



Lessons from COVID-19:
How insurers should evolve to meet
customer needs?

In March, as Thailand reached its peak in coronavirus cases, it was reported that insurers were coming close to exceeding their threshold of policy sales with more than two million COVID-19 policies sold by 18 March. By the beginning of April, that number more than doubled to 6.8 million. This unprecedented demand is just one of the many challenges that insurers have had to navigate as the pandemic has impacted various aspects of their businesses and internal operations.

While both short- and long-term effects remain, insurers should start to act on the lessons from this crisis as they look to recover and grow in the new normal. The first step is ensuring the right technologies and strategies are in place to keep operations running and be there for customers in need. Focusing on three key areas will help: automating operations, risk management, and new product innovation.

Crisis reinforces need for automation

The lockdown highlighted that many insurers were unprepared to move jobs performed in the office to home. One of the issues is that the industry is still heavily reliant on manual processes that need to be physically managed and are not easily moved online. These range from simple things like mail collection to some aspects of claims assessment.

Insurers need to increase their use of technology and automation so that they can respond more quickly to future crisis situations. The efficiencies provided by automation will also help insurers reduce costs and better manage the surge in claims and enquiries they are likely to experience in the short-term.

Specific opportunities for automation include workflows that move tasks from one queue to the next and help with prioritisation. Communication journeys can also be automated to push out more timely and relevant information to customers.

Improve scenario planning to manage risk

Data and risk management go hand-in-hand, and insurers need real-time information and analytics to respond to immediate challenges and plan for the future. One important lesson that insurers should take away from the pandemic is that improved scenario planning is needed to accurately identify and mitigate risk. This calls for investment in systems that allow you to track and analyse KPIs like sales and outstanding claims as well as trends and patterns in customer behaviour. For specific events like COVID-19, insurers also need information to understand and model impacts.

Increasing the speed of innovation

Insurers in Thailand were quick to meet customer needs with new insurance policies surrounding COVID-19. Now, it's time to look at what customers need next, and whether new insurance products are needed or if existing ones should be modified.

The more that insurers understand their customers, the better placed they will be to provide policies and solutions that will protect them. To achieve this, insurers need to be able to gather insights from their own data in addition to looking at market trends. For example, analysing trends in customers' behaviour can help inform policy design and allow insurers to identify cross-selling opportunities. The same insights can also be used to prevent customer churn.

*As a **Salesforce Platinum Consulting Partner**, Beryl8 is well placed to help you address these and other opportunities for digitisation as you prepare for a new normal. Contact us at contact@beryl8.com to schedule a meeting and learn more.*