

MARTIN CURRIE STREAMLINES COMMUNICATION WITH FACTSET RMS

› FactSet’s customized Research Management Solutions (RMS), integrated with portfolio holdings and market data, helps Martin Currie to organize and communicate internal information more effectively.



AUM
US\$19B

FIRM TYPE
Active Equity Asset
Manager

CHALLENGE
Silo-based, manually intensive
research process

FACTSET SOLUTION
Research Management
Solutions

The Challenge

Martin Currie are active equity specialists, crafting high-conviction portfolios for client-focused solutions with investment excellence at the heart of their business. Central to this philosophy is a stock-driven approach, based on in-depth fundamental research, active ownership of companies, and skilled portfolio construction. With investors based in multiple locations across the UK, Asia, and Australia, a key challenge for the company is how to provide consistent access to research being performed across these multiple locations, combining the collective insights of wider investment teams through common tools and practices, ultimately to the benefit of client portfolios.

For Martin Currie, it was critical to ensure that the key waypoints in the development of an investment thesis were universally agreed upon, and that each component of this research was performed in line with minimum standards. The research management process was heavily based on Microsoft Excel to improve collaborative thinking, but the system was cumbersome and laborious for the analysts and investors on the floor.

“The internal communication process prior to FactSet relied heavily on strong informal communication that certainly had existed in parts of our business but not all,” says Jeff Casson, Head of Investment Process. “It also required significant manual intervention by the admin function through the use of quite convoluted Microsoft Excel worksheets. This was not ideal for sharing information efficiently and was highly labor intensive.”

Casson adds, “We recognized that our investment floor, our clients and regulators required a more transparent view of our research actions and process, in other words how we identify ideas, how we evaluate those ideas, how we discuss those ideas and what the outcomes are from those discussions. Prior to FactSet’s deployment, too much of this information was stored in Microsoft Excel or in email format, resulting in a poor user experience.”

The Solution

Martin Currie saw the potential to overcome these issues by using FactSet to develop a proprietary internal research portal. The firm provided details of their existing research workflow, from idea origination to specific company analysis to stock discussion to portfolio action to FactSet. From this workflow analysis, FactSet was able to deliver a customized solution for capturing, storing, and accessing internal research across investment teams.

Martin Currie’s formal research process remained unchanged. The deployment of FactSet provided the benefit of a centralized research portal.

“Email is a good example. Prior to implementing the FactSet research portal, a lot of valuable insight around company management contact, internal research, and portfolio outcomes was email-based,” says Casson “This wasn’t optimal, in particular when auditing the quality and consistency of decision-making. Now that we have moved to FactSet’s Research Management

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The Outcome

By improving transparency and collaboration on research projects, Martin Currie was able to make more use of their research in client portfolios. Investment teams across different products and geographies were able to see each other’s research objectives, company models, meeting notes, and stock discussion conclusions in one place—the internal research portal.

Casson says, “We also see benefit when prospecting for new business and when sitting down with consultants and existing clients. Showing them how the research portal is being deployed in the business underpins confidence in the sustainability of our process. The general feedback we’re getting is positive.”

Additional benefits include a simplified and even more efficient process, saving time, and providing everyone with better access to information whenever and wherever. Amongst other things, this has led to better retention of intellectual capital and a greatly improved ability to review and discuss successes and failures.

“If there’s any disagreement or ambiguity six months, 12 months, two years down the line, that record will continue to exist and that’s important in terms of intellectual honesty with our clients and our colleagues as well as for our regulator,” says Casson.