

Targeting the Global Wealth Community with QUO's New 'One-Stop' Execution Platform

In March this year, TradingScreen, a global provider of cloud-based technology to financial markets for order and execution management systems (OEMS), announced the launch of QUO, its new investment management platform. A 'software-as-a-service' cloud-based solution, the platform enables execution across multiple workflow streams, adjusts between different trading strategies, offers a wide-angle view of portfolios and allows users to trade directly without having to log into multiple portals. Hubbis met up with Will Lawton, QUO's Global Head, at the firm's Singapore HQ, to learn more about QUO's platform and its current and future markets.

“**A** S THE FUND AND WEALTH MANAGEMENT SECTORS CONVERGE”

Lawton explains, “firms need a lighter touch OEMS that does not require multiple logins and clunky permissions for any investment strategy execution. QUO solves this by offering investment managers efficient and streamlined execution across multiple workflow streams, allowing fund managers to easily manage position aggregation, compliance, trading, order management and market data in multiple asset classes. They can, therefore, focus greater attention on generating value for their clients while relying on QUO’s leading technology service to handle connectivity, data and regulatory compliance.”

The rapid evolution of needs

QUO’s platform allows investment managers to manage portfolios and the entire life cycle of trades in an integrated and compliant solution.

TradingScreen created QUO as it had seen that the requirements of investment managers from their OEMS had been evolving rapidly as the asset classes they handle become more complex.

“There is today a rapidly increasing need for more efficient trade processing with risk monitoring, an integrated and consolidated view of trades across multiple assets, more streamlined execution and a better visualisation with data analysis features,” Lawton reports.

He states that adding value to clients for investment managers is now an increasingly important requirement, but that there have been limited options for firms that need an OEMS that is easy to deploy, that offers simpler processes

and does not require multiple log-ins and permissions for any investment strategy execution.

“The various key features of our new QUO platform will allow investment managers to adjust seamlessly between different trading strategies, giving them a more comprehensive view of their portfolios,” Lawton explains.

Redefining the solution

TradingScreen is a privately-held company with roughly 200 employees globally with offices around the world. TradingScreen

Key Priorities

Having launched QUO in Switzerland in 2018 and in Asia just recently, Lawton is now focusing on building out the QUO team globally in order to continue to build out the proposition and product development.

“I suppose ultimately that translates then to the most important elements, which of course are building out the customer base and the revenues for the business, focusing first and foremost on the independent wealth community, those that operate in the Swiss-type EAM/family office model. But as we further build out the QUO proposition, we plan to offer the solution to a wider group.”

For example, he notes that QUO could be used for a relationship manager within a private bank to provide order routing capability, analytic capability, market data capability, charts and technical analysis. It could even have model portfolios and house products listed on it.

Lawton says that the mission is, therefore, to really widen the opportunity, not just to investment specialists for execution and order management capabilities, but also promoting QUO as a sales productivity tool and efficient workflow for relationship managers and ultimately end customers. “QUO offers very easy implementation,” he notes. “You do not need an instruction manual; it is both easy to onboard and easy to use.”

caters to four key customer segments: institutional asset managers, alternative asset managers, hedge funds and wealth managers, as well as catering to specialist segments like exchanges. It provides solutions in execution management spanning all assets including equities, derivatives, forex and fixed income with workflow including sourcing, accessing and aggregating liquidity and positions.

TradingScreen selected Lawton, a former senior HSBC, Standard Chartered and RBS execu-

tive, to head QUO for its new HQ in Singapore due to his highly-experienced financial services leadership background in wealth management, private banking and fintech, having worked in leading firms in London, New York, Zurich and Singapore.

Pierre Schroeder, TradingScreen Chief Executive Officer, said on announcing QUO's arrival: "QUO is a natural extension of the TradingScreen strategy. We believe this solution, alongside the industry experience brought by Will Lawton, will help to redefine how wealth managers and investment managers operate."

“QUO is essentially a one-stop shop,” Lawton comments. “If you have various custody accounts or bank accounts and you have various brokers you deal with, the one platform can execute all of those, and direct all of those orders, and the QUO customer can holistically look at the entire positions and do some analysis on that.”

Lawton's experience includes strategy formulation and its implementation, sales and business development leadership, development and delivery of propositions, marketing function leadership and mobilising fintech wealth business transformation programmes. His most recent focus for the past two years before joining QUO has been within the Fintech arena leading Eigencat, which is a digital investment platform. He is also an active non-executive director for hedge funds, private equity, family offices, as well as consulting work in the wealth management space.

The opportunity in Asia, and worldwide

"The Asian client base is generally multi-banked," Lawton observes, "and also far more active across asset classes than the wealth management communities in Europe and the US. This therefore neatly aligns with the QUO platform capabilities, hence our HQ here in Singapore. Our platform will target the wealth community covering private banks, asset managers, family offices and traders and features multi-asset position aggregation, navigation and compliance, trading, order management and market data provision.

product was initially developed for this audience as the EAM model needs a lighter touch solution to cater for various different brokers and custody agents. However, in Asia a core part of my responsibility is to build a global proposition that suits key markets in Asia and the US as well as Switzerland and the rest of Europe. Accordingly, we are now increasing the capability of the product."

Stepping back, Lawton looks at the bigger picture of the industry's evolution, noting that compliance and risk are very binary requirements that should not be loaded onto relationship managers.

Freeing up the business-getters

"Putting that sort of burden on an individual means that they're taking far too much time to get the right documentation and paperwork in place and not spending time with the client understanding their needs and delivering on those needs," he observes. "A platform like ours can have compliance and pre-trade check setup, so that execution, order management, and portfolio management can don't need to go through some of that documentation."

"The platform also helps clients in Asia who need to tap a number of different platforms and log-ins in order to connect and deal. Again, our proposition overcomes that issue," he reports. "Once you're set up with all that connectivity it is one log-in for all of the products. With our approach, it is one fixed connection so that whatever product the asset manager is dealing with it is routed down the same channel to that organisation."

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Widening the net

Lawton explains that originally the primary target audience was the Swiss External Asset Management (EAM) market. "The



WILL LAWTON
QUO

A natural evolution

Lawton says he was attracted to the fintech space back in 2015,

when he launched his own start-up in Singapore, having come out of many years of experience with global universal banks. “My 2015 fintech launch was focused on building digital robo-advisory type platforms, which I passionately believe in,” he remarks, “but the trouble with that was that actually, the banks had little interest in engaging in that type of cutting-edge technology because it impacts their business model so dramatically.”

Accordingly, Lawton was attracted to QUO because he is again back much closer back to the industry itself, to real users who have a need. “We are enjoy-

ing providing real solutions that the customers really want and further developing QUO’s capabilities and markets,” he reports.

Lawton closes the discussion by commenting that he believes that QUO’s platform is somewhat unique. “In the institutional space for electronic execution and order management and portfolio platforms there is a lot of choice, but for wealth platforms, we are fairly unique. We offer the data aggregation element as well as the order and execution side, and analytics. The other critical point is that we are not a broker, so with our proposition, the client has the option to choose who they want to trade through.” ■



Getting Personal

Lawton is based full-time in Singapore, which is in fact where he was born and raised. His parent arrived in Singapore in 1950, when his father was an engineer for General Electric Company. "He originally came here as a cable engineer to re-lay the infrastructure of Singapore after the Second World War," Lawton explains. "He loved it so much here that he stayed and became full Singaporean in 1965, later heading GEC for the SE Asia region."

Lawton was later educated at school in the UK, in Shropshire, which is where both of his parents were initially from. He then went to Kingston University, near London, and studied business.

His early career was as a trader. "That was pretty exciting in those early days in the '80s and '90s," he recalls. "I started as a commodities trader but pretty quickly realised my real ambition to become an FX dealer, so I was soon trading the major currencies, first for what was then First Republic Bank Dallas and later for several other banks."

Lawton has built up over 30 years of experience in the financial and commodity markets globally, of which 15 years have been spent in Asia. His most recent banking role was as Head of Investment Group for HSBC Private Bank in Singapore managing all discretionary, advisory and product services including corporate finance.

Before that, he was with the Royal Bank of Scotland Group for 15 years, including a spell from 2005 to 2009 as the Chief Investment Officer for the private bank arm, RBS Coutts, based in Zurich and was a member of the Executive Committee.



"My responsibility there," he explains, "was all the non-UK part of Coutts, so that was basically Europe based out of Switzerland and Asia predominantly. I did that until RBS's troubles during the global financial crisis in late 2008 and then came back to Singapore, initially with Standard Chartered and then with HSBC Singapore heading up the investment group for the private bank at HSBC. Then in 2015, I set up my own fintech business here, and now here I am with QUO at TradingScreen."

Lawton is married with three children, the oldest of whom is now at university in the UK, while the younger two, aged 17 and 10 are at school in Singapore.

"My passions outside family life are boats and motorcycles," he reports. "We actually live on a boat in Sentosa in Singapore. I built it myself, it is a Passagemaker, an explorer yacht. And as to motorbikes, we love dirt bikes and our 10-year old son is a current Singapore dirt biking champion at under-10s."

Lawton concedes that at his age he might be losing a little bit of his nerve, heaving broken his wrist badly last year, falling off his dirt-bike. But he still enjoys the adventure it offers. "Most of the dirt-biking we do is in Malaysia," he reports. "There are some great tracks, great facilities and where you can go exploring as well. It is a fantastic adventure."

More sedate enjoyment comes from watching sports on TV, for example following his favourite rugby union club team in the UK, Wasps, as well as the England team. "With the World Cup coming up this year, the excitement is rising," he remarks, "I really love watching rugby and this year's competition in Japan will be very interesting indeed."

