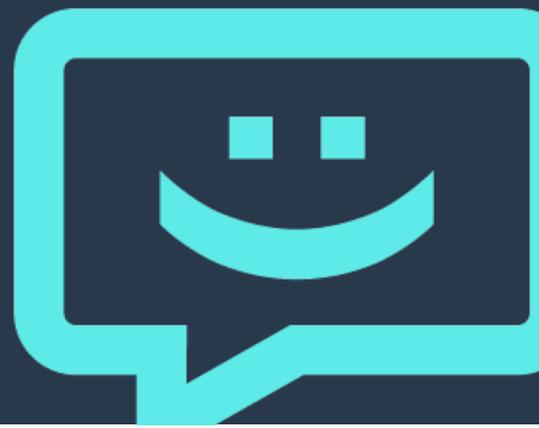


Countrywide Assured record an outstanding silver award for Customer Experience

2020



Countrywide Assured



Chesnara

Background

Countrywide Assured provide financial protection for customers and their families. This protection comes in all shapes and sizes from pensions and savings, to life cover and critical illness benefit. Their main focus is looking after customers' policies with the support of their holding company Chesnara plc. What this means is that they don't sell products to existing or new customers, but take over existing policies from other companies to manage them as efficiently and robustly as they can.

Putting customers first is a commitment that they take very seriously. Customers can be confident that their money is with a business that is running efficiently and effectively, and that has a secure and solid foundation and future.

Countrywide Assured asked Investor in Customers (IIC) to provide an independent, third-party assessment and verification of their current levels of customer and staff experience, provide an in-depth report with analysis and business insights of that experience, and an appraisal to identify any areas of concern and highlight potential areas for improvement.

How it works

The Investor in Customers (IIC) award is an independent mark of distinction, based on a unique model which measures the customer experience in an impartial way, taking into account internal perceptions as well as the external client view. There are three award levels – gold, silver and bronze which are derived from a published standard and give prospective clients the confidence about the customer experience they will receive from the company. The award is an independent assessment of excellence in the field of customer service and customer relationships and helps awarded companies differentiate themselves from their competitors.



The assessment is built around **four principles of customer experience**: Understand Customer Needs; Meet Customer Needs; Delight Customers and Engender Loyalty. These principles are then divided into a further 16 themes.

The Outcome

The 2020 IIC Assessment result is Silver!

A superb result, on their first attempt, not far off a Gold award, with really solid scores across all four IIC principles.

The assessment provided some excellent feedback and insight from staff and clients alike meaning that Countrywide Assured now have the tools to really drill down into that feedback to drive an improvement programme across the company with the continued help of IIC.

A plan of action is now in place to implement these changes.

When asked: “What three words would you use to describe the company” most popular were:

<i>Customer focused</i>	<i>Engaging</i>	<i>Forward thinking</i>
<i>Progressive</i>	<i>Flexible</i>	<i>Efficient</i>

Comments from customers included:

- *“I am pleased with the service and the management of the growth of the pension funds, especially in these difficult times.”*
- *“Responded to my one request in a simple and helpful way.”*
- *“When I queried the need to provide information with a joint policy holder the reply was understanding and practical.”*
- *“Their honesty that they do not provide the pension package I want.”*
- *“Most staff answering the telephone speak clearly and can be understood. All staff have been polite.”*
- *“Rachel was able to explain things to me in a way I was able to fully understand.”*

Tony Barritt, Managing Director at IIC, commented: “Countrywide Assured undertook their first Investor in Customers (IIC) assessment and, whilst pleased with their initial Silver Accreditation, recognised that they can still improve the way they interact with their clients. IIC’s comprehensive report and action plan is being implemented and all employees in the business are focused on delivering an exceptional experience for all clients as part of Countrywide Assured’s Customer Commitment programme.”

Ken Hogg, CEO of Countrywide Assured added: “Working with Investor in Customers gives an honest, independent view of our Customer Experience, with expert interpretation which Countrywide Assured cannot get from internal reports. Joining the IIC community also allows us to benchmark our customer experience activities with other organisations across a wide spectrum of industries. We can then share best practice and learn from each other about how to exceed ever increasing customer expectations.”

