



2006 Best-in-Tech Award Winner

RegentAtlantic Capital, LLC Chatham, NJ

From the moment an investor walks in the door of RegentAtlantic Capital LLC's Chatham, New Jersey offices, there is little doubt that this firm has strategically positioned technology to shine a spotlight on its most important asset: its team of 30 talented individuals. Every conference room at RegentAtlantic Capital is equipped with LCD monitors – canvases for its client service teams to present smart, customized financial presentations to clients and prospects. Paperless since 1996, many are surprised to find no photocopier in residence; paper documents are quickly scanned and chronicled for easy and secure storage and recall.

Even these small touches speak volumes for the flavor of a firm that's done so much more to shape how its own advisors – and other independent investment advisory firms across the country – are managing their client portfolios.

Technology: a Key Platform

Formed by the merger of two independent financial planning and investment management firms in 1996, RegentAtlantic Capital at the time had nine employees and 275 clients. Today, the firm manages more than \$1.4 billion in assets for 800 clients with a team of 30, and has positioned technology as a critical factor in making RegentAtlantic Capital a regional leader, targeting a 25 percent annual growth rate.

"Our business is a personal service business," says Chris Cordaro, RegentAtlantic Capital's chief investment officer. "We are always challenging ourselves to deliver the personalized, world-class service that our clients deserve and expect. We continue to cultivate an all-star team, and we are passionate about looking at how we can apply technology to best leverage our talents in the interest of our clients."

Commitment to Constant Evolution

RegentAtlantic Capital uses a multi-asset approach to build globally diversified client portfolios, employing nine asset classes and a variety of alternative investments, including absolute return hedge funds, REITs and commodities. The firm's investment team holds weekly strategy sessions where they also talk about potential roadblocks, opportunities to be more efficient and to make enhancements that will benefit the team and its clients.

"Like all firms, our most valuable asset goes home at the end of the day, and we are extremely committed to making RegentAtlantic Capital an environment where our people can work not only efficiently and consistently – but also enjoyably," Cordaro explains. "We say, 'if there's anything you need to do more than once, you need to find ways to automate.' We want to empower our team to get to the decision-making process on behalf of our clients as quickly as possible."

Standardize. Centralize. Mass-Customize.

Finding ways to standardize and centralize processes has been RegentAtlantic Capital's key to leveraging technology for mass-customization. In 1999, the firm was using Northfield, a factor-based risk model, in portfolio construction of large-cap stocks. Northfield optimized the trade-off between higher return, tracking error, tax efficiency and transaction costs, but lacked certain significant database functionality, such as the ability to store specific client portfolio information.

“We wanted to be able to do this holistically across our portfolios and knew what we had here was an opportunity to automate,” Codaro says.

This sparked RegentAtlantic Capital’s move in 2002 to implement MARS by Softpak, an SQL database that sits on top of Northfield, with the added benefit of being able to use the extract from Schwab PortfolioCenter, the firm’s portfolio management system, to automatically load client positions into Northfield. “This was a real time savings and a real enhancement,” Cordaro recalls.

In 2006, RegentAtlantic Capital made two additional improvements. First, the firm implemented the ability to run a portfolio across multiple accounts. For clients with more than one account, say a taxable account and an IRA, both accounts could be automated as one client portfolio. Second, the firm implemented Factset to automate the quantitative stock rankings it uses in its management process. RegentAtlantic Capital now ranks all 1,400 stocks in its universe every morning. As a result of the integration between Northfield, Softpak, PortfolioCenter and Factset, RegentAtlantic Capital saves valuable time that is now spent working directly on behalf of clients.

Leveraging CRM to Manage Holistically

In late 2004, RegentAtlantic Capital upgraded from traditional contact management software to Microsoft CRM. “We had been doing a good job of capturing the basics, but we wanted a way to monitor utilization and track best practices across our client service teams,” Cordaro says. The move to Microsoft CRM allowed Regent Atlantic Capital to record specific workflows for client needs, financial plans, investment recommendations and new account applications. “This has allowed us to identify when a particular team’s capacity may be high or low, and direct resources accordingly,” Cordaro adds.

Collaborating to Meet a Need Across the Industry

RegentAtlantic is recognized for spearheading the development of iRebal, a joint venture with wealth management firms Balasa Dinverno & Foltz, LLC and Kochis Fitz. iRebal is a portfolio rebalancing software tool that is a strategic response to a persistent problem, and a remarkable example of a technology innovation within the independent investment advisor industry. RegentAtlantic Capital had found that its analysts were spending a lot of time analyzing client portfolios for rebalancing, investing, freeing up cash and tax-loss harvesting. They had to follow a complex set of rules to manage portfolios, and it was taking expensive professional time. This, in part, inspired the creation of iRebal, a rules-based engine to automate the process, which RegentAtlantic Capital was the first to implement in February 2005. Today, the firm – and others across the country – use iRebal to efficiently and effectively monitor client portfolios for rebalancing, tax-loss opportunities and cash needs daily, and with limited professional drain.

Collaboration was critical to the development of iRebal. “Advisors all view the world differently – everyone has a slightly different wrinkle for how they do things,” says Cordaro. “That’s why we agreed it was important to involve other firms and their best practices in developing iRebal. Too often, software is created without the direct input of the end-user. We set out to create a solution that is customizable enough for many firms to use, yet specific enough to be able to adjust certain settings to get what you want out of it.”

Leading the Way with Industry Innovation

Positioning its growing team of professionals to provide unsurpassed client service is at the foundation of every decision RegentAtlantic Capital makes. Through the years, RegentAtlantic Capital has proven its commitment to adapting and improving through technology to meet changing client needs and to strategically grow its business – in the process benefiting others in the industry and their respective clients. In 2006, as in 2005, Regent Atlantic celebrated a more than 99 percent client retention rate, always mindful of its mission, “to enrich the lives of its clients by delivering unsurpassed client satisfaction, peace of mind, and a full-range of personalized wealth management services.”

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