



NOBLE APEX

Survival of the Fittest

While Hong Kong's independent financial advisors are unhappy with tougher regulation to protect the market and tell the industry to shape up or ship out, NOBLE APEX is pursuing a game changing plan, says Dr. M. F. CHAN.



Dr. Chan: "This will be a trying period that calls a closer relationship between investor and IFA in order to plan for contingency and take advantage of opportunity as and when it arises."

Noble Apex is known as an industry innovator. Besides the traditional IFA advisory and brokerage business, the company offers fee-based portfolio management and holistic financial planning services since Dr. Chan founded Noble Apex Advisors

Limited in 1998.

Today, the brand also houses a trust company providing personal trust service to high net worth individuals. Noble Apex has also expanded to non-financial wealth management areas such as property investment, immigration, art collection and quality of life services.

"Change is inevitable and not all

change is welcome," says M.F. Chan, the company's founder. "The challenge is to understand the factors that bring about change and re-structure suitably. The key to staying on top of the industry is finding game changing ideas earlier than others, and transforming the organization to take advantage of it."

A long-standing champion of indus-

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try ethics, Chan agrees that regulation is good medicine for an industry that perhaps walked too far out on the edge.

“Malpractice is self-defeating. You will end up sacrificing long term success for short term gain and eventually bring disaster upon us all,” he says of the industry. So, given the situation now, where’s the light at the end of the long tunnel?

FinTech Revolution

“Technology enabled businesses will prevail,” says Chan. He should know. With a master degree in E-commerce from HKU, Dr. Chan is one of the few financial professionals well versed in FinTech applications.

Noble Apex Advisors Limited had soft-launched an online fund supermarket, iFund.com.hk, with more than 1000 SFC authorized funds on shelf and state-of-art analytical tools.

Noble Apex plan to develop mobile app version, and to add other financial products onto the platform over time to make it a comprehensive hub of financial products. Development of robo-advisor tools is also on the action plan.

“Moving with the times is not an option. The language we speak today is a reflection of the new reality that we have no choice but to embrace. Few IFA companies are moving with such vigor in this direction so it is up to us to lead the way and bring our customers a wider range of investments to exceed their expectations.”

“The Internet has changed the way we live and work so investing online is the next frontier. Customers today want global opportunity and the safety of working with a responsible investment partner. Furthermore, informed investors today want quality, fact-based, competitive product platform at a moment’s notice. They want a 24/7 IFA to help them respond to new opportunity timely,” says Chan.

Speaking of markets that Noble Apex finds interesting, Chan emphasizes

the need for financial services in China where reputation, performance and transparency are greatly valued.

China Prospects

“Hong Kong is the de facto offshore financial centre of China,” says Chan, adding that “as China’s economy grows, Hong Kong is becoming more, not less, important to China as an internationally recognized financial centre.”

“The offshore RMB, Shanghai Hong Kong Stock Connect, the Mutual Recognition of Funds (MRF) and the near-future Shenzhen Hong Kong Stock Connect arrangements are policies enhancing Hong Kong’s position as the de facto offshore financial centre of China.”

Noble Apex had built up an extensive network of strategic alliance in mainland China, and will ride on the resources to capture opportunities there. One example is to offer investment advisory services on A-share market to foreign fund houses, financial institutions and HNWI individuals who do not know China market well.

“The challenge is to move in tandem with our partners while keeping up our commitment to best business practices. China markets can be as lucrative as they can be unforgiving. Pragmatic expansion is the way forward.”

Offshore Prospects

Coming back to Hong Kong, Chan agrees that offshore prospects now serve IFAs better. “The problem is not about finding investment options and better returns. It is about retaining customer confidence and market faith. As an industry, we have to consider the long-term implications of dishonesty. It is a question of understanding the value of reputation and appreciating that the way forward is paved by referral business,” he says.

“Diversification is the need of the hour, which is why we are providing our customers with other financial solutions and the market is responding remarkably well.

“We anticipate double digit growth over the coming year and trust that our role in educating the market, adherence to compliance and strategic planning will bring more scope to our efforts and a higher quality of returns to our customers. Given the economies in America and Europe, strife in the Middle East and the high costs of property in the Far East, we see the immediate future as a phase of challenge. This will be a trying period that calls a closer relationship between investor and IFA in order to plan for contingency and take advantage of opportunity as and when it arises. We invite all your readers to visit and bookmark our homepage to stay abreast of the latest news that may well help them achieve or exceed their financial goals or at the very least keep them safer from the perils of misinformation and baseless speculation,” concludes Chan. ■

For additional information please visit www.nobleapex.com

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