Infocast

Backbone of Finance

Infocast was founded in response to the needs of banks and brokerages for efficient IT solutions. Its President CECILY HO charts its admirable growth and service to Hong Kong's financial industry.

Over the past 20 years Hong Kong has grown into a major international financial center. At the start of 2015, Hong Kong's stock market ranked 6th largest in the world (3rd in Asia) for market capitalization, and is one of the world's most active markets for IPOs. Another unique point is that Hong Kong has a much higher number of market participants (500+) than anywhere else in the world, meaning a huge number and variety of banks and brokerages requiring IT solutions.

Recently the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (HKEx) has been taking radical steps to encourage growth, in particular an industry-wide technical platform revamp (HKEx Orion Programme) and the establishment of mutual-market access between Hong Kong and China (Shanghai-Hong Kong Stock Connect Pilot Programme).

Best-in-Class Service

Infocast was founded in 1996, in response to the needs of banks and brokerages for efficient IT business operation solutions. This encompasses distinct services such as financial market data information, multi-channel trading systems and multiple asset class back-office systems.

"Our opportunity was to deliver an all-in-one platform providing all the services needed for a bank's or brokerage's operation," says Cecily Ho, President of Infocast.

She adds, "Infocast has responded by continually adapting its technologies and business models to meet the changing needs of the industry. Our technical expertise and domain knowledge enabled us to adapt and react to these changes, while still maintaining our market-leading level of service quality and performance."

Infocast differentiates itself two-fold. In a non-functional aspect, Infocast uses cutting-edge technology to deliver the highest possible levels of performance, stability, resilience and security. "With our flexible system design, we can deliver high quality products for new business initiatives in a timely manner.

"In a functional aspect, Infocast has outstanding market sense towards a client's business needs. This insight stems from the strong connection to the industry our team of experienced professionals has, with many of our members' backgrounds in banks and brokerages, as well as IT. Also, we belong to professional financial associations and therefore have a better understanding of the ever-changing business environment."

Market Leader

"We have unrivalled client diversity as we service firms ranging from large international banks to small family-run local brokerages. Therefore we can leverage our scale and knowledge to deliver solutions in both a rapid (time-to-market) manner and with lower development cost. For example, we use our technical solutions from our higher-tier clients to benefit our lower-tier clients, thereby adding value.

"Infocast is continually improving its product offerings to expand its market. For instance, our new Infocast iBroker system aims to serve the retail bank and retail brokerage (tiers 2-3) market by addressing their need for proven yet affordable back-office systems. At the same time, we are promoting Infocast InvesTrade, our innovative all-in-one trading solution for retail brokerages. InvesTrade delivers exceptional value through end-to-end packaging and flexibility through cloud computing. We are also expanding our Agent Solution network by signing up more execution brokers in multiple overseas markets, thus enabling connected brokers to easily subscribe to multi-market trading."

Overcoming Challenges

"Our main challenge was the swiftness of regulator initiatives. For instance, the Shanghai-Hong Kong Stock Connect had only 6 months between its formal announcement and its official launch date. Furthermore, during these 6 months the regulatory rules and technical requirements were still in the process of being created by the Exchanges. Time was extremely limited to meet the deadlines."

As a solutions vendor, Infocast had to be agile to the changing market initiatives and responsive to the needs of market participants. To achieve this, the company leveraged flexible core-modules to successfully deliver its Shanghai-Hong Kong Stock Connect solution.

"For 18 years Infocast has been driven by our dedication to progress and innovation, in order to best satisfy the ever-changing needs of our clients and the market. We also owe our success to our key business and technology partners such as Huawei, HKT, Oracle and IBM, with whom we leverage technical expertise and business opportunities." ■

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