Justin Sycamore
SS&C Eze

Justin Sycamore leads SS&C Eze's sales and business development efforts in EMEA. He joined Eze in 2018 from Algomi, where he was the global head of buy-side sales. He began his career in fintech in 1996, and since then has worked for several buyside technology vendors – both start-ups and well-established firms – in senior roles. He also built his own software company from scratch, which he took to profitability and sold in 2016.

Meet Eze Eclipse, the next-gen cloud-native IMS

With a client base that's more than doubled since this time last year, SS&C Eze's Eze Eclipse is one of the fastest-growing front-to-back cloud-native investment management platforms on the market. HFM sat down with SS&C Eze's head of EMEA sales, Justin Sycamore, to discuss why the product has been so successful, how technology demand has shifted towards the cloud in recent times and how the pandemic has influenced trends in trading functionality

Q Why do you think Eze Eclipse has been so successful in such a short period of time?

A Eze Eclipse meets a growing demand in the market for a front-to-back off-the-shelf solution that is fast to implement, easy to use and cheaper to maintain. Budgets are getting squeezed and firms need to do more with less. Our growth was driven initially by start-ups and emerging funds. As the product has matured, we're onboarding more established managers with more sophisticated strategies. Eze Eclipse enables these firms to streamline their vendor relationships and optimise their total costs. The platform delivers a combination of gains in operational efficiency and savings in terms of direct costs.

Here in the EMEA region, we've seen adoption in the UK, across Europe and the Middle East since we launched the product in the region last year. We've already more than doubled year-on-year growth globally, and we expect our client base growth to continue to accelerate.

The beauty of Eze Eclipse is that there's nothing comparable in the market, and people are excited about that. Users love how elegant and easy to use it is. It's not only intuitive but as new features are added, the context-based help and integrated tutorials make it easy to take advantage of new features on the fly.

Another important driver of the success was a methodical, client-first approach to onboarding new Eze Eclipse clients. When you're growing quickly, it can be easy to over-promise. That's why we've been careful and strategic with how we've grown and taken on new clients to ensure we deliver results. This approach has earned us a reputation as a trusted partner with a proven track record. We're very proud of the 100% lifetime client retention rate we currently maintain for Eze Eclipse.

Q As Eze Eclipse continues to rapidly grow, how are Eze's support teams equipped to face the challenges that arise with serving a wider client base?

A SS&C Eze has been around for 25 years delivering, implementing and supporting software solutions for investment managers all around the world, virtually around-the-clock. We're lucky to have successfully navigated rapid growth stages through our other industry-leading products and that experience and expertise benefits how we've approached support with Eze Eclipse.

We have dozens of tenured and experienced service experts onboarding and supporting clients across Eze Investment Suite and Eze Eclipse in London. This team is backed by another 400-plus service professionals worldwide that specialise in supporting the front-to-back office. Being part of SS&C Technologies gives SS&C Eze access to a global powerhouse of more than 25,000 employees, world-class data centres and a hardened network that's withstood the test of the pandemic. Our employees have

access to a dedicated education and training division, and SS&C is focused on recruiting and training top talent. This global breadth makes it easier for us to provide critical regionalised support with the necessary scale to support the rapid expansion.

Q How have your clients adapted in the past six months and how have their technology needs shifted as a result?

A Since March, we've been able to help clients transition seamlessly to remote work even as we were transitioning ourselves. We conducted work-from-home readiness planning well in advance of the lockdown, so there was very little impact on our support and implementation teams when the tougher measures were put into practice.

We recognise that traders need to be focused on the markets, and not on their IT, during a period of high volatility and uncertainty. Because the Eze Eclipse platform is truly cloud-native, it means that traders can access the system from anywhere and have the same, consistent experience with no downloads or workarounds. Dual-factor authentication ensures the same level of security at home as you would find in the office.

We've seen cloud adoption greatly increase across our client base over the past couple of years, but the pandemic has certainly accelerated the need and demand for cloud-based technology. In today's environment, accessibility, scalability and speed are even more critical, so Eze Eclipse must be highly scalable and mobile-friendly. Eze Eclipse is already offering market-leading accessibility. We're excited to further enrich our user's mobile experience with the launch of a new mobile app powered by Eze Eclipse later this year.

Q What more can you tell us about the SS&C Eze mobile app?

A The mobile app isn't our first; we launched our first app nearly 15 years ago. What's exciting about this new app, which is due to be released later in 2020, is that it's powered by the Eze Eclipse architecture, making it inherently secure, reliable and scalable. New features can be rolled out quickly and iteratively. The app is designed to empower portfolio managers and other key stakeholders to conduct their daily investment activities from their iPhone or Android devices. The mobile-optimised user experience is based

on extensive market research, including interviews and testing with 60-plus users. It's exciting to be at a firm that is constantly reviewing and enhancing its technology.

Q How have high-trading volumes and market volatility caused by the pandemic influenced trends in trading functionality?

A The pandemic has emphasised ensuring the front office has the necessary technology to navigate more complex market scenarios. A major benefit for Eze Eclipse users during times of high trading volumes and market volatility, not to mention working remotely, comes from sophisticated OMS, EMS and compliance features integrated into a single platform.

Synergy across the front-to-back office in one system has proven crucial for many traders. In the home environment, traders don't have the same screen real estate or hardware they may have in the office. Navigating a single, browser-based system as opposed to several applications becomes significantly easier.

Another trend we're seeing, accelerated in the current environment, demands full front-to-back integration. Eze Eclipse offers a broad set of extensibility options out of the box, including APIs, automated short-locates, flexible investor-friendly reporting, and real-time P&L and exposure.

Q How does Eze Eclipse stay ahead of the competition in terms of meeting clients' evolving needs?

A What's exciting about Eze Eclipse is the powerful and innovative underlying cloud-native architecture. Unlike a monolithic application installed as a whole and requiring dedicated upgrades, Eze Eclipse features a microservices architecture that allows for a much faster innovation cycle.

Continuous delivery enables us to roll out frequent, incremental updates behind the scenes without disrupting individual users or the platform's overall service availability. Users can always take advantage of the latest and greatest feature set since there are no versions or upgrades. The microservices architecture also means that as new and better technologies emerge, we're not locked into past technology choices. We're able to select to best available technology without rewriting the entire system. With the ability to easily deploy new features and technologies at any frequency, the platform is truly built to grow with the client.