

GAZETA MERCANTIL

São Paulo, July 15, 2008 - Marsh Affinity, a U.S. brokerage house specialized in popular insurance policies known as mass insurance, is betting on this segment of the Brazilian market and plans to speed up the claim payment process and increase accountability to its clients by releasing information on the amounts of claims paid by the company. Currently, approximately 90% of these new policies sold by Marsh are brought in by credit card operations. Marsh has agreements with major retail chains such as Carrefour supermarkets and Lojas Renner and has access to their portfolios of customers who use credit cards. The amount of the insurance comes stated in the client invoices.

Last year, the total portfolio of insured customers jumped from 3.3 to 5 million. This increase resulted in an average of 1,000 claim payment requests per month. In 2007 alone, an accumulated total of 11.8 thousand payment requests was recorded.

According to Marsh's own analysis, the reduction of the time waiting in line is the most efficient way to promote trust in the acquisition of the new low-cost policies. The waiting time for payments dropped in half, from 30 to 15 days, after the insurance broker increased its staff from 440 to 550 employees dedicated to mass insurance operations. For document screening and registration, the total current staff is twelve, with four new employees hired just for document screening.

Mass insurance policies are distributed by non-specialized agents - not only retail outlets but also companies providing public services and credit card operators - providing cost feasibility.

However, according to market specialists, improvements in customer service are one of the main challenges for the growth of the popular insurance segment in Brazil. It is about helping customers to know who they can turn to when they have a claim. To improve this relationship, Marsh decided to place another bet on accountability. The brokerage house will now release the amounts of all claims paid to customers. According to last year's consolidated data, the company paid R\$ 31 million (approximately US\$ 19 million) to customers, 19% more than in the previous year.

Among popular insurance categories, the one paying the most premiums during 2007 was life insurance. Customers of this type of policy received an average of R\$ 109 thousand (US\$ 64 thousand). Residential insurance, on the other hand, paid R\$ 2.1 million (US\$ 1.2 million) in 2007 in protection against residential theft, fire, lightning and explosion. Money lending policies, which guarantee installment payments in the event of death, disability or unemployment, paid an average of R\$ 834 (US\$ 490).

"Showing transparency by releasing our numbers demonstrates a measure of the benefits given back to society", says Sherry Gonzalez, Director of Operations for Marsh Affinity Latin America. (Gazeta Mercantil/Finanças & Mercados - Page 3)