

# The Alliant Difference

An Interview with Thomas W. Corbett, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Alliant Insurance Services

**EDITORS' NOTE** *Thomas Corbett serves as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Alliant Insurance Services and sits on the company's board of directors. He joined Alliant in 1977 as a producer and launched its Newport Beach-based Public Entity Group. Prior to joining Alliant, he was with Allendale Insurance in Los Angeles and spent three years as a loss prevention engineer at Factory Mutual Engineering Association. Corbett is a graduate of California State University, Long Beach, and is involved in various community and charitable organizations.*



Thomas W. Corbett

**COMPANY BRIEF** *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.*

**Will you highlight the history of Alliant and what you feel have been the keys to Alliant's industry leadership?**

Alliant began as a small local operation in the San Diego market and has grown into one of the nation's largest insurance brokerage and consulting firms with a national reach and more

than \$3 billion in revenue. While our organization has undergone extensive changes and evolutions throughout our history, the core component to our leadership has always been in attracting and retaining high-performing individuals from across the industry who are forward-thinking and fiercely independent. Our culture is team-based – you don't have a lot of cowboys riding the range alone. We provide our brokers and service teams with the support and collaboration they need to compete and win on

a daily basis and don't stand in the way of them achieving their goals. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Alliant is a majority employee-owned company where our employees have the unique opportunity to share in the rewards of ownership. We attract the best talent in the business because we provide the opportunity for them to own their successes.

**What is unique about the Alliant culture, and how do you see it playing into the success of Alliant for years to come?**

Keeping our management structure flat has played an essential role in helping us build an entrepreneurial, sales-based culture. We believe in letting great people do great things, and we don't weigh our talent down with unnecessary layers of management and oversight. This keeps the organization dynamic and allows people to

operate at their full potential. The formula is simple: hire great people, provide them with the resources and collaboration necessary for success, then get out of their way and let them do what they do best.

**Alliant's core values are Entrepreneurialism, Service, and Strength. How do you define each of these values from your leadership perspective?**

Our culture of entrepreneurialism points directly to our intrinsic focus on people – attracting talented, creative, and hard-working professionals who don't need continuous management oversight to achieve success. Our people have the freedom to own their successes and make their own unique contributions to the business. Service means understanding that we are nothing without our clients. Everyone thinks of this as a sales business, but the real value we deliver is service after the sale. Our continued growth and retention rates demonstrate that we excel at this part of the business. Strength can be defined in many ways – financial success, geographical reach, size. However, being big isn't great on its own. It's our volume with the insurance companies that makes a true difference in the solutions we are able to deliver. Having the support of our carriers gives us tremendous leverage in delivering products and services to our clients that are customized, cost-efficient, and best-in-class.

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**What do you see as Alliant’s responsibility to the communities it serves and to be a force for good in society?**

We realize that our success as an organization correlates directly with the success of our communities, and we are deeply committed to investing in our local communities and in the health and well-being of the people who live and work in each of them. We achieve this through a strong commitment to supporting local charities and encouraging our employees to play a direct role by providing volunteer time off (VTO) to give back to their community and through corporate giving and matching gift programs.

Alliant supports a broad array of programs nationwide that:

- Support women and minority-owned businesses
- Assist organizations that facilitate the development of on-the-job skills
- Help people with disabilities
- Provide vital services for victims of abuse
- Promote the educational development of children
- Ensure the welfare of the elderly and those in need of additional care
- Promote access to a wide array of crucial resources that promote the general well-being of the community
- Provide direct relief for communities impacted by natural disasters.

We also believe that the future of our industry is directly connected to cultivating diversity at all levels of the workforce, and making a strong investment in diversity, equity, and inclusion plays a direct role in our success. The larger the talent pool, the stronger you become. Having a wide variety of different backgrounds, perspectives, and ideas on our team is a significant competitive advantage and promotes a stronger, more engaged team of professionals. Alliant’s Diversity, Equity & Inclusion initiative takes a broad-based approach to this perspective through partnerships with like-minded organizations, internal employee resource groups (ERGs), and a proactive approach to providing career opportunities for underrepresented individuals in the insurance industry. This approach will help us build a stronger, more dynamic organization today and sets the stage for a better future for our business and our industry.

**How critical has it been to Alliant’s success to build such a strong and experienced management team?**

We have found a significant competitive advantage in building a management team that understands what it takes to get the job done. Our leadership team is comprised of true “insurance” people; men and women who know what it’s like to be in the trenches and have real-world experience leading in client acquisition, service, and retention. This enables them to draw from their own personal experiences as brokers, underwriters, and service professionals to guide

their teams to the best possible outcomes, and when certain challenges arise, they know how to address them from an insurance perspective.

**You joined Alliant 45 years ago. Did you believe in the early days that this would be a company that you would spend your career with and what has made Alliant so special for you?**

When I joined Alliant in 1977, I saw an opportunity to build something that was uniquely different from the usual insurance sales operation. We used this opportunity to open a new geography and shift the organization’s focus to a more specialty-driven business, beginning with the public entity vertical. This set the tone for Alliant going forward, helping us grow into an organization that wasn’t “all things to all people,” but excelled at delivering targeted products and services built around specific industries and disciplines. As we continued down this path, more doors opened, culminating with our purchase of the company in 1998. Prior to this time, Alliant was a family-owned operation. This move enabled us to open up ownership to our employees and continues to serve as the foundation of how we operate today. It opened up the door for growth and expansion and helped us attract the best people in the business. This has been the most rewarding part of my career; building something together and seeing great people thrive. What I value most is the extraordinary people I’ve worked with over the past 45 years. ●

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