

# UBS Partner's Modular Technology Designed to Elevate and Scale Asia's Advisory Offerings

Alex Seiler is Head of Sales & Distribution for UBS Partner, a Technology Platform for Wealth Management created in 2016 by UBS as a white-labelled offering to help third-party banks evolve and scale their advisory offerings. The platform leverages the immense experience that the global financial colossus UBS has built over many years as it has evolved its technology to support its own wealth management relationship managers and advisors. UBS Partner has recently been upscaling its push into the Asia Pacific markets, where more and more banks are pursuing the transition from transaction-led wealth management to an advisory-led proposition. The solution covers the spectrum from the mass affluent wealth market to the exclusive HNW and UHNW segments. The platform's technology and services are available today in three packages, including the recently launched entry-level and very agile 'Light' version, which delivers results at speed and is gaining robust traction in Asia. Hubbis met with Alex recently to learn more about the technology, the offering, and the value of UBS's global wealth management DNA that UBS Partner brings to the table, and to understand some of the key goals and challenges ahead in this region.

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**ALEX SEILER**  
UBS Partner

**UBS Partner is** essentially an in-house FinTech that delivers a premium technology platform for wealth managers.

wealth managers to upgrade their business model through a suite of configurable modules designed to help them implement a systematic advisory process that ensures their own private clients' personal circumstances and goals are always in sharp focus.

"At the core of our offering lies a sophisticated, scalable technology platform that screens millions of portfolios, identifying issues and generating customised recommendations for each of those private clients, continuously," Alex explains. "UBS Partner offers the opportunity to make meaningful improvements to the quality of end-client portfolios, and thereby strengthen our customers' value propositions."

delivering future-proof, cloud-based and scalable technology that adapts and advances alongside our customers' businesses."

Alex explains more about the modular approach. According to the UBS Partner brochure, they offer 10 modules in their technology suite: Portfolio Quality Checks, Portfolio Remediations, Brokerage, Sales Campaigns, Prospecting, Goal & Wealth Projection, Sales Analytics, Scenario Analysis, Investment Analytics and Risk Analytics.

**Portfolio optimisation**

UBS Partner focuses first on the mission to ensure optimised portfolio quality for all end clients and to provide them with

« *"At the core of our offering lies a sophisticated, **scalable technology** platform that screens millions of portfolios, identifying issues and **generating customised recommendations** for each of those private clients, continuously."* »

"What makes us unique is that we are able to harness the power of the world's largest wealth manager to support other wealth managers with our proprietary, white-labelled solution. he explains. "We are working hard to let the marketplace know that UBS Partner offers WealthTech solutions for banks, especially in the Asia Pacific region."

**Driving personalisation**

According to the firm's marketing literature, UBS Partner enables

**Supporting the transition to an advisory-led model**

He says a great advantage for their customers is that they are effectively leveraging the renowned and undoubted UBS global wealth management DNA. He says that the modular and fully customisable platform has been designed and refined to suit customer needs without the need for add-on costs and the inconvenience of airlifting in other data streams and inputs. "Moreover," he reports, "we are

tailor-made recommendations. To achieve these goals, UBS Partner scans and analyses all portfolios, daily, against a set of customisable quality checks, and provides RMs and client advisors with actionable, tailored and suitable recommendations.

"These are individualised investment proposals that are fully in line with investment strategy and individual preferences, and are fully relevant to each client," he reports. "On top of this, our solution automatically attaches all

regulatory required documents to each proposal.”

### Delivering the right ideas

The delivery of interesting and relevant ideas is vital to the wealth management offering of today and the future. UBS Partner helps to ensure clients receive proactive recommendations that are aligned with the customer’s CIO so that trading-oriented clients receive tailored and actionable ideas. “The key,” Alex reports, “is to match these ideas with individual portfolios, and to that end, UBS Partner will automatically determine which ideas fit accurately with each individual.”

### Winning and retaining clients

Another vital element of any future-focused wealth management proposition is to win more clients, retain more clients, and win a greater share of the wallet. Clients often hold assets with multiple institutions and these days, RMs and advisors need to be able to offer holistic advice, armed with the perspective of all their assets across different institutions.

“UBS Partner allows customers to analyse clients across multiple accounts held in various banks, they can then adapt their advice and help drive towards becoming the trusted bank of choice,” Alex elucidates. “Advisors can, for example, showcase what would be possible should the client move more assets to their bank and then provide tailored proposals for more fruitful discussions, with the obvious potential of increasing share-of-wallet.”

### Key Priorities - the Asia Pacific markets

Alex turns to his priority of building the brand and presence across the key target markets across APAC. He explains that UBS Partner has a long history in Japan, which is the firm’s strongest market in the region. Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore are also key markets to which Alex has been travelling a lot of late.

“The UBS name opens a lot of doors in this region, where wealth management growth is significantly outstripping Europe and also rising much faster than GDP,” he reports. “While we currently work closely with other UBS teams to fast-track our penetration in the region, a core mission is to build out our dedicated UBS Partner teams over the next several years. We currently have our own team in Tokyo and in Hong Kong, and we want to scale both of them up to expand our reach.”

He adds that the longer-term goal over the next four to five years is for Asia to emulate the robust position the platform has in Switzerland. “It will not happen overnight, but the potential is there, for sure,” he states.

Alex also recognises that Asia Pacific represents a remarkable cultural kaleidoscope. “UBS has a long history in this region, and we are highly sensitive to the different cultures and expectations,” he states. “We know, for example, how doing business in Japan is so often very different from Hong Kong. Through our wider UBS group capabilities, we are able to deliver engagement in local languages and through local teams. As a global company with a local touch, this is an important additional competitive edge for us.”

### Assessing scenarios, managing risks

The new world of wealth management advisory demands future-focused and agile investing to realise future objectives. “It is incredibly valuable for advisors to obtain and monitor vital insights on portfolio exposures and risks for each client in order to then provide a 360-degree service,” Alex observes. “UBS Partner provides them with all these insights through our stress testing module, via predictive and historical scenario analysis.

Moreover, our Risk Analytics module offers a collection of risk metrics that provide in-depth analysis for each portfolio.”

### The right data, fully refined

Finally, UBS Partner understands the concept that in wealth management, data is the new super fuel. Accordingly, the platform has been designed and refined to provide comprehensive data relevant to advisors as well as to senior management.

“Maintaining oversight across your entire client book and business can be very challenging and it is essential to gain accurate insight on exposures, trends and risks,” Alex comments. “UBS Partner achieves exactly this by leveraging powerful investment analytics to help the advisors spot client exposures and then act in various scenarios. And this also provides crucial feedback to management on sales analysis, to monitor how end-client and advisor activity evolves, what ideas and proposals are adopted and how these portfolios develop.”

And these days, no discussion on the wealth management proposition is complete without a mention of ESG, so Alex duly complies. “We are also very excited about the ESG module we have been rolling out, helping our partner banks to develop or enhance their ESG framework and capabilities,” he says.

UBS Partner launched its ‘Light’ version earlier this year and it has already been gaining traction. “We have really hit the nail on the head with this in terms of meeting a demand out there in the market, not only in Europe but in Asia as well,” Alex reports.

### Let there be ‘Light’

Offering more insight into the development of the UBS Partner ‘Light’ version, Alex notes that the mission was to dramatically cut back on the usual six- to nine-month integration and more complex and multi-year contractual arrangements for the larger suite of modules. “In Asia in particular, we realised in late 2022 that the key decision-makers wanted a more rapid success trajectory and greater flexibility,” he explains.

Hence the birth of the ‘Light’ version, an entry-level, off-the-shelf offering that provides fewer customisation options, but that

### Agility and speed to market

Alex explains that they had also recently launched a Light version with a Swiss client, where there is no integration fee and no minimum contract duration.

“It is of little surprise that interest is already strong, and not only from smaller banks with lower budgets but also large institutions which like the speed and flexibility this package offers,” he says.

### Opening the way to advisory at scale

As to the competitive arena, Alex reels off a list of key competitors for UBS Partner, from major global names to smaller FinTechs, before articulating more about their target clients. He says the one common characteristic is that the typical client is active in the investment advisory space and has a body of Relationship Managers and advisors, and wants to scale their business.

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### Three packages on offer

Turning to the nitty gritty of their sales and marketing, he also reports that the platform is now available in three packages, starting with ‘Light’, then with the ‘Key’ option as the mid-range offering, and with ‘Select’, which delivers the full platform suite and capabilities.

can be up and running in two to four months, and that involves less contractual complexity.

Alex reports that it has been a great success so far in the region, offering a rapid path to demonstrate the promised positive results. “They like it because they are not holding their breath in hope and anticipation for many months,” Alex states.

“Customers understand our DNA,” he explains. “They know how we as an institution have successfully scaled our investment advisory business, and they believe in our platform as being able to help them achieve their key goals. I cannot emphasise enough the value of our history and expertise, offering a perspective and credibility that we believe no other player can deliver. This is not a conceptual

understanding – it is at the heart of what we do as an institution.”

### Seeing the big picture

Alex then steps back to take a wider-angle perspective on the wealth markets. He says that whereas perhaps before the pandemic there was a school of thought that the digital advisory model would dominate, today there is a greatly reinforced belief that the RM/advisor is core to the wealth management model.

“There have been so many events and uncertainties to address on a global, regional and local scale that the need for human advice, empathy and connectivity has risen significantly,” he reports. “Across this region, there is a drive to elevate RM and advisor capabilities and productivity, with perhaps the ultimate goal being to encourage more and more clients towards discretionary mandates. But the reality, and we know this very well, is that without the right technology and processes in place, those goals will not be reached.”

### The hybrid model prevails

And on the nearer-term goals for many banks and wealth managers in the region, Alex observes that those missions must be delivered. “The RM or client advisor remains very much front and centre of the wealth management proposition, especially the higher up the wealth segments,” he states. “To deliver a true advisory offering with frequency, with accuracy, with consistency, in a seamless manner and at scale is not easy and requires the RMs and advisors to have the best possible support from technology such as ours.”

### Evolution, not revolution

He then offers an example of a marquee client in Japan that UBS Partner has been working with. The mission, he says, has been to help them make the vital transition, that so many others want to achieve, from more of a short-term trading business to a longer-term, portfolio-focused advisory-led offering.

“They value us as a genuine partner with whom they can discuss these concepts,” he elucidates. “They greatly appreciate our ability to articulate the technology evolution that helps them achieve their ultimate goals for their clients, and thereby both transition and expand their business.”

Alex drills down further into this seam, noting that such a transition is not going to be achieved overnight, and it needs to be carefully managed. “You might be advising a client who is keen on trading ideas, but armed with our support, you can then offer ideas and proposals that are fully in sync with their long-term goals and hopes,” he says. “You are thereby satisfying the trading mentality at the same time as nurturing the clients towards a more portfolio-driven investment style.”

He adds that this type of transition is exactly what other customers in Asia also want to achieve. “It all boils down to helping them evolve their client relationships and ultimately becoming the long-term trusted adviser rather than just a facilitator of trading activity,” he reports.

### The ‘buy or build’ ship has sailed...

Alex observes that in very large part, the buy or build debate in

Asia has long sailed out of view. “We see very few cases indeed of banks wanting to go it alone to achieve the goals UBS Partner can quickly, efficiently and cost-effectively attain for them,” he says. “We know, and they generally know that it is too expensive, and too often ends up in failure. We, however, are a proven technology specialist with a global wealth management DNA.”

### Empowering the client-facing bankers

He expands further, offering what he thinks are the key attractions of working with UBS Partner. “Put simply, RMs and advisors really like our tools, as they help them evolve better and more enduring client relationships, resulting in more revenues, and a larger share of wallet over time,” Alex explains.

He says they often hear that customers consider these solutions remarkably efficient, because they help them maximise and upgrade their time and conversations with their end-clients. “The feedback is very positive,” he reports. “The RMs and their clients understand the recommendations our technology generates, and the advisors actually really enjoy working with these tools.”

### Support and understanding from start to finish

He explains that the other key advantage for customers centres on the ‘softer’ side of transitioning from older to newer models of wealth management. “Customers value the partnership we offer, helping them with technology integration, change management, providing training to the frontline,

providing ongoing support through our dedicated teams and also other specialists we know and trust. We bring all these elements to the table, and we are not charging on top for this extra value; it is part of our proposition.”

Alex also reports that sometimes a potential customer might be well on the road towards engaging UBS Partner but needs something more tailored and bespoke. “We have the capability to then come

up with co-developed solutions that are more customised to a customer’s specific goals,” he says. “For example, the brokerage and trading solutions and functionality are much more focused on Asia than on Europe and has evolved from working with specific clients in the region.”

### Alignment and potential

Alex closes the conversation by noting that he is confident that

their progress to date and the reputation they have already built are the pillars for what will become a significantly larger edifice of clients in Asia. “With our agile, modular approach and tailored packages, our proposition is entirely aligned with the evolution of the wealth management market and the democratisation of advisory in what is a remarkably diverse and dynamic region,” he concludes. ■

### Getting Personal with Alex Seiler

Alex Seiler is Executive Director and Head of Sales & Distribution for UBS Partner, the UBS Technology Platform for Wealth Management. In this role, Alex is responsible for global sales, focusing primarily on the EMEA and APAC regions. In addition to sales, he is also responsible for driving the platform’s partnerships and for overall marketing.

Alex is Swiss by birth, lived overseas for the first ten years of his life, and then completed his schooling in Zurich. He went on to earn his Master’s degree in Economics & Business Administration from the University of Zurich.

He started his career in 2008 in Strategy Consulting for Zurich Insurance Group, working in various countries in Europe and also for assignments in Hong Kong and in Chicago. Before moving to UBS Partner in May 2019, he had spent five years at Credit Suisse in Business Development roles for both UHNW Private Banking as well as Corporate & Investment Banking where he led the bank’s Key Client Coverage Program.



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