

Coughlin gets creative with partnership that fits

Coughlin Insurance and C.W. Pooles & Company in unique alliance

"In the next 10 years, there will be all kinds of changes within the insurance industry, with continuous consolidation and more aggressive competition – and we're going to be part of it."

With those words, **Ken Coughlin** summed up the reasons behind the recent business partnership involving his brokerage, Coughlin Insurance, and C.W. Pooles and Company (owned by **Carol-Ann Borody-Siemens**). The partnership allows Coughlin Insurance to 'expand its brand' both within the industry and to the commercial insurance buying public. For Carol-Ann, it allows her brokerage to expand its home policy business and her, personally, to focus on the area of insurance in which she is most interested – Life and Disability. In short, it's a win-win situation for all concerned and a partnership that, simply put, is the right fit.

Both brokerages are family businesses. Coughlin Insurance has been in business for 35 years, since May of 1971, when Ken's father, Guy, started the Winnipeg-based enterprise, which has grown into a brokerage with two sites (Taylor Avenue and Regent Avenue). Today, Guy can still be found in the Coughlin Insurance offices, although Ken and his brothers Bob and Brian oversee the brokerage's day-to-day affairs.

C.W. Pooles is located on Portage Avenue and was started in 1937 by the brokerage's namesake, Cecil William Pooles. He eventually sold the business to employee Walter John (W.J.) Borody. W.J.'s daughter, Carol-Ann, assumed control in 1991.

The history of these two businesses formed the basis of the new partner-

ship. According to Ken, "Our fathers did business together and that tradition has continued. Over the years, our families became more than business acquaintances – we became friends. At

partnership became official."

When asked if the transition has been a smooth one, Ken chuckled and said, "For the most part, it has been very smooth. The first day, however, the fax

machine broke and we lost our printer connection. We were left shaking our heads for awhile, wondering if the insurance gods were against us, but these problems were quickly ironed out."

He added, "The offices are integrated, but we work with two different networks. The staff members at all three sites have been wonderful. They are totally behind this partnership and see the greater opportunity in being part of a larger brokerage entity."

What does the future hold for C.W. Pooles / Coughlin Insurance? "I consider our new partnership a 21-employee start-up company," said Ken. "In my view, we are just getting started. Five years ago, no one knew who we were. Then, about three years ago, we invested considerable time and resources into our advertising efforts and, today, the industry and consumers alike, recognize Coughlin Insurance. We plan to get even more creative in the future, and we're

always looking for new opportunities that could turn into something more profitable." (Editor's note: Something along the lines of the C.W. Pooles-Coughlin Insurance partnership, no doubt.) #



(L-R) Bob, Brian & Ken Coughlin

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social functions, the conversation would inevitably shift to business. That's what happened with this recent move. Over the last Christmas season, our families first discussed the notion of a partnership. We continued to talk and toss ideas around and, on June 1 of this year, the