



## Claims is on a 'big journey' to catch up with digital revolution says AXA's Malik

By Katie Scott | 18 May 2020

**The claims managing director believes the use of data and analytics has been exhausted in pricing, and should instead be used to enhance the customer experience**

For Waseem Malik, executive managing director of claims at AXA Insurance UK, the one positive that has emerged from the continued **Covid-19 pandemic** is the acceleration of the insurance sector's digital revolution.

This includes being able to use data and analytics in a more meaningful way to improve the customer experience, rather than solely focusing on figures related to pricing.

"**Claims** is on a big journey to catch up in terms of the whole digital revolution, and there's a huge focus on customer experience as well as a real move to using data more intelligently," he says.

“Claims is at a point where it’s recognised that it is the customer experience that we sell to our policyholders, but at the same time it’s an area where we have a lot of data available to us, so we can utilise that to do things quicker and better for our customers.

“Historically, all the focus on data and analytics has been in pricing, but I think everyone’s exhausted what we can do from a pricing perspective and it’s now moving to claims.”

AXA has put this this thinking into action with its newly launched ‘Repair or Replace’ tool, which it piloted at the start of the year before fully rolling out today.

This aims to more accurately gauge whether vehicles are a total loss or suitable for repair using data from initial **claims conversations** with customers.

Ultimately, this process is designed to reduce customer waiting times and ensure a quicker claims turnaround; Malik says the insurer was previously sending too many total loss vehicles to be repaired, delaying the overall **claims process**.

“It’s all just using what we have in a different way or the **technology** that exists today, using that in a different way,” he adds.

## Internal innovation

Internally, AXA has ramped up its own digital transformation in order to respond to the **coronavirus crisis**.

This includes enabling retail motor customers to log their claim via the firm’s website rather than over the phone, while brokers are now able to notify AXA of claims using an e-form.

Malik says the insurer is also using e-notifications for travel claims, due to the “huge surge” they have witnessed as a result of Covid-19-related cancellations.

Logging claims online was also, in part, to mitigate service delays while AXA adjusted to moving its 1,800 claims staff to working remotely – Malik says that within three weeks, 99% of the workforce, including front-line claims handlers, were able to work from home.

“We were very conscious that customers initially may struggle to get hold of our teams, particularly in the early days when offices were still open and absence rates were quite high, so we enabled more digital means for customers to log their claims,” he explains.

Robotics is another area Malik is seeing gaining traction, both at AXA and across the sector. He believes bots that complete mundane or admin-based tasks empower “people to spend their more valuable time on value-add tasks because claims is an area that will always require a human touch”.

Malik continues that **startups within insurance** are also a welcome part of digital revolution because they bring “new ideas, new energy” to push “insurers, who can be a bit traditional, to move forward themselves”.

With this in mind, AXA has invested in the Guidewire claims platform – the migration programme is still underway, Malik adds.

## Virtual tour

Another way AXA has responded to the **coronavirus pandemic** is by extending a tool used within its household business to now be applicable for commercial property too.

This means that if a property sustains water damage, for example, policyholders are able to arrange a 40-minute telephone consultation at a time of their choosing, where they can show AXA staff the relevant damage via the camera on their smartphone.

The **technology** within the tool can analyse the materials used and the size of the damaged area, for example – by the end of the call, policyholders can agree a settlement with AXA, ask for the insurer to instruct repairs, or take time to gather additional quotes.

AXA has been using this technology for around 18 months in total, however commercial property policyholders have only had access for the last three months.

“We’re getting fantastic feedback because the customer feels they’re in control. They can do it at a time that suits them and it also means there’s a much quicker turnaround in their **claim** being settled,” Malik adds.

“Particularly with Covid-19, this stuff’s really helping as well because physically, it’s harder for people to go out there. [Usually] we have a team of **claims inspectors** who will go and physically inspect certain claims, so we’re now getting them to utilise this technology because they physically can’t go out at the moment because of lockdown. It’s really positive.”

## CV

- Became executive director, claims at AXA in April 2018.
- Joined AXA in June 2006; held numerous roles such as chief financial officer and finance director prior to current position.
- Worked at PwC between 1997 and 2006; last role there was senior manager, transaction services.

