



#2017 FIA Awards

The Financial Intermediaries Association of Southern Africa (FIA) annual awards celebration is the highlight on the association's calendar. In a process perfected over 19 years, the FIA's intermediary members choose the best insurer brands based on their perception of the product, relationship and support on offer. Brands that emerge victorious can proudly claim to be companies that go the extra mile for the intermediary, who in turn recommends appropriate financial products to consumers.

The 2017 FIA Awards winners were announced at a reinvented function held at the Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, on 8 June. Instead of persisting with the tried and tested awards formula, staff at the FIA tried their hand at some radical event transformation and no

stone was left unturned. Instead of row upon row of 10-seat tables, guests were free to mingle as they saw fit, choosing from cocktail tables, lounge areas and an array of informal seating. Freed up from the time constraints inherent in feeding 1 000-plus guests, the FIA was able to start the 2017 event a full three hours earlier.

The FIA's 600 guests had filed into the event venue by 17h00. Guests included the regulators, the FIA board, FIA Advisory Council (made up of FIA branch chairs and vice chairs), dozens of FIA members and, of course, industry representatives from the many firms active in the insurance sector.

"The feedback received from guests on the evening was incredible," says Gareth

Stokes, communications manager at the FIA. "Everyone I spoke to on the evening loved the new format, with the most frequent compliments being about the networking convenience and the pre-21h00 finish." He adds that the informal cocktail format, the red carpet entranceway and the fun horse-racing theme were all well received. But, of course, the real stars of the evening were the insurers, finalists and winners alike.

Stokes explains that while the event planners had free rein to shake up the function, it was essential that a consistent methodology be applied to determine the winners. The complex task of surveying FIA members and subsequently determining the results was handed to Ask Afrika, South Africa's largest independent research firm (and the FIA's



2017 winners

THE 2017 FIA AWARDS WINNERS (left to right): Viresh Maharaj, CEO of Sanlam Employee Benefits; Peter Olyott, president of the FIA; Lizelle van der Merwe, CEO of the FIA; Raymond Mhere, regional manager at Allan Gray; Edward Gibbens, executive head of commercial and personal at Santam; Marco Fonto, managing director at Stratum Benefits; Quinton Matthew, executive head of specialist business at Santam; Wimpie Mouton, executive of life broker services at PPS; Jonathan Rosenberg, CEO at Renasa; Stuart Sinclair, director at Leppard Underwriting; Damian McHugh, head of health and marketing at Momentum.

A celebration of insurers, intermediaries and the value of good financial advice.

survey partner for 2017). Ask Africa was challenged by FIA CEO Lizelle van der Merwe to reconceptualise and reinvigorate the awards survey process without straying too far from the existing method.

“We created real tension this year by keeping the results under lock and key; nobody knew who the winners were until our MC Carel Nolte broke the seal on the various envelopes,” says Stokes. “Carel created additional buzz by shuffling the order of the announcements – jumping from short-term to healthcare to employee benefits and back to short-term insurance, instead of dishing out the prizes as in the past: category by category.”

The FIA is proud to announce the 2017 FIA Awards winners, each recognised by FIA

members as companies that go the extra mile for the intermediary, enabling us to ensure positive financial outcomes for consumers.

The FIA has lofty goals of leveraging the awards to spread the ‘value of good financial advice’ message to as many consumers as possible. “We want to inform consumers that our members, the individuals and firms that advise them on a wide range of financial products really care about positive advice-backed financial outcomes,” says Stokes. He adds that FIA members should not lose sight of the fact that while product suppliers walk away with the accolades on the night, the awards are also a celebration of the value that financial advisers, insurance brokers and other financial advice professionals bring to the industry. ➤

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AWARD WINNERS

Short-term insurance

Short-term Insurer of the Year:
Personal Lines – Santam

Short-term Insurer of the Year:

Commercial – Renasa

Short-term Insurer of the Year:

Corporate – Santam

Underwriting Manager of the

Year – Leppard Underwriting

Life and investment

Long-term Insurer of the Year:

Risk – PPS

Product Supplier of the Year:

Investment Product Lump Sum –

Allan Gray

Product Supplier of the Year:

Investment Product Savings – Allan

Gray

Employee benefits

Product Supplier of the Year:

Employee Benefits – Sanlam

Employee Benefits

Healthcare

Product Supplier of the Year:

Healthcare (Medical Schemes) –

Momentum Health

Product Supplier of the Year:

Health Insurance – Stratum Benefits



Edward Gibbens, executive head of commercial and personal at Santam accepts the Short-Term Insurer of the Year – Personal Lines award from Peter Olyott, president of the FIA (left).



Raymond Mhere, regional manager at Allan Gray accepts the Product Supplier of the Year – Investment Products Single Premium award from Lizelle van der Merwe, CEO of the FIA (left), and Peter Olyott, president of the FIA (centre).



Viresh Maharaj, chief executive officer of Sanlam Employee Benefits accepts the Product Supplier of the Year – Employee Benefits award from Lizelle van der Merwe, CEO of the FIA (left), and Peter Olyott, president of the FIA (centre).



Damian McHugh, head of health and marketing at Momentum accepts the Product Supplier of the Year – Healthcare award from Lizelle van der Merwe, CEO of the FIA (left), and Peter Olyott, president of the FIA (centre).



Marco Fanto, managing director at Stratum Benefits accepts the Product Supplier of the Year – Healthcare award from Peter Olyott, president of the FIA (left).



The FIA is extremely proud of the awards and the value that they represent; in particular, supporting the industry's overarching goals of consumer protection, financial inclusion and transformation. "Our heartfelt appreciation goes to each of our members for making the awards, now in their 19th year,

such a resounding success. Our congratulations go to each of the financial services brands, winners and runners-up, who have emerged in the final stages of the 2017 FIA Awards. Thank you for your continued support of the FIA, our members and the intermediated distribution model," concludes Stokes. 📌