

Credit Suisse adopts new delivery model for digital banking app

Credit Suisse's new digital banking app required a sizeable investment in terms of time, people and budget. But the wealth manager believes it now has the platform to enhance connectivity and collaboration between its bankers and clients, says Urs Lichtenberger.

Credit Suisse has been quicker than most of its private banking rivals in Asia to embrace digital.

Paying close attention to evidence about the increasing tech-savviness and related demands of HNW individuals in the region, the wealth manager set about developing a new digital banking app to respond to these.

In doing so, launching it in March 2015 in Singapore, Credit Suisse believes it has taken a significant step towards providing the type of integrated digital and direct channel experience which is a pre-requisite for many clients today.

The investment essentially increases clients' access to portfolio analytics, research and market data, collaboration and transaction services.

"We want to capture this opportunity and deepen the relationship with our current and next generation of private

banking clients," says Urs Lichtenberger, director, programme head digital private banking, chief operating officer department, private banking Asia Pacific, Credit Suisse.

Undoubtedly, it will be complex to engage everyone in the organisation to embrace this change, and understand what going digital means for everyone.

"But the advantages for our clients and front-office teams are substantial and therefore the organisation is very positive about this business model change," says Lichtenberger.

INFORMATION ADVANTAGE

The accessibility and transparency the app offers means that the bank's clients get a wealth of information about their accounts around the clock.

At the same time, they can view market insights and intelligence that is personalised according to their portfolio.



URS LICHTENBERGER
Credit Suisse

And when they want to act on this information, the app gives them trading tools to enable them to respond quickly to moving markets.

Key for Lichtenberger has been the fact that this has been achieved without compromising usability.

“It has a simple user interface and facilitates multiple channels of connectivity and collaboration for clients with their relationship manager (RM) and the Credit Suisse team,” he explains.

Ultimately, he adds, clients are empowered to actively expand their knowledge, to stay informed and connected to their team of Credit Suisse experts and, equipped with all of these insights, to make better financial decisions.

“The use of digital technology to empower clients in these ways is available in other industry sectors,” explains Lichtenberger. “We feel that it should be available for wealth management clients too.”

Yet the app is a work-in-progress. The bank says it is committed to releasing new features and enhancements in phases to ensure it caters to the current and emerging needs of clients.

OUTSIDE IN

One of the most important aspects of the development process for Credit Suisse was getting client feedback from an early stage.

Only by getting such insights from clients to define the value proposition, features and user experience, does Lichtenberger feel confident the platform can enhance the interaction with clients while also benefiting the bank’s RMs.

This led to a different way of thinking about how to tailor the app to various types of clients.

Instead of segmenting them by traditional approaches such as AUM or source of wealth, Credit Suisse analysed how its clients make decisions in relation to their finances.

This shed further light on the reality that the majority of the bank’s private banking clients in Asia Pacific want to understand investment opportunities and trade-offs to validate with their advisers, who think in the mid- to long-

A new approach to delivery

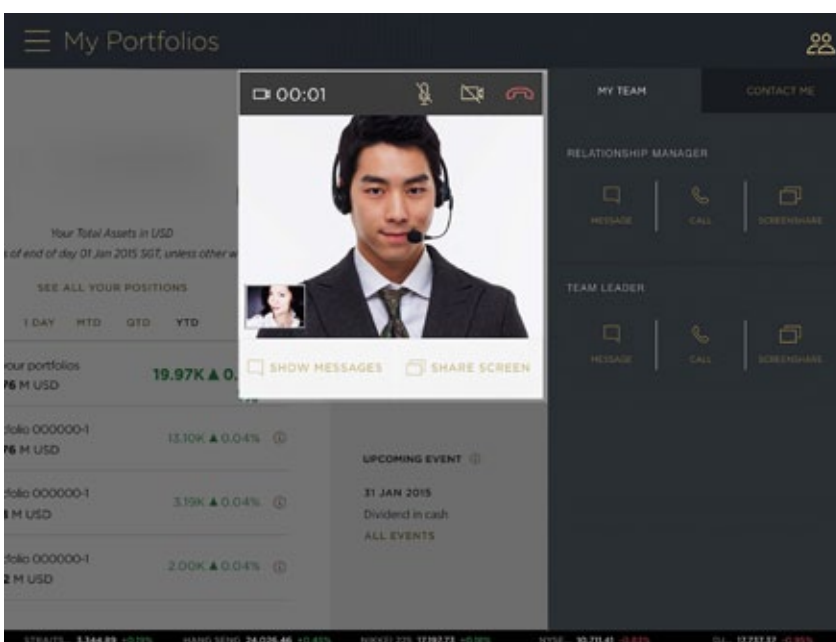
Credit Suisse’s digital private banking solution was developed in Singapore. An Innovation Hub was set up on one of the bank’s premises, where a development team of around 200 employees and vendors worked closely to create and deliver the bank’s new platform.

Developing it in less than a year, Lichtenberger and his team embraced a completely new delivery model – one inspired by successful technology companies – by adopting a much more agile approach to developing banking technology solutions.

This involved an effort to constantly prioritise and refine the product development process by listening to feedback from clients and colleagues, then launching new functionality releases in short cycles.

In many instances, the team delivered working software every two weeks.

This incremental approach allowed Lichtenberger to constantly test and improve the features and continually enhance the capabilities and functionalities going forward.



term and appreciate support in understanding global markets and refining their views and ideas before taking a final investment decision.

“We designed, developed and prioritised the features of our first product release based on what these clients expect from our bank and our digital offering,” explains Lichtenberger. “We

also fully engaged with our clients in the process of designing and shaping the digital solution, with in-depth, one-on-one 'Voice of the Client' sessions held with around 100 clients across the region. Their feedback shaped the way our first release of the digital private banking app looks today."

In addition to listening to clients, Lichtenberger and his team held many 'Voice of the Business' sessions with more than 80 members from the relationship management teams.

GAME-CHANGING

In Lichtenberger's opinion, taking this kind of approach breaks some important ground for the development of technology and new capabilities within private banking more generally.

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"We are redesigning the way in which we interact with, curate content for and advise our clients," he explains. "It is not just an enhancement to the client experience, but a transformation of our private banking service model."

For example, the app essentially introduces a multi-channel service delivery model, with many more client-activated touch points and flexibility in the way that RMs and the Credit Suisse team interact with clients, through a suite of innovative collaboration tools.

Further, news and content are curated for clients differently – they will have access to watch lists, market data and Credit Suisse insights through the app, in turn altering the types of discussions clients have with their RMs. As a result, these bankers need to be well-versed in the news and research available to their clients.

At the same time, an intuitive user interface enables clients to self-serve for basic transactions.

"This requires rethinking the way private banking works, including organisation, process architecture and supporting technologies," says Lichtenberger.

For those private banks which can get this right, they stand to benefit from

the opportunity Asia offers. As a relatively nascent industry in this region, it faces an interesting growth challenge, namely a lack of talent to cater to the increasing demand for wealth management services. "We believe digital will help us close the gap between demand for our services and our ability to service that demand," says Lichtenberger.

TRANSFORMATIONAL

As the app is initially available on the iPad, Credit Suisse plans to extend access to other devices, including the

How digital private banking benefits RMs

- **More focused** – RMs will have more time to focus on their clients' priorities. Clients will be able to manage many administrative activities themselves, freeing up the bankers to focus on value-added interactions with their clients.
- **More effective** – RMs can use the digital channel to deliver ideas and content to clients, and clients have new channels to access key information about their portfolios, ideas and research insights. This means RMs' and their clients can be pre-informed prior to in-person discussions.
- **More empowered** – As the number and quality of client touch-points increases, RMs will have greater insights into clients' preferences. Also, clients are empowered with the information that is most important to them and with the capacity to trade or to engage the team at the bank, whenever they choose.
- **More engaged** – RMs and clients can leverage multiple collaboration touch-points, via a secure suite of communications channels.

Apple iPhone, web browsers, and devices operating on Google Android.

It will also be rolled out progressively to clients in Singapore and across Asia Pacific. New features and enhancements will be released in phases, for

example tools for portfolio analysis, greater trading capabilities and alerts based on clients' preferences.

After Asia Pacific, the roll-out of its digital private banking platform will then take place in other regions.

The bank also has a change programme in place to accompany its employees all the way, market by market, team by team, to bring them on board the digital private banking platform. This will help them serve their clients better in this new environment.

But beyond the tool itself, moving digital private banking forward in this way is a first step in the transformation of a wealth management business, with the client at the centre of it.

For Credit Suisse, this means creating new capabilities to complement the experience and expertise of its RMs.

Key to keep in mind is the fact that this is not a digital-only channel that replaces the human touch. It is, in fact, a multi-channel experience between the client and the bank that increases connectivity and collaboration. "The RM will always remain at the centre of the client relationship," says Lichtenberger. "Client access to tailored information and content will save the RM time and allow them to engage clients in higher value conversations."

MEASURABLE RESULTS

Beyond the hype around digital private banking, however, its value and meaning comes down to being able to monitor

tracking web analytics to understand the way clients are using the app. This also gives the bank insights to further enhance the client experience.

At the same time, the bank has been conducting review sessions with clients.

"We are encouraged by the response and enthusiasm among those who have already downloaded the app since it has gone live," says Lichtenberger.

Notable feedback from clients includes the app's simplicity without it being simplistic; the combination of design with intelligence and analytics; its visual appeal; the provision of actionable insights; and the way it facilitates more productive and proactive conversations with RMs. ■

