

Leveraging a digital dimension to portfolio advice

Despite its scale, BlackRock is increasingly agile in how it is adapting its platform to deliver digital capabilities that can help wealth managers in Asia shift from product selling to portfolio advisory, explains Damien Mooney.

A confluence of factors is encouraging BlackRock to develop new tools and adapt existing platforms to become more nimble and relevant in the way it adds value to private banks and other wealth managers in Asia.

The catalyst for the world's largest asset manager to add such new services to its existing product offering is regulatory-led change across the industry. This is shining a spotlight on the need for transparency in relation to the manufacturing and distribution of funds, putting pressure on fees and, in turn, encouraging a move from commissions to fee-based advice.

At the same time, investment and wealth managers alike face the continual challenge of low rates and generating income-oriented outcomes. Further, there is the ongoing disruption via technology and innovation, as well as the changing investment needs of a younger generation of clients.

Against this backdrop, the private banking and wealth management industry continues to grapple with how to deliver portfolio advice to address the many challenges the current environment presents.

And playing its role in responding to these trends, BlackRock is extending its capabilities in the digital space to this community.

The aim, says Damien Mooney, head of the firm's retail and wealth advisory business in Asia Pacific, is to work more closely with various banks and advisers to help them build the right types of portfolios to match the needs and risk profile of their clients.

It is doing this via an array of relevant and flexible tools and platform-based services that were previously only available in the institutional space. "We have a number of proprietary technology platforms that we are making available



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for firms in the wealth space also," he says. "These firms now have a need that wasn't there four or five years ago.... So