

Firm Profile:

Large Asset Management Firm

Geography:

Canadian-based with global presence

eVestment Client Since:

2012

Subscriptions:

Enterprise Agreement for Analytics, Dashboards, Omni

Fiera Capital is a large asset management firm offering investment solutions for high net worth individuals and institutions.

"To really be able to have a cohesive view of eVestment across our organization is very helpful," said Frederick Chenel, Vice President, Consultant Relations and Business Development, Institutional Markets.

"Over time, we have grown through a combination of strategic acquisitions and organically, so we eventually found ourselves with various divisions under the Fiera umbrella using a variety of analytical tools. We just recently brought them all into a single relationship with eVestment, which really streamlined the process."

"Before, it was a mixed bag where some people had access to hedge fund data or some people had access to European datasets and others didn't. Now we are all on the same playing field because we're all seeing the same information and using the same metrics."

"This has certainly helped in terms of the communication across various distribution teams whether in Canada, the United States or in Europe, streamlining internal discussions."

The Value of a "Neutral" Database

Chenel said he felt that if Fiera really wanted to have a credible marketing message, the firm had to show its strategies relative to their peers. "Even back in 2012, we recognized that you needed to have a centralized database that was well recognized and importantly, a neutral database, so you could present to any consultant without feeling a little bit awkward because you were presenting another consultant's data," he said. "The fact that eVestment is a neutral database, used by a variety of different firms, is important. Also, the quality of the information and the high degree of user-friendly features of the system used to conduct and generate competitive analysis from that data, is extremely valuable."

He continued, "eVestment provides us with the right level of granularity to meet our needs and I truly believe that for firms that are serious about growing and adapting to an ever-changing marketplace, eVestment is a must-have because it is amongst the best sources for manager information on a global scale."

Key Uses of eVestment

Competitive Analysis Versus Peers

"At the onset, we were looking to identify and gather information on our largest competitors and to view their profiles in eVestment," Chenel said. "The other major use of the tool involved positioning our strategies relative to our peers in their respective universes. This would then allow us to integrate key messages into our marketing materials. We look at a number of measures like return, standard deviation, Sharpe ratio, upside/downside capture, tracking error, information ratio as well as returns across rolling periods. It's great to show the information in different ways. And if we're going into a finals presentation, we want to have some information on who we are going up against. eVestment is a good way to access that information."

"If we're speaking to a prospective client and we know that they invest with a specific manager, we'll look up that manager in eVestment and do some analysis to see how our offering can be complementary. We will then use this information when discussing with the potential client. In essence, we do a little bit of work for them so that it hopefully helps with the decision-making process."

Strategic Planning

"eVestment collects a huge amount of data from managers and then extracts information on how the marketplace uses that data, which is very valuable from a sales and marketing, and especially, a strategic planning perspective," Chenel said. "We can use that information to make some pretty significant decisions in terms of positioning and what we're going to be presenting



Frederick Chenel

VP, Consultant
Relations and Business
Development,
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to our clients over the next six-, 12- or 18-month period. This has really been a game changer."

Setting Fee Schedules

"When we're setting our fee schedules, we don't want to be the cheapest and we don't want to be the most expensive," he said. "If our fee schedules and various fee levels arrive at or slightly above the median, we're happy. There really aren't that many ways to arrive at that median. Having a centralized database like eVestment that has all of the different fee schedules of managers in a specific universe is extremely valuable to our pricing effort."

Database Population

"Our firm's philosophy has always been to attract talented individuals with promise and ambition. What ended up happening is that they would spend two years crunching data and populating databases. There would be a bit of a learning curve where mistakes could occur, and once they would really be up to speed, they would move on. That is an issue because you are always starting over."

"Our goal with using Omni is to automate that manual process, such that we can ensure that our talented staff stays in the firm, generating value-added work instead of more repetitive and redundant tasks," he said.

Sales Dashboards

"With the addition of Sales Dashboards, we are really modifying the way we use eVestment so that it becomes even more of a strategic tool rather than an operational, everyday tool," Chenel said.

"I've been very impressed in terms of the information that is available. I was surprised at the extent to which we can use it to flag information and then adjust our marketing campaigns. Looking at who our real competitors are, where the opportunities lie – it's an extremely powerful tool. The highlights are presented to you within a few seconds of search. That certainly helps in terms of making that analytical process much faster than it would have been historically."