

Member services

It's been just over two years since the creation of CLA Insurance Services, an exclusive partnership between the CLA and R K Harrison Insurance Brokers Ltd. **Stuart Rootham** looks back at the highs and lows and gives his predictions for what the future holds

Perfect policy

The launch of CLA Insurance Services was a run-away success and within a year we were handling business worth around £2 million. On the first anniversary of the launch of CLA Insurance Services an agreement was reached with the CLA's previously appointed broker to buy its remaining CLA customer base.

This doubled the amount of clients we were servicing and, added to the fact that we were half way through a complete IT system overhaul, the pressure was on for us to get things right. Initial creases were ironed out as soon as possible and it wasn't long before the systems were fully operational and we were recruiting more employees.

The massive influx of clients at the 12 month mark, coupled with the integration of the new IT systems, meant that the team at CLA Insurance Services had to work very hard to ensure high service levels. The CLA was impressed with the speed and professionalism with which initial issues were resolved and service levels are now improving month on month."

The next big hurdle came in the guise of the widely publicised European Directive of Insurance Mediation. From January 2005, any company wishing to carry out insurance activities must be registered with the Financial Services Authority. In order to become registered the insurance intermediary and its directors must meet certain professional standards, be they service levels, financial standards or staffing expertise.

At CLA Insurance Services, we understand that becoming



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regulated is only the beginning and an ongoing commitment to high standards is required to ensure that CLA members continue to receive the most relevant cover and excellent service.

As part of our ongoing efforts to meet the needs of all our clients, we also introduced an online travel insurance product in 2004. This is a welcome addition to our portfolio of CLA Home, Land, Business and Motor products, all of which are regularly reviewed and updated.

However, we do understand that due to the nature of

insurance, no two clients are the same and we are willing to be flexible to tailor our products to suit their needs. For example, we were approached by a CLA member who needed household, liability and property cover. By taking time to properly assess this customer's needs we came to the conclusion that an amalgamated farm and property owner package would best serve their needs.

The outcome? Cover that was much more comprehensive than any previous offer as well as a saving of 25 per cent on the customer's premium.

Looking at a commercial example, our team was approached by a manufacturing and wholesaling client who was finding it very difficult to get any kind of cover at a reasonable premium. Once again, a full appraisal of the situation was carried out and cover was successfully placed with a 30 per cent decrease in premium.

So let's take a look at some statistics. Last year saw CLA Insurance Services retain 94% of its clients, which says something about the quality of our products and service. New clients have found that we also provide them with an average saving of between 10 and 15 per cent and we continue to enjoy high conversion from quotes.

Commenting on the success of the last two years, CLA Chief Executive Bruce Wilson North said: "CLA Insurance Services continues to go from strength to strength and there is no question that their efforts enable us to maintain and improve other CLA services.

We will continue to review the breadth and scope of the insurance services and tailor them to meet the needs of our valued members."

So, what does the future hold for CLA Insurance Services? Our main objective is to build our CLA client base. We are already supplying insurance services to around 10 per cent of members and we firmly believe that the vast majority of the remaining 90 per cent could benefit from our expertise. It doesn't cost anything to receive a quote and it could even lead to increased cover at decreased costs. What have you got to lose?

Just call 01234 311211.