

## Idea Ideals - Money Marketing – November 2008

Getting a bad reaction to an idea doesn't always mean that the idea isn't a good one. For example, one of the first entrepreneurs to go on the television programme Dragon's Den asked for £75,000 to manufacture and promote her new board game. She was denied an investment by all of the experts, who were agreed that the board game market was overrun and impossible to crack.

The game has since become a best seller, making its inventor a tidy fortune, and earning her the accolade of Business Woman of the Year in the process.

I was reminded of this at a recent meeting with a group of mortgage brokers, discussing protection in general and what strategies could be deployed to drive up income in these testing times.

One of the brokers shared his plan, which was to contact all of his previous clients and attempt to sell them Unemployment Cover. He had realised that, due to economic conditions, redundancy figures are rising and that this, combined with continued press coverage, meant that the public were becoming increasingly concerned about unemployment and might therefore be receptive to his suggestions.

The reaction to this idea from some of his peers couldn't have been more vitriolic had he said that, actually, he found leaving prank messages on septuagenarians' answering machines quite funny. In summary, many thought that this "cold calling" was tantamount to preying on people's insecurities to exploit a sales angle.

Personally the only thing that surprised me was that no-one else had thought of doing this. Aren't we, as advisers, supposed to keep in contact with our existing customers to ensure our advice is up to date? As protection sellers, is it not our duty to advise our clients of insurance products which could mitigate the effects of a drop in their income?

This isn't cold calling as I know it (someone ringing me half way through Top Gear to ask how my guttering's holding up). This is my financial adviser letting me know that, if I am worried about losing my job, he's got a product which might be helpful. A pretty good opener to a full protection review, from which I wouldn't begrudge him earning some commission.

Part of the problem might be the industry view of the Accident Sickness and Unemployment product of late. Many have criticised it and there is little doubt that it has been widely mis-sold, but as part of a full advice package and correctly compared (or better still sold in addition) to full income protection there remains a definite place for ASU.

Indeed for Income Protection as a whole the time is ripe for the often predicted increase in sales to come to fruition. The government's welfare reform has slipped quietly under the radar due to the banking crisis, but a good adviser should no doubt be using the new Employment and Support Allowance as reason for their clients to be thinking about IP.

It would also be interesting to see how consumers would react to buying IP directly, should a system be produced which made it as simple to compare and buy as Critical Illness Cover.

Incidentally, sometimes ideas get a negative reaction which is fully warranted. Just ask the inventor who wanted the Dragons to invest in her cardboard beach furniture concept – wet kids plus cardboard equals...?

By Phil Jeynes, Key Account Manager