

THE NEW AGE OF WEALTH TECH

For the wealth management industry, embracing technology is no longer optional but essential for survival and growth. Given this new reality, technology was a prevalent theme at this year’s INSITE, with experts from throughout the industry sharing their expertise on a range of subtopics. Explore highlights from several key sessions and discover insights from discussions on the current tech landscape, solutions to grow your business, and tips for successful tech integration.

Alyssa Palmero

(moderator)

Director, Relationship Management,
BNY Pershing

Jennifer Kirksey

Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Tolleson Wealth Management

Jaci Stanton

Managing Director
F2 Strategy

Hussein Yahfoufi

Product Manager
Arta Finance

Embracing the Tech Landscape

*Insights from the session, Tech Experience Upgrade:
How Clients Evaluate Your Value*

Large tech companies have changed the way consumers evaluate products and services, setting high standards for customer experience across various industries, including wealth management. Financial advisors must rise to the challenge by modernizing their own services.

Jaci Stanton, Managing Director at F2 Strategy, a leading wealth management technology services firm, emphasized some of these latest trends in consumer behavior. “In America, we spend an average of six hours and 40 minutes online, every single day. We’re exposed to anywhere between 6,000 and 10,000 ads during that time,” Stanton reported.

According to Stanton, a compelling client experience will be critically important over the next three to five years. “Many firms still prioritize their capabilities and their spend on the advisor experience and not the client experience,” Stanton said. “That’s okay for now because baby boomers prefer human contact. But, as Gen X and millennials rise up, there’s going to be mounting pressures to elevate that experience.”

Despite efforts to enhance client experience through significant investments in digital platforms, the adoption rates can be challenging. Jennifer Kirksey, Deputy Chief Operating Officer at Tolleson Wealth Management, noted that many clients, especially from older generations, still prefer in-person interactions, though they appreciate the security and accessibility that digital tools provide. “Even if it’s not as fully adopted as we had hoped, we still try to push the digital experience alongside working directly with our clients.”

Hussein Yahfoufi from wealth management fintech Arta Finance believes firms must strike a balance between offering robust self-service options and maintaining high-touch, personalized service. “When clients become part of Arta, we consider it as if they’re building a relationship with Arta. Clients want to trust that you have their back and that you understand them and their goals.”

Something all panelists agreed on was that the success of digital tools hinges on their simplicity and ease of use. This expectation mirrors the efficiency found in consumer tech experiences like Amazon, where the entire process is intuitive and streamlined. Financial advisory firms should strive to replicate this level of user-friendliness in their own digital offerings.

Noam Tasch

(moderator)

Head of Revenue & Partnerships
BNY Pershing X

Mark Evans

President & CEO
Conquest Planning Inc.

Bryan Kucholtz

Head of Private Wealth
Texas Capital Bank

Becky Gallo

Manager, Information Technology-
Strategic Partnerships
Beacon Pointe

Mohan Gurupackiam

Partner, SVP, Chief Information Officer
Steward Partners Global Advisory

Michael Lewis

(moderator)

Chief Information Officer
BNY Pershing

Dan Adler

Chief Technology Officer
BNY Pershing

Michael Kollar

Chief Information Officer
Lincoln Investment Planning

Madhu Kotian

VP Software Engineering | CTO NMIS
Northwestern Mutual

Solutions to Grow Your Wealth Business

Insights from the session, Turning Tech Pains Into Growth Gains

The right technology strategy is essential for firms looking to grow and thrive in a competitive market. Solutions for advisors, home office, and investors demonstrate the need for tech and business strategies to work together, particularly when integrating these solutions into existing systems.

Automation was confirmed by the panelists as a critical (yet often undervalued) line item for any tech strategy. According to session moderator Noam Tasch, Head of Revenue at BNY Pershing X, “Automation is the forgotten cousin of AI.” Becky Gallo, Information Technology Manager for Beacon Pointe Advisors, reaffirmed this sentiment. “We’ve recently seen more companies come out with bots to assist—which I think are underrated. If you use them correctly, you can have a clear process and workflow.”

Continuing the automation discussion, Mark Evans, President and CEO of Conquest Planning, added that automating wherever possible can move things forward significantly. “But do it in a way that you’re using intelligent automation,” he cautioned. “That’s one of the things we’re really working on with some of the AI components we’ve been integrating.”

Mohan Gurupackiam, CIO of Steward Partners Global Advisory, sees cloud-based technologies and data aggregation platforms as crucial tools to help firms transform their operations. “If automation is the forgotten cousin of AI, the home office experience is the forgotten cousin of the advisor experience,” Gurupackiam said. But, by using advanced networking models and cloud ecosystems, firms can achieve a holistic view of their clients’ portfolios and help advisor provide more comprehensive and timely advice.

Having a robust tech stack is also crucial for attracting and retaining top talent, according to Bryan Kucholtz, EVP at Texas Capital Bank, emphasizing the need for evolving technology to keep pace with expansion. “If you don’t do that right, you can hire all the great salespeople in the world and it’s not going to do you any good.”

Implementing Your Plan

Insights from the session, Technology Leadership: Innovation, Speed to Market and User Experience

Technology has nearly limitless potential in the financial advisory sector, but realizing this potential requires a strategic approach to implementing your tech stack. Careful planning and prioritization can help ensure that technology investments pay off.

As highlighted by session panelists, the journey to an ideal tech stack often involves a mix of large transformations and incremental innovations. Michael Kollar of Lincoln Investment Planning believes that some systems require a complete overhaul, while others can be gradually improved through new workflows and APIs. “For us, we usually do a little bit of both.” Kollar shared.

The adoption of cloud technology plays a crucial role in this process. By moving to the cloud, firms can transform their cost structures from fixed to variable, as explained by Michael Lewis, CIO of BNY Pershing, and session moderator. This shift not only reduces the need for capital investments in infrastructure but also provides greater flexibility — something that’s critical for sustained growth. “You’ve got to build knowing that you will make some pivots and things will change over time.”

Cloud migration isn't a simple process but the value it can bring to clients is worth the effort, asserted Dan Adler, CTO of BNY Pershing X. "Yes, we successfully migrated our entire front end and infrastructure [of Wove]. But, what's more exciting is the promise of that migration."

AI and automation also came up as key components of a modern tech strategy. While there is some skepticism around AI, its potential to enhance productivity and streamline processes can't be overlooked. As discussed by Madhu Kotian of NMIS Investments, AI can be used to automate repetitive tasks, provide more personalized client interactions, and generate insights that help advisors make better decisions. "You need to have clear process and workflow," Kotian advised, stressing the importance of a solid foundation for successful AI implementation.

By carefully balancing large-scale transformations with incremental innovations, all while taking a thoughtful approach to tech adoption, firms can not only enhance their operational efficiency but provide greater value to clients.

Tech Wrap-up

Our panelists made it clear that embracing new technologies, using innovative solutions to promote growth, and carefully implementing your tech stack, can help advisors and firms confidently take steps to modernize their practice and deliver an exceptional experience.



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