Influential Women Profiles Alicia Calhoun: Redefining Risk Strategy Through Resilience And Continuous Learning Today



SPRING, TX, UNITED STATES, September 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- From an Unexpected Start in Insurance to a Leadership Role in Complex Casualty Brokerage, Alicia Calhoun Has Built Her Career Around Curiosity, Resilience, Relationships, and the Courage to Bet on Herself

For Alicia Calhoun, a career in insurance was never something she planned from childhood. In fact, she often reminds younger professionals entering the industry that nobody wakes up one day and decides that insurance is going to become their lifelong career. Her own path reflects that unexpected beginning. What started with one person recognizing potential in her and advocating for an interview eventually became a career centered on complex casualty risks, strategic problem-solving, relationships, mentorship, and an enduring commitment to continuous learning.

Today, Alicia serves as Senior Vice President and Senior Broker at CRC Group, where she leads her own casualty-focused team. Her work centers on sophisticated and often difficult-to-place risks, including energy, oil and gas, environmental exposures, and onshore and offshore construction. Her background encompasses both the retail and wholesale sides of insurance, giving her a broad perspective on how risks are evaluated, communicated, structured, and placed.

Yet Alicia's professional identity extends well beyond technical insurance insights. Relationships have remained central to her approach from the beginning. She is highly engaged with clients, carriers, underwriters, colleagues, and industry peers, while maintaining an active presence as a

networker and thought leader. She is also frequently sought out for insight into accounts outside her direct involvement, reflecting the knowledge and relationships she has cultivated across the industry.

Her philosophy is grounded in a simple but powerful principle: bet on yourself.

That mindset has influenced nearly every significant stage of Alicia's professional journey, from accepting her first opportunity in insurance to pursuing additional education, moving into wholesale brokerage, taking on increasingly complex risks, and ultimately making bold career decisions that required her to step beyond her comfort zone.

A First Opportunity That Changed Everything
Alicia traces much of her career story back to the people who gave her a chance before she had the experience to prove herself.

Jim Watson ultimately hired Alicia, but it was his office manager, Tammy Sherwin-Hanna, who first recognized something in her. Tammy advocated for Alicia and pushed for the interview despite her lack of insurance experience. Without that initial support, Alicia believes she may never have made it into the room.

Jim's personality was unconventional, but his belief in people left a lasting impression. He taught Alicia lessons about relationships, sales, consistency, and the importance of showing up. Perhaps most importantly, he taught her the responsibility that comes with receiving an opportunity: give one to someone else.

That lesson became a recurring theme throughout Alicia's career.

She has consistently looked for ways to extend opportunities to others, particularly emerging professionals who may not yet recognize where their abilities can take them. Her own experience taught her that a single person's belief can change the direction of someone's life. Because Tammy advocated for her when she had little experience, Alicia understands the significance of advocating for others when they are still finding their footing.

Her approach to mentorship is therefore deeply personal. She does not simply view professional development as a matter of titles or promotions. She believes people need opportunities to discover where they fit, what they enjoy, and how far they want to take their careers.

Resilience Rooted In Her Early Life
Alicia's work ethic also has roots well outside the insurance industry.

Born in Mexico City, she came to the United States with her older brother when her parents moved the family in search of opportunity. Both of her parents worked multiple jobs, and Alicia grew up with a strong understanding of what it meant to work hard.

Her childhood also included challenges that could easily have become defining limitations. Alicia was held back in second grade because she did not speak English, could not read, and was diagnosed with dyslexia. A literacy program at her elementary school helped her learn both English and how to read, fundamentally changing the direction of her education and future.

The experience left Alicia with a lasting appreciation for programs that create access to literacy and opportunity. She points to organizations such as the Barbara Bush Literacy Foundation as examples of the kind of support that can open doors for children who are facing obstacles early in life.

Her own story has reinforced a broader belief: circumstances may influence where someone starts, but they do not have to determine where that person ends up.

That perspective continues to inform how Alicia approaches both her professional and personal life. Setbacks, difficult transitions, and unfamiliar situations have become opportunities to learn rather than reasons to stop moving forward.

As one mentor told her, “Don’t let setbacks define your story. Let them refine it.” Alicia has carried that message throughout her career, viewing some of her most difficult moments as experiences that ultimately strengthened the person and professional she became.

A Career Built On Continuous Learning
Alicia’s approach to insurance has always involved asking what comes next.

After obtaining her P&C license, she continued pursuing professional education, earning the CIC, MLIS, CRIS, and CRM designations. For her, education is not simply about accumulating credentials. It is a way to remain relevant in an industry where conditions can change rapidly.

She regularly reads industry material, speaks directly with underwriters about market conditions, and actively seeks new information. That curiosity is particularly important in casualty insurance, where emerging litigation trends, economic conditions, regulatory developments, and changing risk profiles can alter the landscape.

Alicia believes complacency has no place in insurance. Professionals need to continually reinvent themselves because the industry is influenced by so many external forces. What worked yesterday may not be sufficient tomorrow.

That mindset has helped her develop a technical perspective that extends beyond simply placing coverage. She approaches insurance through the lens of risk management, constantly looking for hazards, potential problems, and possible solutions.

For clients dealing with highly specialized or difficult risks, that way of thinking can be

particularly important. Complex accounts may require more than a standard solution. They can require a broker who understands the details, knows how to communicate those details effectively, and can engage with the market to find an appropriate strategy.

Navigating An Increasingly Complex Casualty Market

The current casualty environment presents exactly the kind of challenge that suits Alicia's approach to the industry.

She identifies rising loss costs and an increasingly complicated risk environment as major concerns. Social inflation, nuclear verdicts, expanding litigation funding, and aggressive plaintiff strategies are changing how liability risks behave, particularly within Excess Liability and Auto Liability.

Pricing can create another layer of complexity. Even when pricing appears to stabilize or soften, the underlying severity of losses remains a concern. That disconnect can create pressure for carriers, brokers, and insureds trying to make informed decisions.

At the same time, Alicia observes that the insurance market has increasingly fragmented into micro-markets. Capacity and appetite can vary substantially from one segment to another, even within the same account.

As a result, traditional or "standard" solutions may no longer be enough.

Program structure, risk differentiation, contract analysis, and the way a risk is communicated to underwriters can all play an important role. Clients need strategies that reflect the market as it exists today rather than relying on assumptions based on previous market conditions.

For Alicia, this environment creates an important opportunity for professionals who are willing to engage deeply with the details.

The broker's role can extend far beyond renewing a policy. It can involve helping clients think through retention, limits, risk financing, contractual considerations, and the broader implications of their insurance decisions.

That requires technical knowledge, but Alicia believes it also requires communication and relationships.

Understanding a risk is one thing. Being able to explain why the risk deserves consideration, identifying the right markets, and communicating effectively with underwriters are equally important parts of the process.

Relationships Remain At The Center

Despite the technical nature of her work, Alicia has never viewed insurance as a purely

transactional business.

Relationships are one of the strongest threads running through her career.

She has developed a broad professional network that includes clients, carriers, underwriters, colleagues, and industry peers. Her annual crawfish boil in Louisiana has become one expression of that relationship-focused approach, providing an opportunity for clients, underwriters, and colleagues to connect outside the formal structure of business.

Her strong engagement extends into the digital space as well. Alicia is highly active on LinkedIn and ranks among the top tier of social engagement within her professional network. She uses writing and thought leadership to share industry perspectives and remain connected to a broader professional community.

That visibility has helped establish her as someone people turn to for perspective, even when she is not directly involved with a particular account.

For Alicia, networking is not simply about collecting contacts. It is about developing genuine professional relationships and remaining connected to the people who make the industry work.

That philosophy also explains why she places such importance on showing up consistently.

Creating Space For Different Career Paths
Alicia believes one of the greatest misconceptions about insurance is that there is only one way to succeed.

In reality, the industry contains an enormous range of career paths. Professionals can work in personal lines, property, casualty, retail, wholesale brokerage, underwriting, claims, adjusting, marketing, account management, or production.

For someone entering the industry, that range can initially feel intimidating.

Alicia encourages young professionals, particularly young women, to give themselves permission to explore. Someone may begin in one position and eventually discover that another area suits their strengths better.

She has mentored individuals who progressed from receptionist roles to account management, while others have discovered an interest in marketing or production. Some professionals want to move rapidly through the organization toward account executive, inside broker, or production positions. Others are perfectly suited to account management and find fulfillment there.

Alicia believes there is room for all of them.

Her message to young women considering insurance is straightforward: go for it.

The industry may seem intimidating from the outside, but once someone gets their feet underneath them, they can begin identifying where they belong. The goal is not necessarily to follow someone else's definition of success. It is to find the path that fits.

Betting On Yourself

The willingness to step outside her comfort zone has been one of the defining characteristics of Alicia's career.

She does not pretend that bold decisions are always comfortable. Some of the most significant moments in her professional life have involved uncertainty and fear. Her transition to CRC Group represented one of those moments, requiring her to trust herself and move forward despite the unknown.

For Alicia, growth often begins precisely where comfort ends.

She encourages younger professionals to become their own biggest cheerleaders. Nobody else can completely take responsibility for another person's career. Individuals have to advocate for themselves, pursue opportunities, develop their skills, and make the decisions necessary to move forward.

Her advice is closely connected to another principle she repeatedly emphasizes: protect your name.

Alicia tells her children to protect their name and always give back. Reputation, relationships, and integrity can follow a person throughout an entire career. Just as she benefited from people who opened doors for her, she believes professionals should remain willing to open doors for others.

Protecting Peace While Pursuing Growth

Alicia's values extend beyond professional achievement.

She places considerable importance on protecting her peace and refusing to allow other people's opinions to dictate her sense of self. She encourages people to focus less on what they think someone else thinks about them and more on how they feel about themselves.

That philosophy reflects the confidence she has developed through years of navigating uncertainty.

She has learned that fear does not necessarily mean a decision is wrong. Sometimes it simply means the decision requires courage.

For Alicia, courage has often meant putting one foot in front of the other, even when the destination was not completely clear.

Her risk management mindset follows her everywhere. She describes herself as someone who naturally looks for hazards and solutions, even outside the professional environment. The same instinct that helps her navigate complicated insurance risks also shapes how she approaches everyday challenges.

There is a certain irony in that perspective. Alicia works in an industry designed to prepare people for uncertainty, yet her own career has repeatedly required her to embrace uncertainty personally.

She has responded by staying curious, learning continuously, relying on relationships, and trusting herself.

A Career Defined By Resilience And Opportunity
Alicia Calhoun's story is ultimately one of opportunity meeting preparation.

Someone gave her a chance when she had no insurance experience. She worked hard to make the most of it. Mentors taught her lessons that became foundational to her approach. Her parents instilled a work ethic that stayed with her. Education helped her overcome early challenges. Professional certifications expanded her technical knowledge. Relationships opened doors. Difficult moments tested her resilience.

Through each stage, Alicia continued moving forward.

Her work at CRC Group reflects the culmination of those experiences: technical casualty knowledge, strategic thinking, relationship-driven business development, market awareness, and a willingness to tackle difficult problems.

She is also committed to ensuring that the opportunities she received do not stop with her.

Alicia continues to mentor emerging professionals, encourage young women to pursue opportunities in insurance, and advocate for the idea that there is a place in the industry for different personalities, skills, and ambitions.

Her own career demonstrates why that matters.

There was no predetermined path from a young girl learning English and reading in an elementary-school literacy program to a senior leadership role in complex casualty brokerage. There was simply a series of opportunities, decisions, challenges, relationships, and moments when Alicia chose to keep going.

Today, she approaches the insurance industry with the same curiosity that has carried her throughout her career. She continues to study the market, speak with underwriters, analyze risks, cultivate relationships, and look for solutions to difficult problems.

And she continues to encourage others to do what she has done herself: step outside the comfort zone, show up, learn continuously, protect their reputation, give back, and bet on themselves.

For Alicia, success is not defined solely by the position someone reaches or the business they generate. It is also reflected in the people they help, the relationships they maintain, the opportunities they create for others, and the imprint they leave behind.

That perspective has shaped her professional journey from its earliest days, and it remains central to the way she approaches the next chapter.

Learn More about Alicia Calhoun:

Through her Influential Women profile, https://influentialwomen.com/connect/alicia-calhoun

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