Digital onboarding: a welcome disruption in the insurance industry

Like many other sectors of the economy, the insurance industry is facing disruptive innovation, with the impacts of the pandemic, economic uncertainty, rising unemployment and rapidly changing customer demographics and expectations forcing insurers to adapt or die. According to KPMG's recent South African Insurance Industry Survey: "The insurance industry is highly competitive – to stay relevant, insurers must embrace digitalisation to ensure they can continue to serve their customers' needs in an efficient and simplified manner and grow the customer base to achieve economies of scale in an environment of increasing costs."

Customer onboarding is the start of a customer's journey with an insurer and often one of the very few interactions they will have with the company (all going well with the customer, of course). The process, therefore, needs to be seamless to ensure a good foundation for a lasting relationship, and in an era of sky-high consumer expectations in terms of convenience, flexibility and speed of transactions, the traditionally manual and time-consuming onboarding process is fast becoming unsustainable.

When digitalised, basic and repetitive tasks can be left to technology, freeing up staff to focus on more complex activities and improve customer experience. "Smooth onboarding and Know Your Customer (KYC) procedures are key when onboarding to ensure user-friendly customer journeys. This is where SearchWorks can assist via multiple services to streamline the process while mitigating risk when new applicants are considered," says Sameer Kumandan, Managing Director of SearchWorks, an innovative data aggregation platform that allows users to conduct live, accurate searches on individuals and companies and in-depth KYC checks online.

The web-based search application is a bespoke solution giving companies access to up-to-date information and a multitude of safeguards tailored to their specific needs. While onboarding new clients, a SearchWorks report will provide the insurer with the applicant's ID verification, bank account verification to assist with monthly debit order instructions and loyalty payments, detailed property and vehicle valuations to assist with monthly premiums, trace and contact data, CIPC searches to verify companies, and social media checks. This fully inclusive and customised report ensures that the insurance agent knows everything about who is being onboarded, helping with decisions on premiums based on potential risk factors.

"By using SearchWorks, organisations have a wealth of information at their fingertips with very little effort required to access it. Various onboarding and KYC checks can be added using multiple data sources with only a few client inputs," explains Kumandan. This mitigates risk by ensuring member validity via multiple validation services. "By using SearchWorks' 'one click' validation service, insurance agents will quickly know whether a new applicant is being truthful in their application feedback, decreasing the amount of time spent on either clearing or rejecting applications. Having regular validations in place will also ensure that the correct monthly premium is in play based on a high or low risk factor."

User experience has become of optimal importance - the insurer that limits the number of clicks it takes to sign up, the number of documents needed to verify one's identity, and the time it takes to join and fulfil KYC obligations is well ahead of the game.

Ends.