

**Date:** 12.5.2020

**Publication:** Express Computers.in

**Post lockdown environment – shift in consumer behaviour towards insurance and increase in adoption of digital technologies**

We are already living in a digital world – with this, digitization will gain further impetus and redefine the entire insurance value chain

By Express Computer On May 12, 2020



KV Dipu, Head -Operations and Customer Service, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance

Lockdown due to Covid-19 has certainly been challenging for individuals and businesses across the world. What appeared as a flu in the first instance has exploded to become one of the worst pandemics in the world. It has drastically affected economies, lives and livelihood of people across the globe. Amidst these challenges, there have also been various learnings which have changed our approach to, and perception about, various aspects of work and life. Insurance, which was not on the priority list of many before this pandemic, has suddenly been thrust into the limelight as more and more people, as they become increasingly aware of how it can come to their rescue in their darkest hour, gravitate towards it!

Many of us are compelled to work from home to maintain social distancing, which has also changed our approach towards hitherto unexamined aspects such as how we buy products & services, how we connect with our peers or customers and also how we sell products! Many observers feel that these changes are here to stay and will perennially transform many functions even after this lockdown is lifted in a staggered fashion. We are already living in a digital world – with this, digitization will gain further impetus and redefine the entire insurance value chain.

### **Increase in engagement**

This lockdown has certainly taught us how to optimize our time and organize our day in a productive manner. Collaborative tools are being used to connect with team members on a daily basis, meet clients digitally and also educate customers through various webinars. While human intervention will certainly remain in the insurance space given the need for core human skills such as empathy which cannot be automated, we'll see more engagement happening through these collaborative tools which will help us e-service (emotionally & electronically) customers even as we are physically distanced.

Additionally, we will see further increase in usage of mobile apps by customers to reach out to insurers in case of any queries. WhatsApp is also emerging as a common platform for chat based services. In fact, we've integrated our AI enabled chatbot, BOING with WhatsApp that facilitates our customers to register claims without waiting in the IVR Queue. Some of the services that customers can avail of on WhatsApp are procurement of a soft copy of their policy, checking of claim status, checking of policy status, renewal of motor policy, et al. We will incorporate more use cases as we go ahead. Artificial intelligence and machine learning will play a crucial role to increase engagement amongst customers on various digital platforms.

### **Simplifying insurance**

With increasing acceptance of digital platforms, we are seeing more customers approach us via the company website and the mobile app to access various services. With digitization, customers expect services to be provided with a click of a button right from purchase of a policy to redress of grievances and settlement of claims. After the lockdown, customers are likely to depend more on chat and video platforms to raise queries and, in the age of instant gratification, the turnaround time for resolution will define their customer experience with the company. Insurance is a push product and while it required in-person presence to convince people to buy, in the post-lockdown era, contactless sales is likely to be the order of the day. We have also seen increase adoption of digital modes of payments over the past few years. With the lockdown, customers are increasingly opting for it and the ease of payment as well as the plethora of options, once customers are hooked to it, are all set to give a fillip to digital payments going forward.

As they say, culture eats strategy for breakfast. The most meticulously prepared strategies of firms stood exposed when the advent of COVID-19 threw up unprecedented challenges & scenarios. Since the fallout of COVID-19 has had physical and cultural ramifications, the shift in consumer behaviour toward insurance & the adoption of digital technologies is here to stay.

*Authored by KV Dipu, Head – Operations & Customer Service, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance*