that they can select from, based on their individual needs. It's something that clients haven't heard before and it's a different way of doing business. I believe that clients are increasingly sensitive to buying on a value basis. The ALIGNED way of doing business is a very transparent and clear way of articulating that to them. For brokers, if they haven't historically been getting or winning opportunities selling on price, maybe this will resonate with them. And we believe it will help our team win more business.

We're now working to build our team of producers. The thing that's started a lot of conversations with some of the top brokers across the country is our unique ownership model. I hesitate to use the word "franchise," but I've basically built ALIGNED to offer a brokerage-in-a-box to lead operators and brokers who are entrepreneurial, want to operate under the ALIGNED brand and believe in our way of doing business. We'd take care of a lot of the "administrative" aspects of running a brokerage and a limited number of people can have 100 percent ownership of their own company and then take advantage of the support services that we offer. We're currently in conversations with a number of people in Ontario, Alberta, B.C. and Quebec. Five years out, my goal is to have branches operating in every province across the country, with a vision to eventually launch into the U.S.—that's the plan. **TB**

—As told to Regan Reid



Company:
ALIGNED Insurance
President & CEO:
Andrew Clarke