

Asian heritage drives Mirae Asset's global growth strategy

Ashley Dale of Mirae Asset Global Investments explains how the Korean firm is looking to build on its offering in the international market, using its high-conviction, Asia-centric investment focus to its advantage.

Leveraging off two of its flagship Asia Pacific funds, Mirae Asset Global Investments has a clear plan to gain greater recognition globally.

As a Korean asset manager by origin, the firm has established strong roots across Asia. And in a region where competition among its peers has become increasingly intense, such a legacy gives the firm a point of differentiation it is looking to exploit.

business development at Mirae Asset, the core capabilities of the firm are based on it being Asian and running high-quality local products.

This ties in to its ambitions for both the short and long term.

For example, explains Dale, the firm would like to implement more feeder funds in South-east Asia, to add to the one it already has, run through CIMB,



ASHLEY DALE
Mirae Asset Global Investments

“The firm would like to implement more feeder funds in South-east Asia, to add to the one it already has... which is based in the firm’s Korean equity product.”

According to Ashley Dale, chief marketing officer and head of international

which is based in the firm’s Korean equity product.

Looking further afield, and as appetite for all things Asian continues to grow, he sees potential to broaden Mirae Asset’s horizons to Europe.

EUROPEAN GROWTH

The European strategy is already underway, with a small team established in London within the last year. This is key to Dale's growth plans for the next 12 to 24 months.

The decision to further expand in this region is fueled by the willingness of local asset buyers to look into Asia ex-Japan funds in line with growing interest in emerging markets.

To achieve his objective, Dale says he intends to implement the philosophy of providing the kind of support and after-sales service that he prides his team on. "Often the perception is that once an account is opened, it is left on the shelf," he says.

FLAGSHIP FUNDS

One of the key strengths Dale points to relates to the investment process. "We run very concentrated portfolios; we're bottom-up and highly benchmark agnostic," he explains.

This is a theme which cuts across its 14 SICAV funds, based out of Luxembourg.

Two of the firm's flagship funds epitomise this philosophy: the Asia Sector Leader Equity Fund, and the Asia Great Consumer Fund.

The first of these has a three-and-a-half-year track record, and invests into industries including consumer discretionary, healthcare, e-commerce and also technology.

lio for three years-plus, for both of these funds," says Dale.

On the passive side of the firm's business, Mirae Asset has a growing presence in the exchange traded funds (ETF) space globally.

In Canada, for example, the firm bought into an ETF business called Horizons around four years ago. This has about USD5 billion in AUM.

There is also an ETF presence in Australia called BetaShares, which Dale believes is another strong business.

The firm's ETF presence in Hong Kong, meanwhile, is a co-branded product with Horizons, under which ETFs are on the Hang Seng Index.

GETTING RECOGNISED

Key to Dale's plans is gaining more traction with private banks.

To make his mark in a crowded marketplace, Dale suggests he needs to create a niche, such as a longer-term investment opportunity.

This is in line with what he believes the firm is good at: delivering a more customised product. "There's always a temptation to sell everything to everyone, but that is not the case with us."

In addition, clients need to be educated further about their investment decisions. Without such clarity on their strategy, it becomes a blur.

This will help him overcome challenges associated with getting on approved portfolio lists, by providing something new to investors, rather than just more of the same. ■

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However, he believes the hard work comes afterwards. "That is educating relationship managers about the product and keeping the level of interest high."

This all stems from the original motivation that Mirae Asset had: to make its business more international and build on its base of solid products within the Korean market.

Through Hong Kong initially, the firm now has around USD5 billion out of its global USD75 billion in AUM.

"It's an approximately 50-stock portfolio and its benchmark agnostic, so we really look forward to great bottom-up stories," says Dale. "We do a huge amount of research; we always meet the companies in which we invest."

The Asia Great Consumer Fund is smaller, with a portfolio of 30 stocks, which are highly concentrated. This Asia-focused theme allows for investments in healthcare, technology and IT.

"We're looking at companies and stocks that we're going to keep in the portfo-