

Interview With Manoj Poduval, Head Of Zurich Advisory Network (Zurich Insurance ME)



Editorial note: Manoj Poduval is Head of Zurich Advisory Network, a burgeoning distribution channel of Zurich International Life in UAE. He shares with Clarie Kwa, Chief Market Officer at 360F, how he syncs his twenty years of financial advisory and distribution experience, with 360F's technology innovation to make Digital Advice a success for the global insurer with a local presence and commitment for over three decades.

Clarie: Digital Advice is built on the advice engine and solutioning optimizer, 360-ProVestment®. How have your advisors taken to the technology?

Manoj: We are proud to have contributed immensely, making the advice engine and optimizer Zurich-specific. Today, all our advisors use the tool. Digital Advice ensures that they perform a proper needs analysis and give consistent and unbiased recommendations.

Clarie: Why have your advisors been able to embrace the advice engine and optimizer?

Manoj: While I may have mandated our advisors to use it, I help them see the value. In the market, there is a lack of proper financial needs analysis because either advisors do not know how to do it properly or they simply do not do it. However, if the analysis is done properly, they stand a better chance of giving sound recommendations. 360-ProVestment® is a tool in its own league by enabling the advisors to deliver consistent and unbiased analysis and recommendation. The advisors actually get to sell more and sell better, and more importantly, earn the customer's loyalty. The role of 360-ProVestment® in Digital Advice is as

simple as establishing the conviction for the advisors. If you aren't convinced that you're doing the right thing for the customers, you cannot drive it forward.

Clarie: Any room for advisors to add in their own creative flair?

Manoj: Here's where storytelling is important. I liken advisors using Digital Advice to them reeling a movie film. Our advisors are presenting unbiased information, but they need to set the scene. For example, they will ask the customers, in their own way, if they will have enough savings for the next 6 months should their income cease due to a disability. What about the next 12 months? What if it's a critical illness that forces them to stop working? These questions steer the human conversation. They also make Digital Advice uniquely Zurich.

Clarie: What business benefits has Digital Advice shown so far?

Manoj: Our average APE is significantly better than that of the average market performance for any similar agency channel. Digital Advice also benefits advisor recruitment. In fact, we are positioned to choose advisors as much as they are choosing us.

Clarie: Very impressive! What's next?

Manoj: Honestly, my vision is for everybody in the UAE to hold a recommendation report in their hands. It's not just about how much you're selling but how many people you're reaching out to. I have lived in the UAE for more than sixteen years. This country is in my heart. I consider it my duty to raise the local awareness on the importance of insurance.