

## How AI and RPA are helping IFFCO-Tokio to return to normalcy

*IFFCO-Tokio General Insurance has been reaping the benefits of early investments in AI/ML, RPA, and other tools with a quick revival in business after seeing a massive impact in the initial phase of the nationwide lockdown due to the Covid-19 crisis.*

Nikhar Aggarwal, ETCIO

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Seema Gaur, Executive Director and Head-IT, IFFCO-Tokio General Insurance

Zero sales registered by the Auto industry has impacted the insurance firm IFFCO-Tokio with drop in revenue in the initial phase of the nationwide lockdown. This segment constituted about 50 percent of its revenues. In an interview with ETCIO, Seema Gaur, Executive Director and Head-IT, [IFFCO-Tokio General Insurance](#) talks

about how with the help of AI/ML driven claim settlement, [RPA](#) and other remote work capabilities, the company has managed to get 80 percent business back on track.

### **Edited Excerpts:**

#### **What is the business impact of COVID-19 on IFFCO-Tokio and in general industry?**

The Covid-19 disruption and the subsequent lockdown have affected the business of the non-life insurance industry as a whole. The impact has been very harsh in the new financial year, as no sales have been happening in the auto segment. It has had a domino effect on the motor insurance business as well, which constitutes more than 50 percent of the business.

At the onset of this financial year, carmakers registered zero sales which impacted revenue of the motor insurance industry as well. Though we are able to prune the impact of Covid-19 crisis with our prior investments in technology. These investments such as AI/ML driven claim settlement, RPA and other remote work capabilities have supported the business to withstand this economic downturn. Also with support of our vendors such as IBM, Adobe, Cisco, etc we were able to make last hour arrangements in this crisis.

On the retail side, there has been an increase in health insurance related inquiries and more people want to buy a health cover now. The crisis has put health insurance to the forefront and we expect more people to buy health insurance in future.

#### **You have always talked about going digital and it's imperatives. How did your digital investments help the business to sustain in Covid-19 crisis?**

Given our digital initiatives in the last two to three years, most of our applications were able to run over the Web Browser and our policy issuing apps like Bima App. Point of Sale (Pos) applications also came handy in the current situation.

It enabled our agents and intermediaries to issue policies from our mobile and PoS applications. We were able to garner around 80 percent of our business through these channels. For big policies, we had provisioned access to the core system through VPN. A few months back with the launch of BYOD across verticals in the company, we ensured employee productivity.

Such digital investments are paying-off today while supporting [business continuity](#).

### **What was your strategy to confront challenges in the initial phase of lockdown?**

During the beginning of the crisis, we had provided VPN access to about 50 percent of our workforce in India over their office laptop. Those who could not take the office laptop to home were given access to the office desktop through a remote access software tool with the in-built security features.

Having launched Bring Your Own Devices (BYOD) a couple of months back helped a lot after we integrated them with IT security. Through the use of BYOD a large portion of business got punched by our employees.

In addition, I along with a few team members continually worked from office with an aim to serve our policyholders. For instance: in the first phase of lockdown, we worked with around 7-8 people in the office. As the CIO I was regularly coming to the office.

In the second phase we were working with 20 percent of the IT staff to ensure that continuity of policy issuance and claim settlement is maintained. During the time of crisis, we also had to have a backup plan where we had to arrange for spare parts which couldn't be delivered to our office.

### **With employees working from home, how are you managing security and also tracking productivity?**

To protect from such vulnerabilities, we have provisioned access to VPN tunnels through the secured firewalls to end users at their home, which they could access through the internet. VPN access was given to people possessing office laptops and who were able to login to their domain.

For BYOD, we were allowing access to secured remote access software with certain limitations built in. We provided access to the office desktop through remote access tools with the in-built security features. Network firewalls and WAF for security purposes are in place of our cyber security strategy.

The company is accredited by ISO 27000: 2013, which is an industry standard for Information Security Management System (ISMS). We ensure data transmission flows in a secure encrypted manner through SSL (Secure Socket Layer).

**As we have entered into Unlock 1.0 across the country and industries, CIOs are undergoing pressure to manage their IT budget while looking up for business revenue as well. How are you managing IT spending in your recovery plan?**

Certainly I believe companies will invest more in technology in the coming future. For our business, we are going to expand our IT spending and are proposing to buy more laptops for employees and other required hardware such as wifi devices, etc. We always acted keen to innovate with new technology such as AI/ML, RPA, etc. Thus going forward we will explore more business use cases.

In our recovery plan, we will continue to focus on renewal of existing customers, as it gives us a steady stream of business. We will also focus on health insurance as we have seen an increase in retail customers for health insurance. Not only group policies but retail policies could also get a boost.