

Streamlining Benchmark Data Aggregation and Distribution

How one of the world's largest asset managers leveraged FactSet to reduce operational costs and boost growth.



AUM:
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FIRM TYPE:
Institutional Asset
Manager

FACTSET SOLUTION:
Benchmark Data Solutions and
Multi-Asset Class Portfolio Analytics

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The Challenge

A major asset manager seeks to make better use of disparate data sources, while improving quality control and integration.

As the head of data management for Amundi Asset Management, one of the world's 10 largest asset managers, Laurent Cohen leads a team that is responsible for collecting and storing benchmark data. They are also charged with redistributing this data to Amundi's global equity, fixed income, performance attribution, and reporting teams. Until recently, data collection has meant scraping data from disparate sources including Bloomberg, Thomson Reuters DataStream, third-party uploads, and public websites.

Despite a clear sense of the firm's overall goal and directions, the data management team still faced a variety of challenges. With no reliable quality assurance system in place, Cohen's team of four had been responsible for manually integrating index-level data daily and constituent-level data monthly. The addition of projected and pro-forma data was also a challenge, as was the integration of new indices, particularly from exotic providers. Bank holiday scheduling presented another obstacle, as Cohen prefers that his team has access to data even on days when providers do not make it available.

The Solution

Integrating benchmark data with portfolio analysis allows Amundi to improve operational efficiency and do more with less.

Familiar with FactSet from a previous role and Amundi's use of FactSet's portfolio analysis suite, Laurent contacted FactSet to inquire about benchmark data feed solutions.

"I worked with many people at FactSet before, and knew it was a very good company, very professional," says Cohen, who managed the first European team to use FactSet's portfolio analysis in the early 2000s. "I wanted to work with FactSet for benchmark feeds."

Cohen suspected that his team could achieve economies of scale by using FactSet for portfolio analysis as well as benchmark data. He was immediately impressed by FactSet's customization and integration with portfolio reporting and systems, and the ability it gave his team to create unique indices in FactSet's applications that could be delivered via data feed as well.

"With FactSet, it's possible to build a specific set of indices within the system. We have particular needs for portfolio analysis; we build custom indices for the research team and for the portfolio managers to use internally. After the indices are validated, it's possible to download them to the benchmark data feed," says Cohen.

Cohen selected FactSet to provide an index-level benchmark data feed for up to 3,000 index levels of unique commercial benchmarks and 3,000 unique constituent levels. Amundi elected to receive all indices daily, including constituent-level data, and to meet the needs of their global team, the firm now receives intraday updates for each region.

To address the quality control issues Cohen's team faced, FactSet applied a standard quality assurance checks to the data, as well as custom checks requested by Amundi. These included weight recalculation and market cap rollup checks.

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Because bank holidays were of particular concern to Cohen, FactSet helped implement a process that sends his team a holiday production calendar per index. This lets them roll forward the constituent's data on specific providers' non-production days.

This kind of customization, collaboration, and personalized support has kept Cohen and his team enthusiastic about their FactSet experience.

"FactSet's support team is very responsive and very nice," says Cohen. "I have a help desk with another provider, but it's impersonal. With FactSet, we converse with people who have gotten to know our workflow. And because their team is global and available 24 hours, we have the same level of support for our employees in Tokyo as we do here in Paris."

In particular, he notes that Issue Tracker, FactSet's interactive portal for requests and production questions, provides a unique level of transparency that he values as a user and manager.

The Outcome

Amundi benefits from a leaner team, significant efficiencies, and greater collaboration across its global organization.

As a long-time FactSet client, Cohen's expectations were high—and he's thrilled to report that he has not been let down.

Since implementing FactSet's benchmark data feed solutions, Cohen's team has been able to reduce the resources required for these efforts by roughly half, largely due to the efficiencies they've found by integrating FactSet's benchmark feeds with its workstation solutions. This has resulted in significant cost savings for the company as a whole. He's also quick to point out how easy FactSet has been on Amundi's IT team.

"We gained a lot of time on the IT side. Because of FactSet's standardized processes, IT doesn't have to follow up on technical issues," Cohen says.

Finally, FactSet's data quality has been recognized and embraced across Amundi. Cohen notes that users across the front office, as well as in the compliance and risk space, have begun relying on FactSet for accurate data, resulting in greater alignment and collaboration globally and across offices.

