

for financial advisers only

service excellence :

the changing face of service

October 2009

As founder of the Institute of Customer Service, **John Tomlins**, Skandia's Chief Operating Officer, is committed to delivering – and promoting – world-class standards.

As I write, National Customer Service Week (5 – 9 October) is just wrapping up a series of events all over the country designed to raise awareness of the vital role customer service plays within organisations. The week is also an opportunity to celebrate the hard work being done by those who deliver the sort of customer experience that makes all the difference to those we rely on for our success.

This issue of *informer* focuses on the way that financial advisers can benefit from the challenges of the RDR and the changes it will bring in our industry over the coming years. It talks about ways to develop sustainable relationships with clients so that long-term value can be embedded – and how improved technology can complement the advice and service proposition.

Service is a subject closer to my heart than any other aspect of our business. Even though we have won more Financial Adviser Five Star Service awards than any other provider, I am never complacent about the quality of the service we deliver from the centre. We remain committed to continuous improvement.

It's timely therefore to consider the key role that excellence in customer service plays in helping improve efficiency and profitability.

Regardless of the regulatory and structural changes involved in implementing RDR requirements, it's vital for your business – as it is for us as providers – that we continue to be considered 'easy to do business with' by our customers. And that in turn involves the four key ingredients of a truly world-class service:

- Deliver what you promise to deliver
- Provide a personal touch
- Go the extra mile when you have to
- Resolve problems well

With the world of financial services moving towards greater standardisation – through simpler product design and greater transparency in pricing and payment – the relationship you enjoy with your clients is increasingly going to be one of the best ways to differentiate your business from the competition.

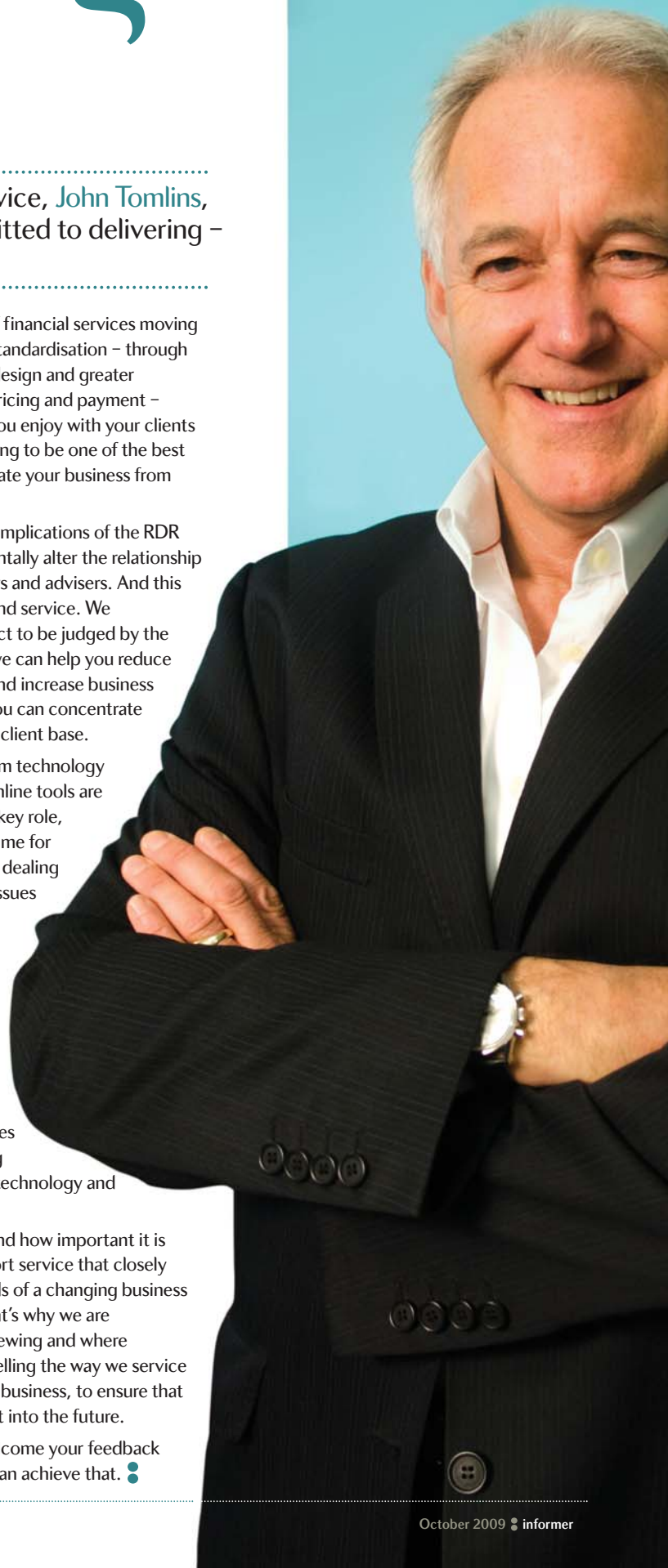
It's clear that the implications of the RDR will also fundamentally alter the relationship between providers and advisers. And this too revolves around service. We increasingly expect to be judged by the extent to which we can help you reduce operating costs and increase business efficiencies, so you can concentrate on servicing your client base.

Advanced platform technology and automated online tools are already playing a key role, freeing up more time for advisers to spend dealing with customers' issues and on business development.

For Skandia, the adoption of new, post-2012 business models by advisers, presents a challenge that goes beyond delivering streamlined new technology and processes.

We well understand how important it is to deliver a support service that closely matches the needs of a changing business environment. That's why we are continuously reviewing and where necessary remodelling the way we service and support your business, to ensure that it remains relevant into the future.

As always, we welcome your feedback on how best we can achieve that. :



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