
Sun Life VA Sales Up 35% At Mid-Year

By Editor Test *Tue, Oct 13, 2009*

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The U.S. division of Sun Life Financial Inc. said its first-half 2009 variable annuity (VA) sales rose 35%, versus the first half of 2008, while VA industry's overall sales fell 25.4% for that period, according to Morningstar/VARDS.

Sun Life was the fifteenth largest seller of variable annuities in the U.S. in the first half of 2009, with \$1.4 billion in sales and a 2.3% share of the VA market, according to LIMRA International. Sun Life's parent company has a Standard & Poor strength rating of AA2, a Moody's rating of Aa3, and a Fitch rating of A+3, as of June 30, 2009.

The firm's year-over-year gains occurred in all three major financial distribution channels. The company's assets rose 10.7%, more than double the industry's 5.1% gain. The Wellesley, Mass.-based insurer also almost doubled its market share in VA sales since the end of 2008, and 91% of its new VA sales for the first half of the year included at least one optional living benefit.

Sun Life VA sales increased against the industry average in all three financial distribution channels. Its wirehouse sales rose 82.6%, to \$596.7 million in the first half of 2009 versus the first half of 2008, independent channel sales rose 46.6%, to \$536.3 million, and bank sales rose 6.3%, to \$226.2 million. The industry's overall sales fell 28%, 23.2%, and 43.4% in those channels, respectively.

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