

How will 2016 be different for the policyholder?

Pradeep Pandey | January 6, 2016 |



The life insurance industry, which has seen some tough times during the last few years, is expected to grow 10-15% in the current fiscal. A stable government and clear indications of expediting reforms have laid the foundation for India to regain the growth momentum, and the insurance industry is expected to benefit from the same. The sector has already witnessed green shoots of improvement in terms of higher consumer awareness and trust/transparency, launch of innovative products and distribution channels, and a heightened focus on need based selling and customer centricity.

For the industry to further unlock its potential, concerted action is required from all stakeholders. One of the key themes this year for the Indian life insurance industry will be customer retention and this will be possible only if we match our customers' wavelength. Insurers are making significant efforts to create long term value for its policyholders and making things simple for them to understand. Here are a few things policyholders can expect in 2016.

1. Managing policies at their fingertips: Electronic insurance accounts are gaining popularity because they offer a convenient way to store all policies through one account even if they are from different insurers. Policyholders can access it anytime, anywhere and also change contact details for all their policies in one go. Furthermore no KYC documents will be required for new life insurance policies if your KYC is updated in your e-insurance account.

2. Your agents will be more empowered to service you better: Agents play a key role in servicing their customers and delighting them. Insurance companies are now pro-actively sharing more information and clarity about your policy so that you remain updated about your renewal premiums, your life cover, your account value to name a few. The agents will be equipped to offer you digital solutions and guide you towards placing your basic policy servicing requests like change in nominee or ask for a partial withdrawal of the fund etc.

3. Connect with your insurer through social media: Policyholders can follow their insurers on social networking sites like facebook, twitter and engage with them in a more informal way, and get updates on new product offers. Policyholders can also let their insurers know about any changes so that you are presented with a relevant product.

4. Seamless interactions through the customer portal and mobile apps: Customer portals and apps have been in existence for a while but the policyholder interactions using these tools is witnessing a change and policyholders are now able to self-manage their insurance policies. The gap between insurers and the policyholders is decreasing.

5. Simplified claims experience: Insurers are looking at new ways to respond to claims faster. Some companies are using a dedicated claims handler, online claims intimation and other methods to simplify and improve the claims experience. Life insurance is a business in which both, the customer and the company derive financial value only by staying invested in the relationship over a long period of time. The customers today expect the same ease, accessibility, control and experience from their insurers as they do from other online retail sites.

It is therefore important to effectively use technology to sharpen productivity and customer responsiveness. This will not only focus on greater automation to reduce costs and faster delivery, but also leverage on digital developments to spur greater

innovation and differentiation. The future looks promising for the life insurance industry, and new strategies and solutions will lead to further changes in the way the industry conducts its business and engages with its customers.

Pradeep Pandey is chief marketing officer of Future Generali India Life Insurance