

BLOG

Reflecting on 25 Years of Risk Strategies. Proud of our Past. Excited about our future.

By John Mina, CEO

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A favorite African proverb says, *"If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far, go together."*

As Risk Strategies reaches its 25th anniversary, I have been thinking a lot about how that statement reflects why we've been able to achieve so much. We have arrived at this place because we've gone together - the caring, commitment, and tenacity of all Risk Strategies associates.

I've also been reflecting on the importance of this milestone. Anniversaries provide the opportunity to pause and reflect on our journey and recognize the role we have each played in its success. Together we have built Risk Strategies into a billion-dollar company, while maintaining the collaborative, entrepreneurial spirit on which we were founded. As long as we keep moving forward together, we're going to continue to grow and prosper.



Founded with A Vision

A lot has changed over the years at Risk Strategies however, much has also stayed the same. The company was founded in 1997 by Mike Christian, now the Chairman, as a risk management consultancy and alternative to large brokers. It was grounded in some critical principles: an intense client service focus, dedication to offering best risk management and risk financing solutions for clients, and a culture focused on collaboration, communication, and respect.

From day one, Mike sought the best talent in the industry with specialty skills, and a focus on building a thriving and supportive company culture. Collaboration and communications were at the heart of client relations and internal team operations. At first, this was out of necessity, but it's bedded in the company culture and is still there today.

Mike also helped to establish a specialist approach to risk, which created a meaningful value proposition for clients and associates. Our specialist lens continues to guide our success.

Decades of Growth

We've hit some big milestones along the way. We have expanded our focus to 30 industries and insurance solution practice areas. We've grown to be the 9th largest Privately Held US Brokerage with offices, associates, and clients across the country, and have plans to expand globally. We've made over 135 acquisitions, 29 in 2021 alone. And in 2019 we launched One80 Intermediaries as a Specialty Wholesale operation. It's grown dramatically to become the 7th largest top intermediaries in the country.

Reflecting on those early years, it's remarkable to see how much progress we've made. During the first five years our revenue was about \$2M a year. Today, we generate that much revenue every day.

The Power of our People and Culture

As important as our rising revenue is, our mission, values, people, and culture are truly what sets us apart.

Our vision is to be a "destination workplace" that attracts and retains top talent and is a rewarding place to work. We have been recognized as a 'Best Places to Work in Insurance' for the past 4 years in a row. The values that we held dear 25 years ago are the same ones that guide us today. We value the contributions of every person and respect diverse voices, thoughts, and ideas that each associate brings to the table. At a time when many associates work remotely, the importance of these values cannot be overstated.

Every single associate—over 3,700 —embodies our values and carries out our organization's mission each day. We can all reflect on what we've accomplished together, and the momentum we have for our future success. We wouldn't be where we are today without everyone's contribution, and I cannot express my gratitude and admiration enough.

Recognizing Our Clients

As we mark this milestone, we also want to reflect on the many clients and business partners that have helped us to get here. Many of our first clients are still with us and we are deeply appreciative of their years of loyalty. Industrial Growth Partners, for example, has been with us from the very start. To all clients and business partners, know that we are similarly invested in your success and greatly value your trust and partnership.

The Next 25 Years

Many people have been asking me *'What's next for Risk Strategies?'*

The journey to the next milestone will challenge us all to remain change agile as we continue to expand our offerings from the strength of our specialty foundation. I see virtually limitless opportunity. What drives us is our mission to help clients protect those things that matter most to them. And we will accomplish our mission by:

- Being a leader in our chosen industry and product line segments
- Continuing our journey as a large independent specialty broker
- Delivering a superior client experience



That's not to say that our path will remain identical. Increasingly we are finding opportunity in firms that have focused on providing holistic risk solutions to clients encompassing multiple products. Providing insights and having a comprehensive understanding of client needs is a highly desirable skill. Clients face unrepresented risks that are only growing, and we need to be at the forefront of delivering new innovative solutions. We're also looking at firms that work in specialty markets such as clients that want to purchase insurance through technology, firms who service specific age groups like Gen Z or that focus on a particular language or heritage.

Risk Strategies will also continue to invest in the next generation of insurance professionals with internship and emerging leader programs, for example. We want to showcase how exciting and fulfilling careers can be in the insurance and risk management realm and offer advancement opportunities that help young people find their passion. I started out as a file clerk at a brokerage in 1986. Our next CEO could already be within our ranks.

Let's Celebrate

We have incredible momentum, and I'm confident that we will achieve great things with the support of all our associates. Thank you again to all our associates, clients, and partners!

This milestone year will be filled with opportunities for reflection, building connections, and celebrating successes. *Happy 25th Anniversary, Risk Strategies!*

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