

## Editorial

# Robo-Advisor – Solutions Solely for Digital Natives or Everyone?

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Robo-advisory has become one of the most discussed subjects in the asset and wealth management industry lately. Betterment, Wealthfront, and Nutmeg have been the first to offer wealth management online.

Obviously, the user behavior of customers has changed over the last decade. Especially the so-called millennial generation is used to online banking and uses the Internet as the main channel to schedule appointments, talk to friends, look for a job, etc. Thus, one obvious next step is managing investments online. The majority of consumers does not want to deal with asset management on their own. They still prefer a partner/advisor to manage their investments for them. That makes sense from my point of view since there are experts who have the knowledge and experience in asset management.

Given the current online behavior, it makes perfect sense to combine the financial expert-

ise with the opportunities that today's technology provides.

From my point of view, robo-advisors will be successful if they focus not only on the technology but consider the needs of the consumer. This must include a transparent high-quality product, a fair and transparent cost structure, and genuine simplicity when it comes to customer experience. In my opinion, the technology is the medium but the real differentiator is the approach of a trustworthy company to offer relevant and differentiated services tailored to the needs of real people, not only a small group of financial experts.

Robo-advice has just begun, and so far it follows the algorithms that humans have created and programmed. When we look at the artificial intelligence that is already available, there will be a lot more sophisticated robos in the future combining the experience/emotional competence of humans with the self-learning



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technology and its superior cognitive abilities. There have been lots of discussions in the industry about the threats of robo-advisors. We strongly believe that it is rather an opportunity than a threat. It is an opportunity to reach out for customer groups that were not or are not approachable anymore. It is furthermore an opportunity to create new offerings and services as well as to build up a state-of-the-art technology. A technology that will provide better outcomes in advisory for the benefit of customers and human advisors as well. That was one of the reasons we founded VisualVest. VisualVest is a so-called robo-advisor established in 2015 and launched in March 2016. It combines the best of both worlds: the decades of expertise and knowledge of a leader in the investment industry and the agile, fast-moving, consumer-oriented online start-up mentality. VisualVest offers diverse portfolios with a balanced mix of asset classes with seven different risk levels. Depending on their pref-

erences, customers can choose each portfolio with actively managed funds as well as ETF funds. VisualVest has access to approximately 13,000 funds. To be eligible for the customers' portfolios, the funds must comply with high-quality standards.

Since May 2016, VisualVest offers three portfolios with sustainable funds only, so-called GreenFolios. That differentiates VisualVest from every robo-advisor around the globe. Based on our market research and many trend reports, we strongly believe that more and more private investors care about the sustainability of their investments.

Of course, there have been lots of discussions if FinTech, e.g., robo-advisors, are threatening the traditional banking sector. On the contrary, we believe it opens new doors to customer segments and interesting opportunities to cooperate with banks to strengthen our market position.