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[with Pix]

Commitment to service-quality management earns insurer two coveted Six Sigma Awards

Hong Kong – Manulife (International) Limited (MIL) has picked up two Six Sigma awards, under the categories Projects and Leaders, for its commitment in bringing first-class service quality to its customers – and further freeing them from worry in times of stress. After five months of dedicated effort, the insurer has simplified its claims procedures and shortened the turnaround time. To do this, it utilized a recognized customer-service improvement model known as Six Sigma methodology.

Accepting the awards, George Chew, Vice President, Individual Financial Products, MIL, said: “Insurance is all about financial protection and assurance. Launching a Six Sigma project demonstrates our commitment to service-quality management because following this methodology has proven to be an effective way of improving business performance and helping to eliminate resources wastage, resulting in an enhancement of customer engagement.”

“Our service pledge is to ‘Make our customers happy’. We believe it is extremely important to offer quality services to attract and retain customers, who are becoming ever more sophisticated nowadays,” he added. “Working within the discipline of the Six Sigma framework allows us to further refine our service quality – thus enabling us to provide our customers with an exemplary service experience.”

Manulife set up a special project team to evaluate the entire hospital-claim process from both the customer experience as well as business efficiency perspectives, based on the Six Sigma recommendations for doing this. As a result, certain steps in the process were re-prioritised and inefficient procedures and wastage were eliminated.

This success earned the company the “Lean Six Sigma Project Award”. At the same time, Mr Chew himself was presented with the “Lean Six Sigma Leader Award” in recognition of his contribution in heightening awareness of the need of service quality across the department – and promoting the “Lean Six Sigma” method of achieving this.

The judging panel of the Six Sigma Awards commented that Manulife’s project team had selected a pragmatic problem that was a concern for customers and had realised both tangible and intangible benefits, both where customer service and service efficiency were concerned.

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Lean Six Sigma combines two industry-recognized management methodologies, Lean and Six Sigma, to create a highly disciplined and systematic approach for improving quality, efficiency and productivity in business processes, eventually resulting in enhanced customer satisfaction and competitiveness.

The 2008 Six Sigma Awards have been jointly presented by the Six Sigma Institute, Sigma Breakthrough Technology Inc. – Hong Kong, Hong Kong Quality Management Association Limited and Shenzhen Association for Quality, with the key objectives of heightening the awareness of quality management and promoting the theory and application of Six Sigma methodologies in both private and public organizations.

About Manulife (International) Limited

Manulife (International) Limited is a member of the Manulife Financial group of companies. Manulife Financial is a leading Canadian-based financial services group serving millions of customers in 19 countries and territories worldwide. Operating as Manulife Financial in Canada and Asia, and primarily through John Hancock in the United States, the Company offers clients a diverse range of financial protection products and wealth management services through its extensive network of employees, agents and distribution partners. Funds under management by Manulife Financial and its subsidiaries were Cdn \$385.3 billion (approximately HK\$ 2,823.1 billion) as at September 30, 2008.

Manulife Financial is one of two publicly traded life insurance companies in the world whose rated life insurance subsidiaries hold Standard & Poor's Rating Services' highest "AAA" rating.

Manulife Financial Corporation trades as 'MFC' on the TSX, NYSE and PSE, and under '0945' on the SEHK. Manulife Financial can be found on the Internet at www.manulife.com.



George Chew, Vice President, Individual Financial Products, Manulife (International) Limited (left), received the “Lean Six Sigma Project Award” on behalf of the Company