CITCO ROLLS OUT NEW TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION

HFWWeek hears how one of the sector's biggest admins is harnessing technology to improve the manager and investor experience

BY SAM MACDONALD

With clients and investment professionals demanding more and more from their alternative asset managers, the importance of technology as a key differentiator has never been under more scrutiny.

Technology is crucial on more than one front; managers need to be able to have access to more of their own data, but also present it in a way that makes it easier to analyse and explain their portfolios and performance to clients.

The Citco group of companies is set to launch the next generation of its proprietary CitcoOne web platform by the end of June, through which it is looking to provide its clients with access to consolidated data in a simplified format using "dynamic visualisation".

The product is described as "a simple way to monitor, survey and explore the information that is important to the user. It leverages new technology frameworks to intelligently expose different levels of content".

This web platform has been some time in the making, with the firm initiating the design phase of the product in 2013.

Nick Eisenlau, head of Citco's product strategy, is responsible for the development of the platform. He claims CitcoOne is "less about offering managers and their clients access to as much data as possible, and more about giving them access to the right data. CitcoOne is a natural evolution of our longstanding expertise in providing online access to data for clients, especially investors".

"We spoke extensively to fintech start-up companies to determine how we can better serve up the huge amounts of data within our applications, as well as providing tools to analyse this data.

"Most administrators don't have the time, energy or necessarily the know-how to synthesise something useful from massive amounts of data. So, through the reporting tools available on CitcoOne, we allow them not only to access this data but to dissect and present valuable information in a smarter form," he added.

From a manager standpoint, CitcoOne offers interactive dashboards with estimated and final NAV production progress giving a live view of the many steps leading up to official fund financial metrics and subsequent distribution of investor statements. "The manager can now see exactly where we are in the process."

In addition, the platform shows cash and position reconciliation work across all counterparties throughout the day as well as live views of investor capital activity. Users can upload documents to the site for investors to access with integrated notification alerts and security preferences.

As far as daily portfolio activity goes, interactive charts and graphs can be sliced and viewed by long/short exposure, gross, net or attribution of portfolio and P&L is broken down by asset type, country, sector and counterparty, amongst others.

In addition, CitcoOne enables managers to co-brand with their own company logo and website data as well as providing the managers with content customisation consistent with their own marketing materials.

A new investor experience includes a single log-in across all investments in Citco administered funds, a consolidation of all documents from different investment managers as well as a live status of activity processing.

Perhaps most interestingly for investors, the platform gives them paperless access to submit additional subscriptions or to redeem into their funds via the web.

"There is significant demand in the industry towards online dealing and CitcoOne will be at the forefront of these changes," says Eisenlau.

The overall service is backed up by the Citco group of companies' 24/7 global support team as well as online tutorials which allow users to walk through the process, although it is expected that CitcoOne will actually reduce the amount of interaction with its helpdesk, given its intuitive design.

"The differentiators are the dynamic visualisation, workflow transparency and usability – it is all about saving people time," says Eisenlau.

He adds that he thinks this latest offering, which comes as part of its existing administration service, has set the standard for other administrators to follow. ■