



ANISHA MOTWANI

Director and Chief
Marketing Officer
Max New York Life Insurance

“The insurance penetration accounts for 4.1 per cent of the Indian GDP and is because of the agents’ drive to insure people and protect lives.”

ENSURE SAFE FUTURE

An agent feels the market pulse and helps in product design.

The role of the insurance agent is undermined by strong stereotypes of someone who is trying to talk you into something that you don't want or need, someone who is there to cheat you and what not. Of course, the insurance agent did play a telling role in an era when financial products were far and few and insurance agents doubled up as financial advisers having no exposure to financial products let alone financial literacy. The role of an insurance agent or adviser has remained the same; provide clients with insurance options that suit their needs.

To many it may seem a simple task, but a lot goes before an individual becomes an agent. First, there are minimum stipulated qualifications that they need to have, seeing as insurers they are trained on insurance, which entails passing an agent's qualifying examination conducted by the insurance regulator. They are also trained on products; understand individual's financial status, sales skills, techniques and strategies before they start selling under supervision, after which they get on their own. Hardworking individuals who have the ability to perform necessary research and who have a strong background in business or finance do well, selling insurance.

The insurance penetration in the country is 4.1 per cent of the GDP and is largely because of the agent's drive to go far and wide to insure people and protect lives. It is one of the most under stated achievements of the agents; their role in providing insurance protection to millions of policy-

holders. Likewise, the economic value of an insurance agent is not fully understood; imagine if you did not have insurance for a moment? In an ideal rising income economy, additional income would have gone into discretionary spending and consumption expenditure. With their knowledge of financial products and the importance to manage future finances, insurance agents provide serious thought to consumers on the need to save and invest.

Although, at the base lies a sales driven transaction, many agents have realised the way to grow is to expand their domain expertise and personal finance acumen. A needs analysis is the first step towards selling insurance; it is also the starting point in developing a holistic financial plan. Many agents have successfully gone into financial planning as a career by qualifying as certified financial planners (CFP). While some may visualise insurance agents as those looking for a share of the wallet, they in fact help reduce discretionary expenses and channelise regular investments.

Though, largely commission-based remuneration, agents have several working benefits of flexi-time and even flexi-office to suit their convenience. Many agents become successful in taking on a second career while being agents such as teaching and training. Finally, purely from the moral perspective, surely the society is better off when it is protected against risks that it faces than being exposed to risks that cannot be balanced. A career in insurance sales is a lot enriching, self satisfying and for the greater good of the society.