

GOING THE EXTRA MILE: CUSTOMER SERVICE WEEK ENDS WITH RENEWED FOCUS ON CLAIMANTS FIRST



SMVAF staff posing for a group photo

MBABANE – As Customer Service Week 2026 draws to a close, employees of the Sincephetelo Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (SMVAF) have been challenged to ensure that the principles discussed throughout the week translate into lasting changes in the way claimants are served.

Held under the theme *“The Extra Mile,”* the week-long commemoration provided an opportunity for the Fund to reflect on service delivery, recognise the importance of its people and reinforce its commitment to placing claimants at the centre of everything it does. The highlight of the week was a thought-provoking presentation by guest speaker Riccardo Kruger on *“Emotional Intelligence in Customer Service: Enhancing Claimant Experience Through Effective Communication and Feedback.”*

Kruger reminded employees that exceptional customer service begins with the individual.

“Customer centricity is a culture,” he said. “It is about placing the customer at the centre of everything that we do.”

His presentation focused on the importance of attitude, emotional intelligence, communication and teamwork in shaping the claimant experience. He stressed that while systems and processes play an important role, it is the daily actions and behaviours of employees that leave a lasting impression on those seeking assistance from the Fund.

A recurring message throughout the session was the influence of attitude on service delivery.

“Your emotional and psychological state at the point of providing a service will inform how you will treat customers,” Kruger said.

He encouraged employees to be intentional about the mindset they bring to work each day, noting that attitude affects not only interactions with claimants but also relationships with colleagues and the ability to respond constructively to workplace challenges.

Using an analogy of “ducks” and “eagles,” Kruger illustrated two contrasting approaches to work and service. According to him, “ducks” are often characterised by complaints, negativity and excuses, while “eagles” take ownership, show initiative and focus on solutions.

“Eagles take action, initiative and responsibility to do their best with customers,” he said.

The message resonated strongly with the Customer Service Week theme, highlighting that going the extra mile often begins with a willingness to take responsibility and seek solutions rather than focusing on obstacles.

Kruger also emphasised the value of self-awareness and self-regulation, encouraging employees to appreciate their own worth, understand the value they bring to the organisation and remain mindful of how they respond during difficult situations. Emotional intelligence, he noted, plays a critical role in both claimant interactions and workplace relationships.

Communication was identified as another cornerstone of quality

service. Employees were encouraged to practise active listening, communicate clearly and respectfully, show empathy and remain attentive when assisting claimants.

Teamwork also featured prominently in the discussion.

“Everything we do eventually ends up in front of the customer. Let’s look for ways to make each other look good,” Kruger said.

He reminded employees that while work may be divided across different departments and units, claimants ultimately experience one organisation. Supporting colleagues and working collaboratively, therefore, directly contributes to a better customer experience.

Speaking during the event, Corporate Services Executive Sam Mzileni echoed many of Kruger’s sentiments, reminding employees that customer expectations continue to evolve and that organisations must adapt accordingly.

He thanked staff members for their dedication and commitment to serving claimants and encouraged them to view challenges as opportunities for improvement. Referring to the Fund’s Net Promoter Score (NPS) journey, Mzileni said there was value in learning from other organisations and adopting best practices that can strengthen the claimant experience.

At the centre of his message was the importance of empathy and respect.

“Do unto others as you would



Guest Speaker, Riccardo Kruger



SMVAF CSE, Sam Mzileni

have them do unto you,” Mzileni said.

He encouraged employees to place themselves in the claimant’s position and deliver the level of service they would expect to receive themselves.

As Customer Service Week 2026 comes to an end, the key lesson emerging from the discussions is that service excellence is not a once-off campaign but a daily commitment. The week served as a reminder that going the extra mile does not always

require extraordinary gestures. It can be demonstrated through attentive listening, clear communication, teamwork, accountability and a genuine desire to help.

For SMVAF, these principles align closely with its Service Charter promise of *“Claimants First.”* The challenge now is for employees to carry the spirit of Customer Service Week beyond the celebrations and into their everyday work, ensuring that going the extra mile becomes not just a theme, but a way of life.

SMVAF'S RENEWED COMMITMENT TO CLAIMANTS

MBABANE – The Sincephetelo Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (SMVAF) has reaffirmed its commitment to placing claimants at the centre of its operations as it commemorates Customer Service Week from 5 to 9 October 2026 under the theme, “The Extra Mile.”

Launching the week on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer, Acting Chief Executive Officer Sensokuhle Masuku reminded employees that the Fund exists to serve people whose lives have been profoundly affected by road traffic accidents.

of greatest need,” he said. “Many of our claimants come to us while recovering from serious injuries, while others are families mourning the loss of loved ones and breadwinners. Behind every claim is a person, a family and a story.”

Masuku said the Fund's service promise, “*Claimants First*,” must be reflected in every interaction with claimants and stakeholders. He emphasised that customer service is not the responsibility of frontline employees alone, but of every staff member whose work contributes to the claimant journey.

The Acting CEO noted that Customer Experience is one of the Fund's key strategic priorities under its 2026-2030 Strategy, with a focus on improving engagement with claimants, reducing claim processing times and enhancing overall customer

satisfaction.

Drawing from recent Net Promoter Score survey findings, he acknowledged areas that require improvement, including prolonged turnaround times, inconsistent feedback, delayed doctors' appointments and the need to consistently honour commitments made to claimants.

“While we may not always be able to provide immediate solutions, we can always communicate honestly and timeously. Keeping claimants informed demonstrates respect, builds trust and reassures them that their matter is receiving attention,” he said.

Masuku challenged employees to approach their work with empathy, professionalism and a sense of ownership, reminding them that the Fund's role extends beyond administration

to restoring hope, dignity and stability to people whose lives have been disrupted by road crashes.

The launch featured a motivational address by Ricardo Kruger, Head of Compliance at Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS), who spoke on emotional intelligence in customer service and the importance of effective feedback. Recognised as one of the country's leading customer experience practitioners, Kruger shared lessons from ERS's customer experience journey and encouraged employees to embrace service excellence through empathy, accountability and consistent communication.

“As we celebrate Customer



SMVAF ACEO, Sensokuhle Masuku

Service Week, let us remember that excellence is achieved through consistent acts of care, accountability and compassion,” Masuku said. “Many injured persons and bereaved families depend on this Fund. We therefore have a responsibility to go the extra mile every day and ensure that our claimants truly experience our promise of “*Claimants First*.”



“SMVAF is more than an institution that processes claims. We are a friend to people in their time

SMVAF TAKES CUSTOMER SERVICE BEYOND THE OFFICE



Mahhala Outreach, Mobile Office

MATSAPHA – As organisations around the world commemorate Customer Service Week under the theme “The Extra Mile,” the Sincephetelo Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (SMVAF) is demonstrating its commitment to taking services closer to the people it serves through claimant outreach programmes conduct-

ed under the “*Claimants First*” banner.

Following the launch of the SMVAF Act of 2026 in July, the Fund embarked on regional outreach activations aimed at improving access to services and engaging claimants directly within their communities.

The first activation, held in Siteki, attended to 88 claimants from the Lubombo Region, while the second, hosted at Mahhala in Matsapha from 1 to 3 October 2026, attracted an overwhelming 598 claimants. In total, 686 claimants were assisted across the two outreach programmes.

The outreaches also delivered tangible results, with a total of 79 offers processed and signed across Siteki and Matsapha, amounting to E4 862 612, bringing much-needed relief to claimants and their families.

Corporate Communications Manager, Makhosi Magongo, said the strong turnout demonstrates the importance of bringing services directly to communities.

“The response from claimants confirms that there is a real need for accessible services. For us, going the extra mile means meeting people where they are, listening to their concerns and ensuring they receive timely assistance. Customer service is not confined to a single week; it is a commitment we strive to uphold every day.”

Client Services Manager, Phindile Mthethwa, said the outreach programme forms part of the Fund's broader effort to improve the claimant experience.

“Many of our claimants are recovering from injuries or coping with the loss of loved ones. By taking our services closer to them, we reduce barriers to access and provide an opportunity for direct engagement. We remain committed to providing feedback, resolving outstanding matters and ensuring that claimants feel heard and supported throughout their claims journey.”

The Fund has extended the processing of matters received during the Matsapha activation into the coming weeks to ensure all enquiries receive the necessary attention.

For SMVAF, the outreach programme is a practical demonstration of its service promise, “*Claimants First*,” and a reminder that going the extra mile means continuously finding ways to better serve those affected by road traffic accidents.



SMVAF staff attending to claimant at Siteki



SMVAF staff attending to claimants at Mahhala



SMVAF employee posing with claimant