

## The Alliant Difference

**COMPANY BRIEF** *With a history dating back to 1925, Alliant Insurance Services (alliant.com) is one of the nation's leading distributors of diversified insurance products and services. Operating through a national network of offices, Alliant offers a comprehensive portfolio of services to clients.*



**Adriana Duenas, Senior Vice President, Alliant Insurance Services and Co-Founder, Women at Alliant ERG**

**Will you provide an overview of your role and key areas of focus?**

I am a Senior Vice President and Producer at Alliant, focusing on employee benefits for mid-market clients.

**What was the vision for creating the Women at Alliant ERG and how do you define its mission?**

Previously I was part of a women's group and in 2016 I wanted to start one at Alliant because I felt it was much needed. Women at Alliant is an inclusive, supportive, and inspiring group of women and Alliant allies. We are a community offering mentorship, leadership, and career development through many resources, workshops, guest speakers, and female-focused activities. In addition, we raise awareness of the unique experience women have in the workforce and celebrate our achievements.

**How are you engaging Alliant's workforce in the Women at Alliant ERG's efforts?**

We recently relaunched nationally. Initially focused on the Midwest region, now we encompass all of Alliant. Our plans include:

- Monthly virtual meetings for now, and as the world reopens, expect in-person meetings as well.
- Quarterly guest speakers to present a variety of topics.
- Mentorship programs.
- Opportunities for small focus groups to help with career development.

**What advice do you offer young women interested in building a career in the industry?**

When I first joined this industry in 1994, I noticed young women would give up because they felt it was a male-dominated environment. However, times have changed, and as I continue in this field I want to see more female representation in the C-suite. Achieving this goal happens by continuing to mentor and guide all women who join our company.

*“We like to say that we are built differently to serve our clients better by continuously building a brand rooted in our culture and aimed directly at our clients' individual needs and business goals.” Aileen Morris*



**Lilian Vanvielt, Executive Vice President, Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, Alliant Insurance Services**

**Will you provide an overview of your role and key areas of focus?**

As an Alliant Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer (DE&I), I create the vision for our DE&I division and oversee the execution of its initiatives across our national offices. My responsibility is also to represent the DE&I needs of our people to the C-suite and represent the company's DE&I division more generally. Guided by over 20 years' experience as a broker at Alliant, my primary DE&I focus is to:

- Separate DE&I from HR as its own division, in line with industry best practices, and create a brand identity that communicates who we are across Alliant.
- Oversee the development of our DE&I strategy and socialize it with stakeholders who then present our vision.
- Co-present key metrics, pain points, and individual barriers confronting our under-represented people to Alliant's leadership.
- Act as the executive director of Alliant's charitable community foundation currently in development.
- Serve as the primary internal and external company spokesperson for all matters related to DE&I.

**How critical is it for the role of Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer to be engaged in business strategy?**

A Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer that is not in line with the company's business strategy will never be able to create meaningful DE&I change within an organization. Therefore, it is immensely critical for the lead DE&I professional to be engaged in business strategy because a successful DE&I plan has to be relevant to an organization's mission, vision, and business objectives. Without this, it can be exceedingly difficult to embed DE&I seamlessly within the organization. It becomes difficult to create a DE&I business case and, therefore, it is challenging to obtain the leadership buy-in needed to ensure top-down support. This support holds everyone accountable for making the necessary changes to propel DE&I within the company.

**How are diversity, equity, and inclusion a part of Alliant's culture and values?**

We do this by cultivating a human-centric culture. By directing our focus to individuals, we transform organizational behavior by promoting allyship, increasing retention and advancement efforts through engagement in our mentorship and forthcoming sponsorship programs, supporting our employee resource groups, and conducting firm-wide unconscious bias training with an ongoing learning component.

**Will you highlight Alliant's diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy?**

At Alliant, our diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) mission is to nurture and sustain an inclusive culture that boosts employee engagement, attracts a diverse talent pool, advances innovative problem-solving for our clients, and allows all our people to thrive. Our six-pillar strategy, outlined below, takes a multi-faceted, metrics-driven approach to promoting DE&I at every level of our organization.

1. Accountability: We believe what gets measured, gets done. We hold ourselves responsible by setting realistic internal and external goals to advance our DE&I mission and establishing systems and processes to keep track of our progress.

2. Culture: By cultivating a human-centric culture, we direct our focus to individuals and transforming organizational behavior by promoting allyship, increasing retention and advancement efforts through engagement in our mentorship and forthcoming sponsorship programs.

3. Representation: By partnering with colleges and universities with historically under-represented student populations to establish risk management internship programs, we continue to nurture the talent pool and broaden student access to the insurance industry.

4. Clients: We take great pride in providing stellar client service that incorporates diversity of thought and representation.

5. Brand Development: As a nationally recognized top insurance brokerage firm, we are keen to leave our DE&I imprint on the wider insurance industry.

6. Community Investment: Both in business and in the world at large, Alliant holds fast to the belief that we can make a difference. It's a commitment we are proud to live out each day in communities across the nation.



**Aaisha Hamid, Assistant Vice President,  
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Manager,  
Alliant Insurance Services**

**Will you provide an overview of your role and key areas of focus?**

As Alliant's Assistant Vice President and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Manager, my role entails managing our DE&I team, acting as a thought leader for the company, and leading efforts to define the vision and direction of our initiatives. My key areas of focus have been to:

- Develop authentic relationships across Alliant to gain a better understanding of the organizational leadership structure, pain points, and potential areas of growth.
- Gather DE&I data, analyze, and communicate important metrics to Alliant's leadership.
- Construct and help execute a data-driven, comprehensive DE&I strategy for Alliant.
- Further develop and create systems/processes to streamline our DE&I efforts.
- Standardize the management of our existing employee resource groups (ERGs).
- Create assessments and benchmarks to measure DE&I progress and our return on investment.
- Develop standardized language for our organizational DE&I collateral and client RFPs, and manage the needs of our ERG leaders, clients, vendors, and internal/external partners.

**How critical is it to have diverse perspectives and experiences at the table when making business decisions?**

Bringing more under-represented professionals to the table and ensuring equitable representation during decision-making has become a business imperative for organizational success, client retention, and revenue growth. When leadership and business development teams are diverse and representative of their clients, it helps foster organizational innovation, increases problem-solving capabilities through diversity of thought, and attracts more talent and business opportunities. In an industry like insurance, where the under-represented populations being served continue to grow, it is vital to ensure that they are served by brokers as diverse as they are.

**How is Alliant making sure that it reaches a diverse candidate pool when looking to attract talent to the company?**

Alliant has existing or emerging partnerships with historically under-represented colleges, universities, and identity-specific insurance organizations (e.g., Women in Insurance, National African American Insurance Association, Latin American Association of Insurance Agencies, etc.) that present a sundry of places to target recruitment efforts. By being strategic in where and how Alliant searches for, nurtures, and develops talent, we

can increase our outreach efforts to attract under-represented professionals to our talent pool. These outreach efforts, combined with our commitment to creating inclusive job descriptions and standardizing our hiring processes, all work to help us increase our diverse talent pools and job candidate slates.

**How important is it to measure the impact and progress of Alliant's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts?**

Measuring the impact and progress of any organization's DE&I efforts is necessary for creating accountability mechanisms that ensure sustainable organizational change. Data and metrics are crucial to driving the DE&I needle forward, and at Alliant we believe what gets measured gets done. In line with this belief, the first pillar of our national DE&I strategy is accountability. In addition to being a signatory of the CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion pledge, we are setting realistic internal and external goals to advance our DE&I mission. We are also establishing systems and processes to keep track of our progress and hold ourselves responsible for creating meaningful change.



**Aileen Morris, Executive Vice President,  
Corporate Marketing and Communications,  
Alliant Insurance Services**

**Will you provide an overview of your role and key areas of focus?**

I oversee Alliant Corporate Marketing and Communications. A day in my life can range from overall brand management, time-sensitive array of executive communications, investor and board communications, M&A-related strategic messaging, corporate department communications and support, and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Philanthropy program messaging – in addition to leading the team in conducting competitive research/analysis, and cross-portal messaging strategy and execution.

**How has brand marketing evolved and what are the key issues that need to be addressed to be successful with brand marketing today?**

The understanding of what a brand is and its role and connection to people has become more evident. Marketing used to separate B2B and B2C audiences, but today we fully understand that there is only the human connection. Brands are multifaceted, beyond a visual design identity and content framework strategy. A brand is all-encompassing. It includes the company's leadership, employees, culture, how it empathetically relates to the clients and communities it serves, and whether it actually does what it says. Expertise, excellent client service, and customer relationships are critical, but a company's actions to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within itself are just as necessary. It's about culture and making sure employees understand and exhibit its values. Visuals and content messaging are only a wrapper to what has to be a truthful story. It's complex for sure, but by not addressing all of these parts, a company risks falling behind competitors who do these things right and win the hearts and minds of their desired demographics.

**How is Alliant using social, digital, print, and other channels to build its brand message?**

The business groups within Alliant have done a great job building out digital content and creating marketing strategies that connect and resonate directly with their target audiences. They understand that you can't just tell people you have expertise. You have to proactively connect with them on an individual level to address their issues and offer guidance and support. It very much is a direct reflection of how Alliant's producers and account teams work with clients every day to help them achieve their business goals.

**How do you differentiate the Alliant brand and what have been the keys to Alliant's industry leadership?**

We like to say that we are built differently to serve our clients better by continuously building a brand rooted in our culture and aimed directly at our clients' individual needs and business goals. It's about recognizing that our story isn't just a blurb on an About Us page; it's something that has real value to our customers and our business. It helps clients understand – beyond the spreadsheets – why their decision to work with us matters. ●