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Weekly roundup of people news, Sept 18

Leigh Powell | Sep 18, 2015 (27 minutes ago)

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Pioneer adds trio, Z-Ben Advisors plants US flag, Thirdrock hires CRO, Old Mutual bolsters in equities, State Street hires from Citibank and IFA Convoy appoints new president.



Jack Lin says Pioneer Investments is accelerating its Asia growth plans

Pioneer adds trio, eyes Asia acceleration

Asset manager Pioneer Investments announced three new appointments in Asia as it moves to strengthen its presence in the region.

Amy Wang has joined the firm as head of Greater China on the institutional side of the business. Separately, Johnny Wong was named CEO and managing director of its Taiwan operations, and Anthony Heredia CEO of its India joint venture Baroda Pioneer Asset Management.

All three report to Jack Lin, the firm's head of Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa. "The Asia-Pacific region continues to be a key area of focus for Pioneer Investments," said Lin, adding that the firm was seeking to accelerate its regional growth plans with new hires.

"Clients' needs are evolving as growth in assets under management in this region is expected to outpace the rest of the world. These appointments are vital in addressing those needs."

Wang previously served as chief representative for Templeton International in Beijing for 12 years, overseeing daily operations including business development and client services.

She has also served as associate director at Fitch Ratings, economist at the International Monetary Fund in Washington and a

senior member of the research task force on financial sector issues at the IMF.

Wong's experience spans 22 years across Hong Kong and Taiwan. Prior to joining Pioneer he served as general manager and managing director at Neuberger Berman in Taiwan.

He has also worked as a managing director at UBS Global Asset Management (Taiwan) and has served in other leadership and business development roles at Janus International Asia, HSBC Asset Management Hong Kong, AIA, Franklin Templeton Investments (Asia), Sun Hung Kai Fund Management and Hang Seng Bank.

Heredia has more than 19 years' experience in Indian asset management. He was previously managing director of Morgan Stanley Investment Management Private, where he led business lines including advisory for offshore clients, cross-border institutional sales and domestic mutual funds.

He previously worked for HSBC Asset Management India as head of sales and distribution network, having started his career with Birla Sun Life Asset Management in 1995.

Overall Pioneer Investments employs about 150 people across Asia Pacific, including in Australia, China, India, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan.

China consultancy Z-Ben plants US flag

Shanghai-based consultancy Z-Ben Advisors announced the establishment of an initial presence in New York in a drive to meet demand for advice on China.

In a statement, Peter Alexander, the firm's managing director and founder, said: "Having people based in New York is now imperative for Z-Ben Advisors. Events in China are now impacting global institutions and investors on an increasing scale. China can no longer be ignored and our senior staff need to be closer to our clients."

Leading the firm's expansion in North America is executive director Anthony Skriba. He noted that while there had been a marked rise in volatility, global managers were increasingly aware both of the opportunities and the challenges posed by China. "We are now able to help clients navigate this environment in real time," Skriba said.

He also pointed to demand from Chinese investors seeking to reallocate their portfolios offshore, particularly in light of recent market movements.

"Z-Ben has been all about China, and only China, for more than a decade," added Skriba. "Now we can leverage that expertise to a broader audience."

Thirdrock hires chief risk officer

Singapore-based asset manager Thirdrock Group announced the appointment of ex-Citibank veteran Jasper Lai as its chief risk officer, effective from September 9.

Lai will be tasked with setting the strategic risk management vision and managing all aspects of the risk function, including implementation of risk policies and procedures and assessment of all reporting processes.

Jason Lai, founder and chief executive of Thirdrock, said: "Given his leadership skills, project management skills and in-depth knowledge of internal business processes and the industry, we are confident in his ability to optimize risks and drive performance across the organisation."

Prior to joining Thirdrock, Jasper Lai led the consumer foreign exchange franchise at Citibank across Asia Pacific as managing director and head of FX business within its regional consumer treasury department.

He spent close to two decades with Citibank, where he started as a management associate and FX trader. During his time there he spearheaded various initiatives for the Asia Pacific consumer bank group.

Old Mutual adds Asian equities director

Asset management business Old Mutual Global Investors announced that Oliver Lee had joined the firm from Schroders as investment director for Asian equities.

Based in Hong Kong, Lee started in the Asian equities team on September 14 alongside Josh Crabb, Diamond Lee, Kris

Whitlock and Dmitry Lapidus.

The team received regulatory approval to operate from Hong Kong in April this year. In all they manage three funds from the region covering Asia equity income, Pacific equity and Greater China equity. All three are sub funds of the Dublin domiciled Old Mutual Global Investors Series.

Lee previously worked in the alternative strategies group at Schroder Investment Management. Prior to that he worked for four years at emerging market equity boutique Sloane Robinson. He also spent two years in the equity division of Goldman Sachs.

Old Mutual Global Investors, which has \$35 billion in assets under management, is the asset management division of Old Mutual Wealth.

State Street hires England from Citibank

Financial services firm State Street Corporation announced the hire of Mark England from Citibank as senior vice-president and head of asset manager sector sales for Asia.

Based in Hong Kong, England will be responsible for further developing and executing State Street's sales strategy for the asset management sector in the region.

He takes over the role from Paul Khoury, senior vice-president, who was appointed head of State Street Global Services for Australia and New Zealand in June.

England reports to Kevin Wong, head of sector solutions for Asia Pacific. "He [England] will identify and develop integrated product and service solutions for our asset management clients in Asia, a core market for us," said Wong.

Most recently England was head of asset manager sales for the investor services group. He has held positions in sales, implementation and operations functions in the Americas, Asia and Europe.

State Street Corporation had \$2.4 trillion in assets under management as at June 30.

Convoy adds president, eyes Greater China

Hong Kong's largest independent financial adviser, Convoy Financial Holdings, announced the appointment of Ng Wing Fai as executive director and group president.

Ng's directorship commenced on September 15 and is for a term of three years. In his role he will lead the group to implement both short-term and long-term investment projects. He is also tasked with identifying investment and development opportunities to achieve sustainable growth.

Quincy Wong, chairman of Convoy, described Ng as a seasoned financial expert with extensive management experience in insurance, investment and banking sectors.

"We believe that his experience and speciality can lead the group to expand its business scope and further promote its development in the Greater China region," he added.

Ng has 20 years' experience in the financial sector. He is managing partner and founding partner of Primus Pacific Partners and has overseen investment into a number of assets globally, including New China Life Insurance and Eon Bank.

Previously Ng was managing director of Fubon Financial Holding, where he was in charge of overall strategy, capital markets, merger and acquisition activities and major change programmes.

Amundi adds chief economist for Asia

French asset manager Amundi announced it had hired Mo Ji from Azentus Capital Management as chief economist for Asia ex-Japan based in Hong Kong.

In what the firm says is a newly created role, she takes responsibility for economic research in the region and will work closely with investment teams in Asia and the firm's Paris headquarters. Philippe Ithurbide is Amundi's global head of research, strategy and analysis.

Mo Ji joined Amundi from Azentus Capital Management (prior Goldman Sachs Principle Strategies), where she was global chief economist for more than four years.

Mirae Asset bolters global research team

Asian financial services group and emerging markets investor Mirae Asset Global Investments bolstered its global research team in New York with the addition of four equity analysts.

It hired Tatiana Feldman for global emerging markets. Most recently she worked as an analyst at Inca Investments. She has previously worked as a Latin American equity analyst at Plural Capital and as vice-president of Latin America at Morgan Stanley.

Further, Malcolm Dorson joined Mirae Asset as an investment analyst for global emerging markets. He had previously worked as a Latin America analyst at Ashmore.

Mirae also hired Song Sungwon and Michael Dolacky as health-care analysts.

Mirae Asset was founded in 1997 in the wake of the Asian currency crisis. It established an office in Hong Kong in 2003 as the centre of its Asian and EM investment capabilities and offerings. It manages more than \$75 billion globally, of which more than \$16 billion is invested in EM equity as of end-June this year.

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