

# It's all about teamwork...

Turn the gloom into a boom with a supportive partner

Overcoming the industry's hurdles is a job on its own for independent brokers. Throw in a bear market in the midst of a worldwide financial crisis, and you're going to need a cool head as well as a supportive partner to be able to survive and succeed in 2009 and beyond.

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It's important not to panic," says Ian Middleton, managing director of Masthead, South Africa's leading broker network. "In this tough financial environment your clients need expert advice and will rely on your guidance for a sensible financial plan. Continue to focus on the basics and communicate regularly with your clients to reassure them that they are on track to achieve their financial goals."

## Get the right support

He continues, "It's also essential to receive the right support so you can wholeheartedly focus on your business. Masthead is committed to partnering with independent brokers to help them build successful and valuable businesses. Masthead does this in various ways. The organisation's range of professional support services will simplify your processes, save you time and prepare you to overcome industry challenges.

Middleton elaborates, "On the one hand we provide easily accessible web based tools and information. Generic forms on our website, accepted by our product partners, significantly reduce members' administration. We also publish useful information on our website such as annuity rates, daily market indicators, unit trust fund fact sheets and fund comparison tools."

## Prepared for the challenges

"On the other hand, we prepare members for the challenges they face," says Middleton. "We do this by compiling risk management plans. We also encourage members to utilise our first-class practice management services and provide advice on product marketing and compliance."

## Networking

Masthead will continue to complement its offerings and services to simplify life for its members. Among its plans for 2009 is another countrywide roadshow, as the popular Professional Development Days provide "an exciting networking opportunity to educate, inform and motivate members". In addition, we will maintain our good relationships with industry regulators and decision makers, and continue to speak and act on behalf of independent brokers," says Middleton.

## Every chance of success

As a member of Masthead, brokers adhere to minimum standards, and are obliged to operate with integrity and honesty. Clients like to know their financial advisor abides by such a code of conduct, and potential clients may specifically seek an independent broker who is a Masthead member.

"There is significant feedback indicating how we have added value to independent brokers' lives," says Middleton. "With the progress we've already accomplished, the plans we have in place for the year and with the backing and support of our product partners, namely Old Mutual, Sanlam, Liberty Life, Metropolitan Life, Metropolitan Odyssey and Auto & General, we give our members and their clients every chance to enjoy a successful 2009."



**MASTHEAD**  
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