



Agent and Broker Interest Group Profile of an Agent

July–August 2020

David Owen

Senior Vice President, McGriff

Years in Present Position: 1

Current role at CPCU Society: Member

Alma Mater: Purdue University

Degrees and Certifications: B.S. Industrial Management



A & B: How did you come to work in the insurance industry? I'm 4th generation in the industry, so it's "in the blood". However, after college, I spent 5 years in corporate finance. Then through a friend, I was introduced to a regional agency to start my career in insurance.

A & B: What is the most challenging aspect of your job? It can be challenging to work effectively with such a variety of personalities. The business is heavily relational and team based. Being empathic to each person's unique needs in a fast paced world can be a challenge.

A & B: What aspect of your work as a broker do you find the most rewarding? Supporting other people. Whether its clients, underwriters or colleagues, I really enjoy supporting and acknowledging other people's contributions.

A & B: How has COVID-19 affected your work life? Initially, I was working from home exclusively. This was challenging with 3 small kids. It was also easy to work nonstop throughout the day. Now I'm back in the office and grateful for the office workday structure. For example, my commute allows me time to better plan each day.

A & B: How has COVID-19 affected your home life? The biggest change has been with our kids' school. Adjusting to virtual learning has been a challenge. We also miss youth sports, Sunday school and Scouting. Fortunately, we found a few great resources with new ways to engage with our kids to continue developing these skills.

A & B: How has COVID-19 affected your clients? In general, our clients' businesses have been detrimentally impacted. Decreases in revenues, CapEx and payroll have been the norm. On top of this, the insurance market is hardening, which creates additional cost challenges for companies.

A & B: In your opinion, what are the biggest impacts of COVID-19 in the future? I fear we may never return to the level of consumer spending and business travel that we saw in 2019. More meetings will be held virtually and more purchases will be made online.

A & B: What do you consider the most important short- and/or long-term issues facing the agent/broker community? Short-term, the hardening market. Long-term, industry talent gap.

A & B: When & why did you become a volunteer leader at the CPCU Society? 2019, as a means to give back to the organization that helped in my professional development.

A & B: Has your involvement in the CPCU Society helped your career? If yes, explain. Yes, it helped expand my professional network, and the membership education opportunities have helped me gain valuable knowledge.

A & B: Who are your top 3 mentors? Why? Ralph Hamm, my first boss, prioritized educational development early in my career. Alec Biele, a senior broker, was patient and giving of his time with me. Alec taught me how to really listen to the customer to understand their needs. Steve Whalley, another peer-broker with 20+ years' experience on me, taught me the ins and outs of Lloyds of London and the importance of building underwriter relationships.

A & B: What is your greatest accomplishment so far? Personally, deepening my faith and leading my family. Professionally, earning clients' trust through hard work and professionalism that have led to decade long relationships.

A & B: What is your favorite book and/or movie? The Bible and a River Runs Through It

A & B: What is the most unusual/interesting place you have ever visited? Kenai Fjords National Park, AK

A & B: How do you balance the responsibilities of yourself, family, work and CPCU? Treat each day as a gift and do the best you can. I use working out as a daily stress relief. I stick to a pretty strict weekly routine and start each day early with quiet, reflective, reading.

A & B: What advice do you have for agents/brokers considering earning the CPCU Designation? Knowledge is power in insurance as much as any industry. You will become more successful, confident, and truncate your learning curve by earning the CPCU designation.

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