

Delivering Hybrid Advice - Omnichannel Must Come With Automation And Personalisation

Dr. Christian Dicke, CEO at Finfox, outlines the attributes of a quality advisory platform.

Client demand to access quality digital services is only going one way. As requirements increase, investment advisers need to be one step ahead and provide their clients with an experience that exceeds expectations in terms of ease of use and functionality. But they cannot do this in a one size fits all way. To keep clients' attention, the offering must also be highly tailored to the user's needs, providing the perfect blend of functionality and personalisation.

A state-of-the-art advisory solution supports advisers in all of their daily user journeys, be they personal or digital.

This is not a new idea. Digitisation has long since been eating away at the edges of what is the real world and what is virtual. But Covid-19 opened up new ways of working and drove not just acceptance, but also an enthusiasm for all the advantages that digital can confer. The demand for digital banking services has never been higher.

Wealth managers and investment advisers thus need to meet clients where they are. That necessitates an omnichannel service so clients can choose how they consume advice and related services, and switch between channels. Omnichannel includes face-to-face. Indeed, advice must stay flexible in its delivery and the offering must span that which is neither wholly digital nor wholly personal but rather hybrid.

But this is not just about the delivery: omnichannel access as a fixed goalpost. The advice and other content being delivered must be specific, relevant, and, hence, tailored to the individual.

Investment advisers should consider offering their clients an extensive and high-end spectrum ranging from easy-to-use self-services to bespoke adviser-led solutions – not to mention exclusivity and expertise.

This is an intrinsic part of wealth management. Clients want and expect their advisers to understand them and be able to provide relevant and needs-oriented advice. The change is in the way that they access this, and technology is the enabler.

Any solution must facilitate easy access to their total assets and act as a conduit to receive bespoke investment ideas and individually suitable proposals, market research, and the like. Access to their investment adviser for timely and straightforward handling of their financial transactions and individual guidance from an expert, is essential.

A state-of-the-art solution should also efficiently support advisers so they can meet client needs at the right time with the right answer. It should be intrinsic to use and offer the means to always know the clients' situation within the overall client lifecycle, e.g., to embrace them when struggling with their self-services.

FinfoxAdvice allows digital investment proposals straight to clients' smartphones, thus enhancing the client experience and increasing digital engagement.

Opportunity and risk monitoring should also be a trigger to approach clients with individualised investment proposals.

A good solution will also help the investment advisers to design group-specific investment proposals and research that can be sent out to multiple clients at the same time whose risk profile, suitability, and other circumstances fit the bill.

The idea revolves around making advisory options more attractive to individual clients while keeping processes lean for the advisers through mass customisation. Campaign management with built-in regulatory compliance for various user journeys helps increase the number of relevant client touch points and strengthen client retention.

But it is not just the content that needs to be personalised. The front-end of each channel also needs to fit the designated user journeys so that different users can access the function and the granularity they need - and always with an intuitive design.

In this way, the investment client has an omnichannel offering that looks and feels as if it were individually made for them and with content that is relevant to them. The adviser also has their own front-end tailored to their role, and of course, this will differ in look and feel from that of the client.

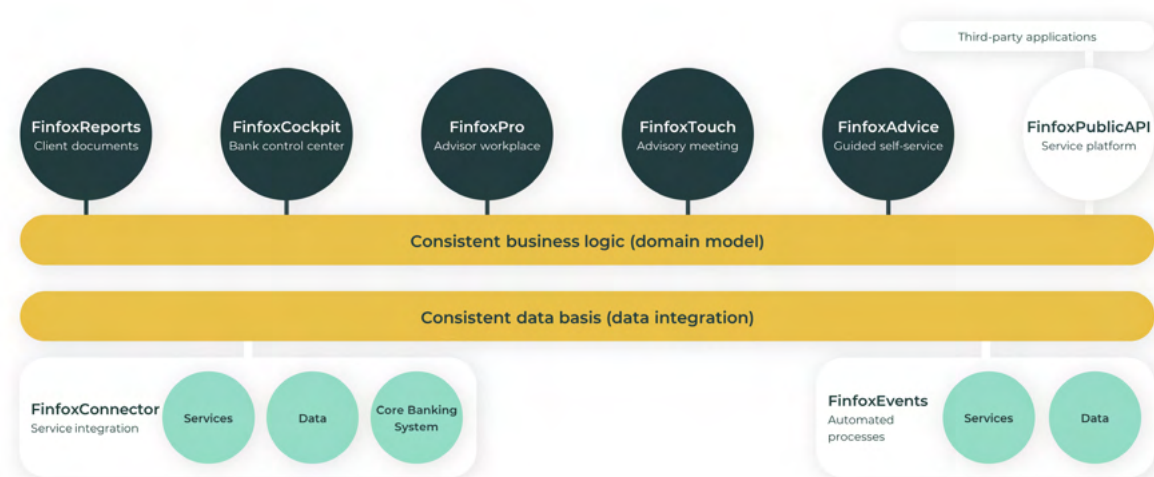
Having this sort of flexibility regarding channel, content, and configurability is especially appealing to small and medium-sized banks which do not have the resources or expertise to build in-house solutions, but wish to offer scalable service and experience to clients.

A platform able to do this and link in with existing systems and architectures via APIs is, thus, a gift at a time when investment clients and advisers alike want cutting-edge technology capability.

In particular, having open APIs makes for a more flexible approach. It means that client front ends can be bolstered by additional add-ons such as pensions, securities lending, additional payment functions, ESG investing, or new investment types.

In summary, we believe a good platform should support channel, process, mass-customisation, and content and be future-proofed with an open architecture approach. This matters because clients expect to have only what is relevant to them at the front end. And for advisers, it matters because they need to be able to target and communicate with their clients more effectively via segmentation.

Figure 8: Omnichannel Approach



Case study

St. Galler Kantonalbank has been using Finfox in its investment advisory business for years. The software has a modular design and can be used as an omnichannel solution in various set-ups and advisory scenarios.

FinfoxPro is used in the client advisers' workplace, while FinfoxTouch is used as an advisory tool in client meetings. The next step was to expand the established collaboration and use FinfoxAdvice for hybrid investment advice.

FinfoxAdvice allows digital investment proposals straight to clients' smartphones, thus enhancing the client experience and increasing digital engagement. Investment proposals can be provided via the bank's app in two ways: client advisers can prepare them by themselves and send them to their clients via the new channel.

St. Galler Kantonalbank has been using Finfox in its investment advisory business for years. The flexible modular design and omnichannel capability foster the bank's approach as a hybrid bank.

Alternatively, the campaign function can be used for the centralised delivery of proposals to a specifically selected client group.

In both cases, the software ensures that regulatory requirements are always adhered to, and contact with the adviser can be made by e-mail or phone directly via the app.