



SIDEDRAWER™

Case Study

Meet Bernie & Alex from Cove Continuity Advisors

Creating space to breathe by doing insurance right.

Space to Breathe®

sidedrawer.com



We sat down with Cove Continuity Advisors' Founder & Head Advisor Bernie Geiss, and Planner & Technologist, Alex Liber, to understand how SideDrawer solved their document management needs.

Who is Cove Continuity Advisors Inc.?

Cove Continuity is a Canadian life insurance brokerage agency, specializing in life, disability, and critical illness insurance and advisory services. Cove uniquely promotes an environment that's centered on transparency, accountability and its stakeholders. While these phrases are becoming more commonplace now, they have been the foundation upon which Bernie established the firm over 35 years ago. By placing a high priority on openness, accountability, and education in their work, Cove seeks to eliminate the negative connotations associated with the insurance sector, to help clients better understand insurance and purchase it with confidence. A good and healthy workplace is created by their distinctive culture of stress-free living, which permeates all their work with customers and partners. Through this differentiated ethos, Cove's approach to helping families takes centre stage and aligns perfectly with their objective to "help families find space to breathe."



Naturally, Cove takes a critical and objective approach to identifying the appropriate insurance needs and products for their clients. They begin by assessing their clients' situation, then going through a process of careful preparation. This helps to educate and inform clients so they can fully understand the insurance products, but also make informed purchase decisions because they understand the benefits that the products may provide. This strategy prioritizes treating clients like partners and valuing their relationships over quick commercial deals. Above all else their clients are free to make decision without the fear of pressure and coercion.

Bernie Geiss

Since beginning his career as an insurance advisor in 1987, Bernie has worked to acquire a distinctive perspective on the insurance industry and focus Cove's internal operations around a strong culture of transparency and accountability. Planning, examining possibilities, evaluating their efficacy, putting them to the test, and communicating the results to motivate others to take action are some of Bernie's strengths. He loves to plan.

Alex Liber

Alex is Cove's Continuity Planning Associate and Technology Administrator. Given the need to incorporate new technologies into business processes, Alex's role is becoming increasingly essential in the firm's core operations. Alex collaborates closely with Bernie and Warren Campbell, Cove's senior advisors, on case analysis and supports Cove's growing advisor team. Researching, compiling, and arranging data, coming up with solutions, and comparing options choices are some of Alex's specialties. He enjoys planning and doing detailed analyses to choose the best course of action. At Cove, Alex puts these skills to use by assisting and organizing other team members.

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Cove Continuity Advisors Inc. – The Challenge

The process of client engagement, from discovery to sale, is done by every advisor – but the amount of information required for a particular situation can vary significantly. As a result, this has an impact on the scope of the firm’s work product, the recommendation to the clients, and the success in implementing the recommendation.

“The insurance advisor meets with the client and determines what information they need” said Alex, “The more information we can get, the better for the purposes of doing an analysis and figuring out what their needs really are. We’re gathering personal information, like birthdates, how many kids you have, your income, all that sort of stuff. We also need existing insurance policies and wills, and if there’s a business, we need the Buy and Sell agreement, as well. It depends on the client. But the more the merrier as far as information goes.”

Traditional means are essentially live, long, conversations, long PDF forms, or email chains of information going back and forth. Not only is this inefficient, but in today’s reality where email content can be read – it opens up the question around liability and safeguarding client information.

This entire process can be daunting and exhausting for a client. Traditional means are essentially live, long, conversations, long PDF forms, or email chains of information going back and forth. Not only is this inefficient, but in today’s reality where email content can be read – it opens up the question around liability and safeguarding client information.

Bernie mentioned that their desire to start using SideDrawer came down to their company culture and ethos. “As part of our accountability and transparency ethos, we’re always looking for tools that allow us to provide the greatest level of convenience, security, accountability, and transparency for our clients and partners,” said Bernie, “And therefore, we chose SideDrawer.”





"Before, we were using a different file sharing platform called Cloud Advisors," said Alex, "And it was basically like Dropbox, it wasn't as customizable. It just wasn't great. When I came on, I had to take all the stuff that was in Cloud Advisors and move it over to SideDrawer, which was fairly easy. Following that transfer, the SideDrawer implementation was just a matter of starting to use it because it's pretty user-friendly. So, it was fairly simple to then educate our clients about what it is and how it works.

Bernie and the team is always focused on evolving Cove's operations to be as efficient and user friendly as possible, as this has a direct impact on the ethos and the company's culture.

"We do an annual impact report where we report on what we actually accomplish socially and environmentally. We're constantly talking about what we're achieving as individuals, both personally and what we're achieving internally. Our business success is a by-product of the quality of the team's satisfaction on how they spend their waking hours at work," Bernie emphasized. "So, our KPIs are around people's wellness, emotional wellbeing, engagement and outcomes."

SideDrawer – The Solution

According to Alex, implementing SideDrawer was intuitive and easy.

"After the advisors have a meeting with a potential new client, we assign tasks to people," said Alex, "And one of the tasks is always 'to create a SideDrawer, share and request this information, etc.' But then after that, everybody has access to all of the SideDrawers, including the clients' outside advisors, if appropriate. If they need something, they know where to go, they know how to use it."

While sharing platforms are commonplace, the intuitive interface of SideDrawer increased the comfort level of the team with respect to sharing information, as the team and their client can easily retrieve reviews and information at their leisure. While there's always a learning curve to any new tech stack, the design makes managing documents and retrieving data easy, especially for advisors who may not be the most tech-savvy.

Alex also went on to note that Cove uses SideDrawer for communication purposes in addition to document management.

"We don't just use it for information gathering," said Alex, "When somebody has an insurance policy, we also use it for continuing communication. When they get their policy, we upload their policy into SideDrawer. And then we do yearly reports called 'insurance summary reports.' So every year, they're getting one, and it's being uploaded into their SideDrawer account creating a history of everything we've ever done for them in their SideDrawer account."

This is one of the many benefits of using SideDrawer—it's not just ideal for secure document management, but also for communication and having an accessible repository for their clients.

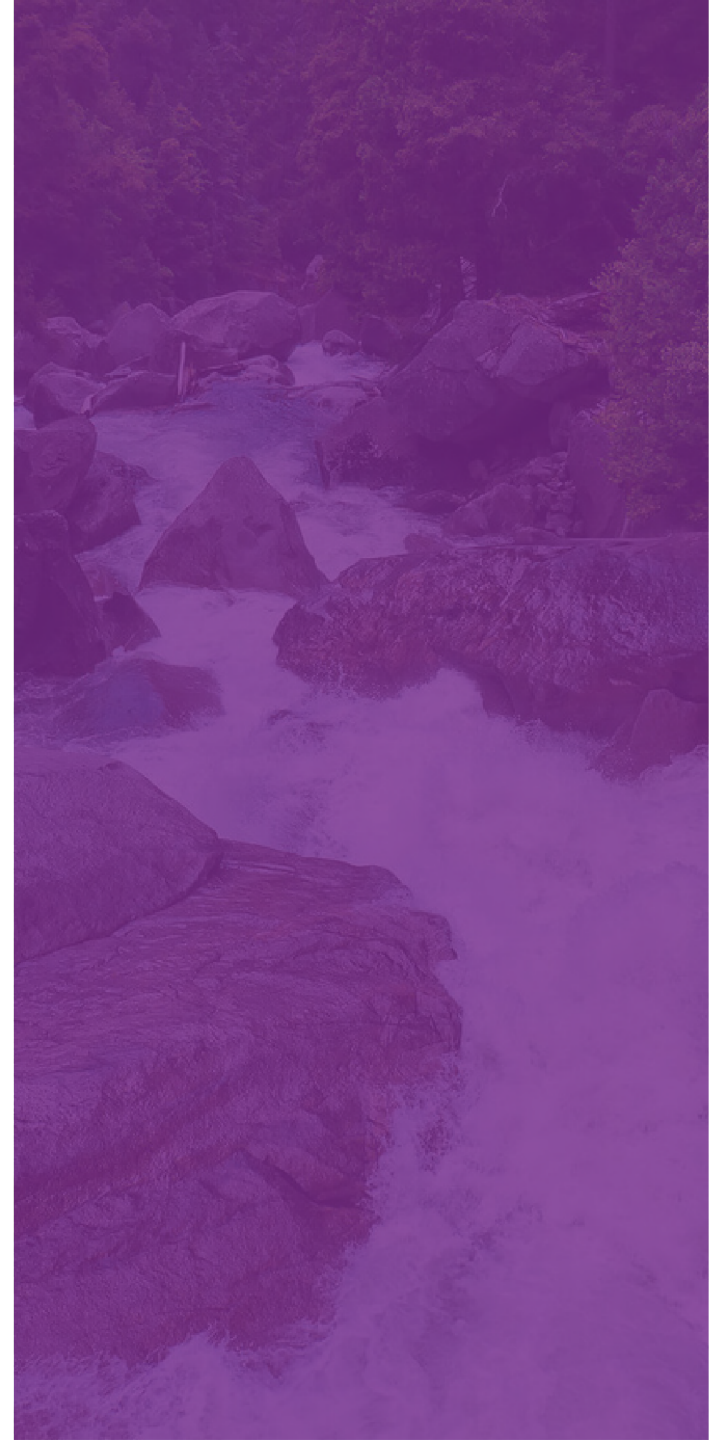
Service matters

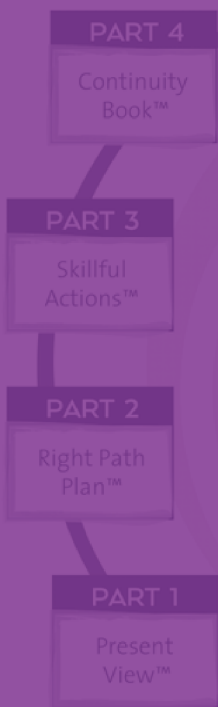
It's a people business, even when it comes to the use of technology. Bernie broke down how he was initially introduced to SideDrawer and what influenced his decision to demo and then implement the software into Cove.

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"We were introduced to SideDrawer through PPI (a leading Canadian insurance MGA)," said Bernie. "The founders of SideDrawer were also a major influence in us deciding to go with SideDrawer because they exude transparency and accountability, which are values we highly regard. This was really important to us – it's about people and our ability to build a relationship that is beyond a simple transaction."

"From the SideDrawer team, we sense a genuine interest in what we want and their personal responsiveness is unique and, well, quite lacking in the tech industry. In the same way we operate in an industry as a bit of an anomaly, I think SideDrawer is a bit of an anomaly in the tech space because very few tech people will talk to you as an equal and the folks at SideDrawer do. The typical feeling I get from tech folks is that they are talking down to us as if we know nothing whereas the folks at SideDrawer don't do that. They exude respect and therefore make us feel valued."





PATH ELEMENTS™

- Right Intentions
- Right Actions
- Right View
- Right Livelihood
- Right Speech
- Right Effort

Cybersecurity concerns are growing amongst clients

Bernie went on to note that SideDrawer solved Cove Continuity's document management concerns, and also addressed the growing need for better cybersecurity solutions across entire tech stacks in the financial and insurance industries.

"SideDrawer has become a very important tool because people are starting to become aware of the risks related to cybersecurity," said Bernie, "Just to give an example - we have one client who's in the tech industry, who, before we started using SideDrawer, complained about using email to share information. We were using Dropbox and tried using SharePoint, as we've always been looking for a secure way of sharing information. One particular client was critical about our approach, more so than anyone before. So to introduce SideDrawer to this client, and have him be satisfied, for us was a huge reinforcement that we're on the right track. We have many clients now that have bought into the SideDrawer platform."

Bernie went on to say that SideDrawer served as a great secure alternative to email and not-so-secure platforms for document management, in addition to being a way to educate clients on the importance of cybersecurity. This, for many organizations in insurance, adds value to the company.

"For us, it's a way to educate on cybersecurity, and highlight its importance," says Bernie, "It's a way to keep our data safe, and prevent a data breach that would negatively effect our clients. It proves that we care, and that we're willing to take the extra steps in order to ensure their security as well as ours."



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What is SideDrawer?

SideDrawer is a cloud platform that provides financial advisors and individuals services to ensure online document sharing security. It is designed as a physical filing cabinet but with amplified safety. As a result, it benefits organizations and their clients by reducing expenses, time, and resources.

SideDrawer is the perfect solution for organizations dealing with confidential information through email. Financial advisors can send and receive sensitive documents without the risk of forwarding them to the wrong person. Additionally, SideDrawer is protected with several firewalls to secure clients' data completely. Therefore, it is an excellent alternative for financial advisors and their clientele.

In a nutshell, SideDrawer is the solution to all documentation problems. It presents a unique opportunity to increase work efficiency using better workflow, all-in-one-place digital document storage, and virtual problem solving faced by financial advisors. This helps promote a better user experience.

Excited to know what SideDrawer can do for your business?

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