Now, Canara HSBC Life begins video service for real-time customer engagement

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Expects 15-20% of its revenue from online channelin three years

New Delhi, December 5:

In a first for the life insurance industry, Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance Co Ltd has come up with a video service that seeks to improve customer engagement.

"This is part of our engagement strategy where we are using digital. Digital is the future in this country. A big portion of our engagement strategy will be driven through digital," Shalabh Saxena, Chief Operating Officer, Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance Co, told*BusinessLine* .

This video service initiative comes close on the heels of the company tapping into social-media sites – Facebook, Twitter and Linkedin – for customer services.

Under the video service, a customer can go to the website of the company and click on the video service icon to directly engage with the company for various service requests, said Saxena.

"This will be like Facetime and WhatsApp video. A lot of customers prefer looking at the face of a company representative than interact only via voice. This will be real-time video engagement," he said.

The life insurer feels that digital initiatives will enhance efficiency, besides helping the company better understand the "pulse of the customers".

Video services can be accessed by a customer through a smartphone, camera-enabled laptop or a desktop with camera, said Saxena, adding that customer engagement in the coming days would drive revenues and retention and even lead to repeat purchases.

"Customer service in the coming days is going to be recognised as a revenue line. Now most companies see it as a cost. This has to change in the current digital era," he said.

Online goals

Given the current momentum in digital activities in the country, the company has scaled up its ambitions on the online channel front.

"In the next three years, we expect 15-20 per cent of our new business premium revenues to come from the online channel," said Saxena.

"We believe the next wave of growth will come from technology. A physical model beyond a point has limitations. To me, online is a subset of digital strategy. There is huge digital opportunity in the service cycle – from customer engagement, satisfaction and service," he added.

As on date, the online channel accounts for less than 5 per cent of the company's overall new business premium.

It may be recalled that Anuj Mathur, the CEO, had in May this year told *BusinessLine* that the company was eyeing 10 per cent of its new business via the digital channel in three years.

Saxena said the increased focus on digital strategy still does not take away the plan to acquire customers through the physical model.

Canara HSBC Life, purely a bancassurance player, has access to a network of over 10,000 bank branches coming through its principal shareholders – Canara Bank, HSBC and Oriental Bank of Commerce.

“We still feel there is lot of juice in the bancassurance model. The opportunity is immense,” said Saxena.

On the product mix, the company is 60 per cent traditional and 40 per cent ULIP. In 2016-17, it had an individual new business premium of about Rs. 622 crore. In the first half of this fiscal, the company already achieved new business premium of Rs. 450 crore, and is looking to finish this fiscal with a level ofRs. 1,000 crore, added Saxena.