

What are the Key Strategies and Tools to help Wealth Management Through the Coronavirus Pandemic?

Shane Meredith, Asia Director - FinTech & Wealth Advisory for Contemi Solutions, shares his insights on the importance of a sound digital offering amid the discourse created as a product of the Coronavirus. Drawing attention to an array of digital solutions and strategies at the disposal of wealth management firms and professionals, Meredith helps break down the options available for the consideration of industry professionals.

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The wealth management sector is facing unprecedented challenges due to the outbreak of the global pandemic. As the coronavirus spreads, wealth managers' business continuity plans need to include more of digital tools and strategies. It is precisely in this crisis situation, where remote working, or the practice of working for an extended period outside the formal office is growing steadily in popularity, that digital tools can make a valuable contribution.

Digital tools are the lifeline that will help wealth management firms survive the coronavirus pandemic.

While many wealth and asset managers are ill-equipped, and many are currently in the middle of their digital transformation journey (according to a latest report, nearly 45% of WAM executives said that due to COVID-19 challenges, they will need to re-evaluate their decisions related to speed of automation and digital transformation), they all need to accelerate the shift to digital to come out stronger in the mid to longer term.

With the quarantines, social distancing, and stay at home orders, digital tools will be the only means for wealth managers to communicate with clients.

Therefore, deploying the right digital tools is critical for a firm's survival. Firms that deploy these tools fast will attract clients and survive. Wealth managers without these tools will perish.

So, to help firms as they adjust with the new remote work arrangements, we've put together a list of digital strategies and tools that will help those who're just getting started as well as those who may already have existing remote work programs but would like to significantly upgrade their effectiveness to minimise impact to their clients, wealth managers, advisors and brokers.

THE MUST HAVE DIGITAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR WEALTH MANAGEMENT TO SURVIVE COVID-19:

ROBUST DIGITAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Wealth management firms need to embrace digital and social media servicing capabilities to better stay in touch with their clients. Firms can look at

increasing their social media communication on market views, sharing investment philosophy through podcasts, investment blogs and as-needed phone or video calls. For customers who might become sceptical about the financial health of the firm, increased engagement from leadership will be especially critical to minimise doubts. Firms need to have an up to date website and presence on all the popular social platforms in your area. This includes: WeChat, WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and any other social medium you can think of.

Digital presence should be used to complement rather than replace offline channels, giving customers access to the same information and services on their mobile and web browsers as they would have in store.

At a minimum, the firm needs to send out messages on all those platforms each day and to have somebody check each social media account at least once a day. Plus, somebody needs to respond to every client message.

CLIENT PORTAL

With investment professionals, wealth managers and advisors now working from home, a reliable, secure, cloud-based communication platform – available anywhere, any time – is key to ensuring direct communication between advisors and their customers and operational continuity.

Frequent and personalised communication is key to strengthening relationships and building trust. At the same time, timeliness and speed is of the essence.

Markets shift so fast that not being able to respond immediately will be perceived as not meeting client expectations to take care of a portfolio 24/7. RMs need to have a 360-degree view of the client portfolio and ability to simulate and rebalance portfolios in real time to ensure safeguarding and sustainability of the client assets.

A client portal is your secure platform for real-time advisor-client interactions and portfolio reviews, which will enhance the client relationship even when the coronavirus crisis passes, as digital interaction is here to stay – it's practical, efficient, and inexpensive.

REAL-TIME ANALYTICS

In turbulent times, good information, good data and the capacity to derive good decisions with analytics are

more critical than ever. And wealth managers have a lot of client data, which they can use to address their clients in a more focused and targeted way thanks to artificial intelligence and machine learning.

DIGITAL CUSTOMER ONBOARDING

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital customer onboarding, from remote locations, is crucial.

The Financial Action Task Force ([FATF](#)) is also [encouraging the fullest use of financial institutions for responsible digital Customer Onboarding](#).

In the UK, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has offered to relax rules and provide some insight on new methods financial services providers can put in place to help verify a customer's digital identity.

By outsourcing this from a trusted technology provider, you can ensure that you are compliant with all KYC and AML compliance regulations.

According to recent survey 77% of respondents would prefer to open accounts remotely, so digital onboarding process will raise your conversion rate

and you won't need to worry about losing your customers to competitors with smoother onboarding.

SELF-SERVICE APP

Today's clients are used to doing everything on an app. They bank, order takeout food, shop, pay bills, pay insurance, and hail rides through app.

With the evolving markets and economy advisors and wealth managers will confront waves of questions from investors. Firms need to have content and capability for self-service web, email, IVR systems, chatbots, smartphone apps, etc. to handle the most common questions, freeing customer service reps to handle more complex or unusual issues.

Today, more than ever, when trapped in homes the younger clients expect a digital wealth management experience on their phones.

Embracing the right digital tools is the key to wealth-management success and survival in the age of coronavirus, and it will enable you to operate effectively across a number of different scenarios. ■

