

# We have Contact...



AT8 Group's **Mark Loosmore** continues his series of articles for *Professional Adviser* with a look at how **Contact Insurance** is using IT to target the needs of the adviser community

Last week at AT8, we were considering changing our company healthcare provision and went to *TotallyMoney.com* to research our options.

We were somewhat disappointed not to be able to get an electronic quotation online but were promised a call back with the relevant information. Shortly afterwards my mobile rang while I was on the landline and unable to answer and although I didn't recognise the number, I noticed it was from Cheltenham.

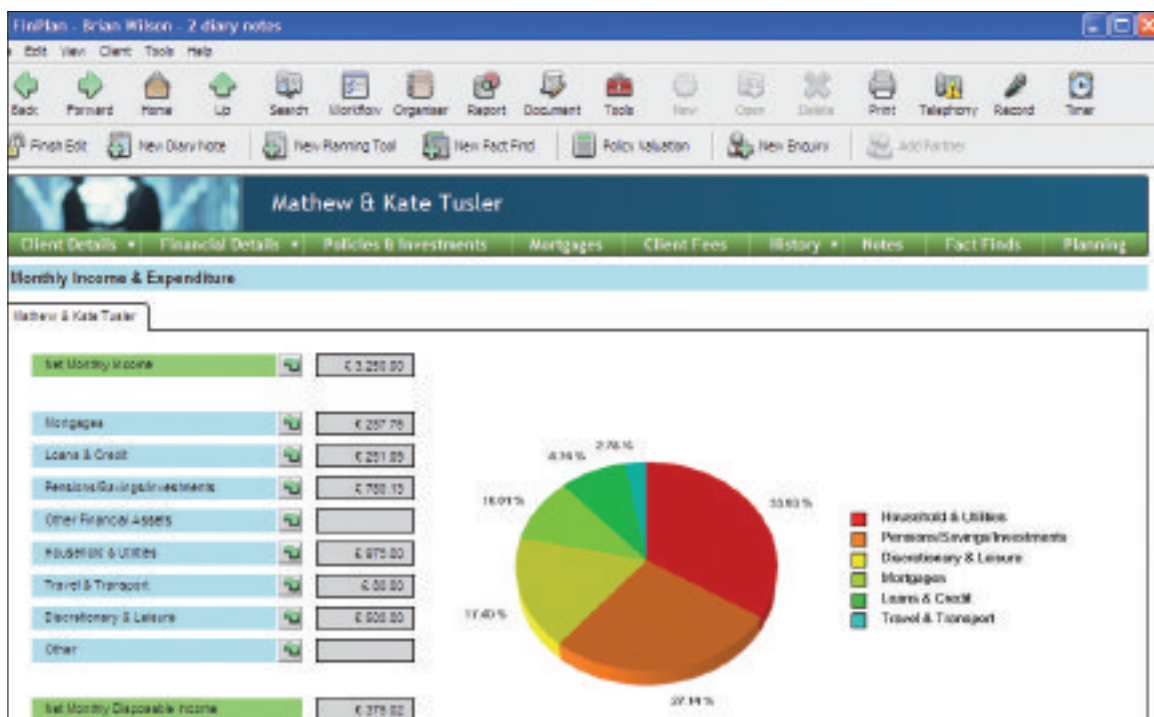
The same number rang again two hours later and this time I took the call, which turned out to be from Contact Insurance. However, as I was about to do a conference call the caller agreed to call back at a more convenient time. They seemed to have understood my needs and had already appeared to have invested time in getting some suggested solutions to our healthcare needs. They called back at the pre-arranged time and, from my experience, they appeared to be operating effective contact management systems and following procedures with professionalism.

By strange coincidence, we had previously selected Contact Insurance as the latest company to investigate how it uses IT to support its business for this week's article, so we were especially intrigued to see how their contact management was supported by IT.

## Alleviate data collection pain

Contact Insurance is a relatively new company, which was set up three years ago to advise on individual and corporate protection business. The company contacts clients directly but also has a successful business in providing the fulfilment capability for others, such as *TotallyMoney.com*, which we originally called regarding our own enquiry.

Contact Insurance has invested in systems and processes to make this fulfilment as seamless as possible, removing the pain of data collection and application processing for IFAs that are too busy to work through the detailed life application process, or from online systems that do not have an electronic fulfilment capability.



Contact Insurance is a 35-person, directly authorised operation, based in Cheltenham with ambitious growth plans. Its strategy is to provide a human version of the online aggregation service – slick and efficient – but with a real voice and people on the end of the phone to help the client find the best solution.

As part of our research, we interviewed Robert Higginbotham, the company's managing director and founder. It was clear that he saw from the start that he needed a robust technology platform at the heart of his operation, in order to ensure a high level of customer service, while keeping costs under control.

Higginbotham reviewed the market and chose FinPlan from Bluecoat Software. FinPlan focused on the functions he needed, and didn't overcomplicate processes and screens with tools and data that were not relevant to him. He believes the usability of FinPlan is excellent, which is vital in a call centre, where callers are prepared to stay on the phone only for a minimal amount of time. Therefore, the operator needs to be able to have access to information quickly and to be able to

move around the system with ease. FinPlan offered an attractive pricing model that allowed the business to scale up without the total cost of ownership escalating too quickly.

## Bluecoat-wearing leads

Leads are fed into the Bluecoat system from partner systems via an XML feed, but if they are self-generated they are manually entered. The sales process is then electronic, based on workflow processes that the Contact Insurance team has defined. Fact finds are filled in electronically and quotations are delivered from the Weblines Platform. The integration of Weblines with FinPlan is seamless and one of the best portal integrations we have seen. The screens stay in the control of FinPlan and always follow the usability look and feel of Bluecoat, keeping the end-user's experience as simple as possible.

In addition, IDD's are electronically produced and electronic suitability letters created and tailored.

Contact management is a key part of the Bluecoat implementation at Contact Insurance, storing details of all contacts and adding follow-up calls and

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actions to the diary. Bluecoat is also used for CRM tasks, particularly to flag cross-selling and up-selling opportunities. Finally, commissions are also managed from the system ensuring an efficient process in a vitally important area.

Telephone integration is high, using TAPI standards to help ensure the correct records are automatically put up on the screen when a caller is identified. It also enables users to call via their PC if they are following up on a planned activity.

Contact Insurance is an impressive and ambitious company that has invested in getting its infrastructure correct from the start. Its use of Bluecoat's FinPlan is effective and the firm is seeing real benefits already. As advisers move towards fees, some may benefit from outsourcing work that they cannot justify in terms of cost under their own fee-based business model to specialists. However, they will do so only if they have faith that the service provided is first class. Through clever investment in technology and streamlining its business processes, Contact Insurance has positioned itself well to be able to provide such outsourced services.

## KEY INSIGHTS

- Simple, easy-to-use technology processes intended to improve speed and efficiency;
- Processes focused on the specific business speciality;
- An efficient outsourced service to other adviser practices;
- Automation supports people-based interaction, rather than replacing people with technology.