

The Rise of the Sell-side COO

Guest Blogger

Four years back, on a trip to New York to meet prospects and clients, I had a rare meeting with someone with the title “COO - Research”. Most of my meetings till then would be with Heads of Research on the sell-side and CIOs or senior portfolio managers on the buy-side. I therefore hoped for a pleasant surprise in my meeting with this COO.

Unfortunately, the senior gentleman told me and my colleagues politely that his was a new role, and he had very limited powers. “Don’t go by my title,” he explicitly informed us.

Jump forward a couple of years, and how things have changed! Over the last 18-24 months, six firms have used the COO’s office to work with our team to significantly alter the brokerage and investment banking cost-output ratios. The analyst teams remain in charge of their products (as they indeed should be), but the COO team (Global COO, Vertical COOs, Regional COOs) plays a significant role in delivering cost efficiencies.

This change seems to have come about without any significant disruption in most cases, although one can argue that the market provided disruptive conditions for change to be effected. In all these engagements, COOs have been able to provide a structure and the required focus to ensure implementation of plans. Combined with our increasing ability and sophistication in ensuring onshore adoption, our clients and us have been able to move from concept to execution to results much quicker than before. Absent that (as used to be the case in the previous era), our clients and us would be inching rather slowly past various obstacles.

For those looking for a structured read on this subject, the following [survey](#) by Investance is worth giving a look.

About Acuity Knowledge Partners

Acuity Knowledge Partners is a leading provider of high-value research, analytics and business intelligence to the financial services sector. The company supports over 400+ financial institutions and consulting companies through a team of over 4,000+ subject matter experts who work as an extension of the clients’ teams based out of various global delivery centres.

We empower our clients to drive revenues higher. We innovate using our proprietary technology and automation solutions. We enable our clients to transform their operating model and cost base.
