

PEOPLE PROFILE

Dan Wywoda

Fast learner



When Dan Wywoda walked into the human resources department of the Boston Company in pursuit of a job in 1989, little did he anticipate his career to be where it is today. Fast-forward 22 years and Wywoda is now head of global product management for BNY Mellon Asset Servicing. MELANIE WHITE speaks to him at his office in Boston, US.

It is somewhat rare to meet someone who dreams, at a young age, of the mechanics of the world but Wywoda insists he is one of those exceptions. After earning his Bachelor of Science degree in management from the University of Scranton, Pennsylvania, Wywoda fell straight into the asset-servicing business where he was responsible for product development initiatives.

From the word go Wywoda knew that the job was for him. Back then securities services was more of an outlying

curiosity in the investment world with little regulation and structure on the way things work, he explains.

“So it was a very exciting opportunity. I was able to learn how things worked and how things moved. I was able to gain an understanding of what was needed and relay it back to the business,” he says.

His interest was equally sparked on the technological side of the business which lead him to undertake a number of different positions within the evolving firm including lead technology manager

in support of Mellon’s integration with the Boston Company.

“This experience gave me the opportunity to appreciate, understand and rethink. We realised that we would have a bigger global franchise through the acquisition with Mellon, which later translated to an even bigger franchise through the acquisition of BNY,” Wywoda notes.

“This is the most important part of my job,” he adds, “to always be active with any new opportunity that may be happening in the market.”



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One of Wywoda's greatest achievements was accomplished through his responsibility for the global custody and fund accounting business for heritage Mellon Europe. Based in London from 1995 to 1998, he developed the business strategy of expansion through heritage Mellon's highly successful joint venture with ABN AMRO. He also developed heritage Mellon's trustee and custody business in Dublin to service offshore clients.

"This was a defining moment for me professionally where it allowed us to launch the business in a much more meaningful way in Europe. It was nothing, and then it became our main business in Europe," he says.

At the time many in the industry were sceptical as joint ventures have a "chequered" history. It came down to personal relationships to make things happen, he explains.

Since his entry into the asset-servicing business, Wywoda has continued to drive the business in several directions. As current head of BNY Mellon Asset Servicing's global product management group, Wywoda is responsible for a team of 65 in 15 different countries across the globe. He oversees all aspects of product innovation, development, and implementation that support the asset servicing business.

On a day-to day basis, Wywoda says that the group sets the short-term and long-term development plans for each product and is responsible for establishing technology budgets and allocation of capital for major product initiatives to achieve appropriate returns on investments.

As head of the group, Wywoda's responsibilities include leading the team in setting individual product strategies to meet specific product financial goals, while also contributing to high levels of client satisfaction and industry leadership for the asset servicing business as a whole.

According to Wywoda the most challenging part of his role is ensuring that all products are cared for coherently. This happens in three dimensions, he explains. Firstly, "evolving capabilities"

and trying to keep products at the forefront of innovation. Second, "industry competitiveness" and making sure all products rate highly against competing products in the industry. Third, "client satisfaction" and making sure that responsiveness to clients is timely and high.

"I tell my team that there should be no surprises. We should know everything that is going on in the business. They get nervous but it's a principle that helps my team to understand that they have to build themselves to a big footprint.

"We have different clients and different capabilities and we need to be a mechanism that is able to keep making improvements... If we find that a client is unhappy or that we have missed the mark against a competitor, then that's a sign that we are not as well connected as we should be and we need to adjust," Wywoda comments.

He adds that the asset-servicing industry has changed significantly over time and custodian banks such as BNY Mellon have become much more of a "valued partner" to their clients.

Clients are now asking questions such as: How will this economic condition affect my portfolio? Did I get more exposure? Did the value go down faster? Which asset classes were impacted? This means that the services that custodians provide become much more valuable to clients in decision-making which never used to be the case, he says.

In addition, it has also encouraged custodian banks such as BNY Mellon to evolve their services around risk management, transparency, and disclosure information.

Wywoda says that regulatory reform is posing substantive changes to the industry. In the US, for example, new laws such as the proposed upcoming Dodd-Frank will mean that global investors need to re-evaluate their reporting and disclosure requirements.

In return, custodians will need to evolve their reporting capabilities to tag and calculate assets, to risk weight them and supply the data back to the client.

"The Dodd-Frank reform has pluses and minuses. On the plus side we will be much closer to our clients. On the

DAN WYWODA'S TOP 10 TIPS ON BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY

1. Listen to your clients
2. Build your team to cover all competencies
3. 'Doing' is more fun and interesting
4. Continuous learning is the key to innovation
5. If you're not known as the best, why bother
6. Build your network so there are no surprises
7. Earn trust, demonstrate integrity
8. Look for the value in everything you do
9. Spend the time to communicate
10. Remind yourself that people are the real asset

minus side, it will involve a lot of work in being close to the regulator and establishing some workable rules around capital, disclosures, and reporting," he comments.

Reflecting back upon his career, Wywoda says he has been extremely fortunate to do a job that has never really seemed like work.

"If there's one piece of advice I'd give to anybody looking to embark on a career in a particular industry then let this be it. Enjoy what you do because it goes far beyond what you do everyday," he concludes. ■

Clarification

ICFA would like to clarify that while BNY Mellon showed a decrease in assets in our Top 50 Custody Mandates survey that was published in our February/March 2011 issue (www.icfamagazine.com/2030178), they did increase in custody assets in the overall market.

BNY Mellon also had two wins within the Top 20 European Custody Mandates including Goudse Insurance Group in the Netherlands for \$3,600 million, and Bankenes sikringsfond (Norwegian Banks' Guarantee Fund) in Norway for \$3,000 million.

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