

Speaking of Alpha

Shaping the Future of Data Management

A conversation with John Plansky and Spiros Giannaros



Data is at the heart of every investment firm's operations. An effective data management strategy can help institutional investment and wealth managers uncover new insights, operate more efficiently, better serve their clients and raise more assets.



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But firms face many challenges when it comes to data management. The sheer volume of data can be overwhelming. Managers need new, innovative tools to curate and interpret the breadth of both structured and unstructured data at scale.

Fragmented, siloed data also poses a challenge. Aggregating and reconciling data from multiple sources is time-consuming and complex, compromising timely investment decision-making and increasing operational costs. Multiple data streams often result in conflicting or unverified data — undermining investment professionals' confidence in their investment decisions. Data velocity also becomes a consideration. With trading decisions accelerating, post-trade timeframes and batch (overnight) processes are giving way to more real-time intraday processes.

As investors seek new growth opportunities, respondents in our fourth annual Growth Readiness Study told us that elevating productivity, migrating to the cloud and moving away from legacy IT systems will be their most critical actions in 2021. Seventy-two percent are attaching greater importance to increased operational resilience than to other strategic actions, as they adapt a platform that support growth over the next 12 months. Investing in new technologies instead of maintaining legacy systems also rose sharply in importance.

In a recent Speaking of Alpha **article**, we discussed the role that Alpha Data Services plays in helping investment firms streamline their operating model by outsourcing data management operations to a trusted service provider. Following the announcement of our Alpha Data Platform launch and our partnership with Snowflake, we spoke with John Plansky, global head of State Street AlphaSM and Spiros Giannaros, CEO of Charles River Development to understand how this collaboration is helping our clients better manage their data.

What are some of the challenges institutional and wealth managers face when it comes to data management?

John: Simplifying the data environment is one of the biggest tests our clients face. With disparate data sources, having frictionless access to a single, enterprise-wide source of truth is crucial. This helps eliminate the need for multiple systems, while also reducing the complexity of reconciliations and increasing the timeliness and accuracy of data. A verified data set that's available in near real-time supports accurate and efficient decision-making.

Spiros: While there is more data available than ever before, many firms still struggle with accessing that data. This is because traditional technology was built with a focus on storing rather than consuming data.

Firms also struggle with data governance. Regulations around personal information and geographic residency require solutions that provide transparency and auditability to ensure data is used appropriately. A third challenge involves data suitability. Business users require detailed context about their data. Otherwise, potentially valuable information can be underutilized or missed entirely.

“Simplifying the data environment is one of the biggest tests facing our clients.”

— JOHN PLANSKY

How is State Street helping solve for these challenges?

John: To help investment firms seamlessly assemble and access public and private investment data, we launched our Alpha Data Platform, an end-to-end data management and warehouse solution. It offers enhanced data management through a cloud-native platform, delivered via State Street Alpha. The platform enables clients to access front-office data in near real time with self-service analysis and visualization capabilities to accelerate decision-making. The platform also helps ensure higher-quality data, while reducing operating costs by outsourcing data operations.

In what ways are industry partnerships helping to bring data management to the next level?

Spiros: A foundational function of data management is interoperability. By partnering with industry innovators such as Snowflake and Microsoft® Azure, we can provide investment managers with seamless access to trusted data from across Alpha, as well as a broad spectrum of curated data available in the Snowflake Data Marketplace.

The platform also leverages product and engineering expertise here at Charles River Development, supported by State Street's technology scale and global service delivery teams for cross-region business connectivity. This introduces a whole new way to accelerate time to market that previously didn't exist.

“A foundational function of data management is interoperability.”

— SPIROS GIANNAROS

How does the partnership with Snowflake promote interoperability?

John: Investment managers benefit from timely insights while simplifying the user experience for assembling and consuming this information. By combining State Street's vast asset management data with Snowflake's powerful Data Cloud, end users are better positioned to streamline the investment process and mobilize data.

What are some of the additional ways institutional and wealth managers can benefit from an interoperable platform?

John: Consolidating data environments and effectively streamlining both business processes and investment decision-making promote a collaborative environment. Increased transparency is also crucial.

With insight into data availability, definitions, usage and lineage, institutional investment and wealth managers can reduce manual reconciliations and build trust with investors and regulators.

Spiros: A framework for integrating third-party and client-specific data expands potential data sources, empowering managers to uncover new insights. The Alpha Data Platform's extensible data model allows for third-party integration — including external custodians — and enables data sharing across client and marketplace ecosystems.

Investment managers are on a relentless hunt for growth. How are data management tools helping them discover new insights?

John: Intuitive, self-service data exploration tools combined with third-party data marketplaces encourage platform use and accelerate time to new investment insights. A cloud-native data solution can dramatically improve a firm's ability to achieve scale and deliver on performance objectives.

Less time spent managing data can mean more time spent on the business activities designed to support a firm's growth, such as generating returns, servicing their investors and developing new investment products.

Spiros: The aim of the Snowflake Data Cloud is to help clients access, explore, share and connect their data. It's exciting to see how the Alpha Data Platform, enabled by Snowflake, will empower managers to blend data from the Snowflake Data Marketplace with their own systems. By breaking down these silos, managers are in a much stronger position to get value out of their data.

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For more information on our Alpha Data Platform, visit:

statestreet.com/platformforgrowth

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3702810.1.1.GBL.INST Expiration date: 8/3/2022