

Insurance companies go virtual, reduce office cost

Mobile app bringing revolution in non-life insurance claim process

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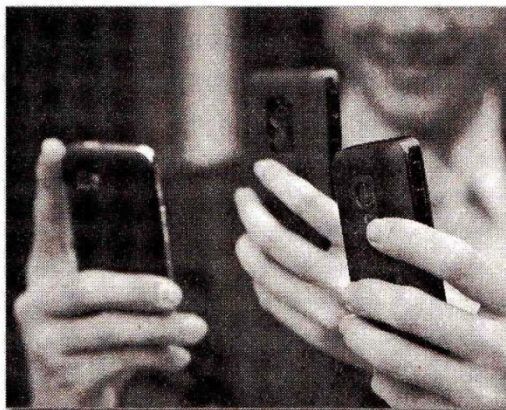
Chennai

INSURANCE companies are going virtual and mobile. With the help of technology, insurers are connecting better with agents and customers and cutting down office infrastructure. Technology not just helps them serve customers better and faster, it also helps them penetrate faster into smaller cities and towns at minimal cost.

"We have developed a new website, which is mobile compatible, to do surveys and instant settlement of motor claims. We have also developed an android application for our agents to issue policies through their mobile phones and tabs," said Aditya Sharma, head of direct marketing, web sales, travel, retail health and home insurance, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance.

Bajaj Allianz has portals for intermediaries to manage day-to-day activities such as policy issuance, renewals and claim settlement. "We have also developed a mobile app for our customers to help them get renewal notice, renew and buy policies along with reporting claims," he added.

Cigna TTK Health Insurance too has moved into the mobile space. "The mobile app helps the agents issue policies immediately. The data dissemination and management too has become efficient with the app,"



HANDY: Companies are doing away with brick and mortar model of offices and launching virtual workplaces through tabs and mobiles

said Sandeep Patel, MD and CEO of Cigna TTK Health Insurance.

"Mobile app is bringing a revolution in non-life insurance claims process. Mobile applications are automating lot of established claim settlement processes. Due to this, the claim settlement turn around time is going down sharply. The basic driver of developing claims apps matches seamlessly with claims settlement process which is anytime, anywhere transactions, information sharing and collaboration," said Sandip Chakraborty, head of IT and project management office, Bharti AXA General Insurance. "Our technology solutions provide efficient tracking and management of applications that result in faster on-boarding of cus-

tomers, thus creating capacity for the operations staff. On the claims side, the solution has helped our end customer immensely by reducing the turnaround time of claim payments and resolving queries faster," said Somesh Chandra, COO and CQO of Max Bupa.

Similar to markets like UK and US, emerging markets, including India, too are witnessing more penetration level of mobile applications in non-life insurance sector as compared to life insurance segment. Non-life insurance companies are trying to use it as an additional channel, which can enable customers and insurers to interact together. This has also helped the companies bring down traditional costs on contact centres and offices. "On a monthly basis,

we are settling more than 25000 claims and issuing over 10000 policies through the EEZEE tab. Our agents are no longer dependent on us and are running offices from home, which helps them in issuing policies or managing renewals. The company is also doing away with the brick and mortar model of offices and launching virtual workplaces with the help of technology, which has helped us reduce infrastructure cost," said Sharma of Bajaj Allianz.

Cigna has cut office size from 1,800 sq ft to 150 sq ft, thus saving on real estate costs. "In most places we don't need to set up offices as agents can handle business virtually. In case the customer size requires a contact centre, we opt for smaller offices," said Patel.

Cigna TTK hopes to double its reach at 80 locations. It expects technology to help the company bring down the cost by five per cent of the gross written premium.

Insurance companies are also increasing their investments in technology. Indian insurance companies are expected to spend Rs 130.4 billion on IT products and services in 2015, a 10.4 per cent rise over 2014. The top three technology priorities this year are mobility, business intelligence and analytics, and digitalisation/digital marketing.

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