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PROPELLING THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY FORWARD

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Insurance firms are summarily viewed as establishments meant to cancel or minimize the adverse consequences of unforeseen misfortunes and are expected to be viable and popular in societies these days. However, many insurance businesses face difficult challenges that seriously threaten their survival and existence due to lack of awareness, lack of trust, and increased competition. Public uptake of insurance on the African Continent is less than 1 percent and with the advent of Covid-19, the uptake decreased

even further. On a positive note, the industry is witnessing a Digital Revolution following the Pandemic. Interview with Carol Athiyo – Business Development & Marketing Director – Minet Limited (Uganda):

HOW IS MINET LEVERAGING THE COVID-19 DIGITAL REVOLUTION TO BETTER SERVE CLIENTS AND MOVE THE INDUSTRY TO A BETTER PLACE?

Minet Ltd - like any other company in Uganda - was not spared by COVID-19. The pandemic taught us to be resilient and to adopt the New Normal through digital transformation by servicing clients virtually and by having staff work remotely.

By being an essential services provider, we were able to fully comply with the strict operating procedures and continue to serve our customers. During the lockdown, we carried out a study together with our partner Strategic Engagement to determine the effects of COVID-19 and the lockdown on mental health. We noticed that the emotional balance was most affected by the new work-life balance, financial challenges, and family life. As a result, we decided to offer psychosocial support by means of interventional webinars through the LOVE CARE HOPE program.

INSURANCE UPTAKE HAS NOT CHANGED MUCH AS THE UPTAKE IN UGANDA STILL STANDS AT 0.8 PERCENT. AS AN INDUSTRY PLAYER, WHAT IS HINDERING INSURANCE ADOPTION BY THE MASSES, AND WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE DIFFERENTLY TO WITNESS A BETTER UPTAKE?

The Insurance Industry penetration challenges are historical and persistent. There's still a big gap in awareness and knowledge of insurance products as the public still perceives them as being complex and difficult to comprehend and embrace.

First of all, education on insurance is important, at all levels - Schools, Tertiary Institutions - and will bring about a good understanding and appreciation.



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Secondly, insurance awareness should be amplified; this is already ongoing through the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) using different media platforms. In addition, customers' testimonies should be used to demonstrate their insurance experience and more specifically on claims as there is a myth that insurance companies do not pay claims. The Government - through the IRA - should ensure that the public is knowledgeable about claims settlements. This will go a long way in creating awareness and a positive influence on insurance uptake.

Lastly, the enforcement of compulsory insurance policies (Motor Third Party, Workmen's compensation, and Marine) would greatly help the uptake of insurance. For example, we continue to see the education sector suffer losses in all institutions. Our proposal is that policymakers enforce compulsory policies to include Fire and Special Perils for properties, which would give comfort to owners of the business that indeed insurance can compensate for unforeseen losses and boost the insurance industry and the economy.

MINET EXCELLED IN THE FIRST EDITION OF THE INSURANCE TRAINING COLLEGE (ITC) INSURANCE QUIZ 2021, WHERE 13 NON-LIFE INSURERS WERE TESTED ON KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE. WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE LIKE AND HOW IMPORTANT WAS THIS QUIZ TO THE INDUSTRY AND THE INSURERS IN GENERAL?

The ITC Insurance Quiz was the first of its kind and an exciting moment to have a breakout with the rest of the members in the industry. Such events will help the insurance fraternity and any other interested party to understand the insurance products available in the market, the risks involved, and the industry players (i.e., Insurance Companies, Insurance Brokers, Insurance Agents, Reinsurance Companies (Uganda Re), Reinsurance Brokers and Insurance loss Assessors and Adjusters). This initiative did bring the industry together, stimulated knowledge sharing, and there was a general appreciation of the insurance knowledge by its members. Our recommendation is for this initiative to become an annual event so members will continue to improve their expertise in Insurance.

COVID-19 HAS AFFECTED MANY SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY AND THE INSURANCE SECTOR HAS NOT BEEN EXEMPTED. HOW IS MINET MANAGING THE SHOCKS, AND WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS TO BOOST MINET'S PRESENCE IN THE INDUSTRY?

Knowing that COVID-19 is a Pandemic and having to adapt to the New Normal working environment, Minet had to think of new ways to service its clients amidst the challenges. With one of our values being Agility, we aim to be flexible in offering our clients service in a timely manner and be innovative with our insurance solutions. Our latest innovation was reaching out to clients – in collaboration with Strategic Engagement Limited – through the LOVE CARE HOPE program. This program is aimed at providing psychosocial support through Counselling and Coaching to our clients facing COVID-19 challenges. The New Normal has taught us that innovation should be one of the key strategic pillars for the insurance industry.

ANYTHING YOU MIGHT WANT TO ADD RELATING TO THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY OR THE FINANCIAL SECTOR AT LARGE?

Risks are real and we need to embrace how best to manage these risks through transfer to insurance companies and risk management solutions. Through the IRA, there is a need to create insurance awareness of the public and how best to embrace it. We believe this will give the industry a good boost and contribute to the country's GDP.