



James Griffin
SS&C Eze

James Griffin is executive managing director, head of global sales for SS&C Eze, responsible for overseeing new sales, existing client growth and strategic business development for SS&C Eze products worldwide, including Eze Investment Suite and Eze Eclipse. He has 20-plus years of business development experience in the investment management technology market, 12 of which have been spent at SS&C Eze, where he has held numerous leadership positions, including managing director, Americas sales and director, North America new business sales.

The cornerstone provision

James Griffin of SS&C Eze reflects on his return to the company and considers the current trends in the vendor space

Q Last year, you found yourself returning to SS&C Eze to lead the global sales organisation. What brought you back?

A As a sales executive, it's essential that I genuinely believe in the company's mission, and I'm excited about the products. The SS&C mission has always been about delivering accurate results for clients and helping make their work easier. All the challenges over the last year have made solutions like ours even more critical. In a time of uncertainty, it is exciting to work for a well-positioned business to meet the needs of the current climate.

Coming back was an easy decision. There was an opportunity to take on this new role and help drive success at the global level. That was exciting to me.

As part of SS&C, we have the opportunity to extend our solutions further and address more challenges for our clients. Many innovations are happening across the company. Bringing together products and services from across SS&C in a creative way that genuinely creates value is another exciting challenge.

Q Since your return, what has surprised you most regarding changes in the industry?

A Many of the trends we saw in recent years have only accelerated with the changes of the pandemic and workforces operating remotely. Cloud adoption and mobility, cybersecurity and a drive towards vendor consolidation are at the forefront for investment managers. These trends

are playing a critical role in vendor selection and due diligence.

SS&C is well-positioned to help firms tackle these challenges. The overall market sentiment towards hedge funds has been very positive. The uncertainty of 2020 created an opportunity for hedge funds to showcase the value they can deliver. With the challenges of fundraising and virtual ODD, there's even more competition. Technology can be a valuable differentiator and help funds gain an edge as they compete for new business. Investors are very savvy. The right technology can enable hedge fund managers to prove operational resilience, assure investors with robust processes and rigorous controls, and showcase their efficiency.

Q How do you think the pandemic has influenced growth for SS&C Eze?

A Despite the difficulties of last year, we continued to see success across our flagship enterprise suite, Eze Investment Suite and our cloud-native all-in-one platform, Eze Eclipse.

We started 2021 with one of our best quarters on record for Eze Investment Suite since joining SS&C, with 67 new modules coming on board. Many firms have seen the past year as an opportunity to evaluate their tech stack, modernise their platforms and maybe address things that were not working well. Some firms were facing costly upgrades and wanted something more flexible and configurable. For others, the pandemic highlighted inefficiencies and pain points they had been living with for a while. We are also seeing more hedge funds moving away from using multiple

specialised platforms to consolidate their investment book on a single system.

It has been incredible to see the market response to Eze Eclipse. We now have more than 170 clients on the platform, and the feedback has been remarkably positive.

Q How do the two platforms compare? Do they serve different markets?

A The needs of a large established manager compared to a start-up or emerging fund can vary greatly. Our goal is to provide a cohesive end-to-end investment experience for your firm. We have a few ways of helping a firm, whether they need a turnkey all-in-one or they need highly configurable and sophisticated features that integrate with their existing technology.

Eze Investment Suite is an integrated suite of enterprise investment apps. They work very well as part of your existing tech stack or combined for a complete front-to-back experience. Most clients deploy in the cloud through our services or by using a third-party or public provider. Eze Investment Suite is an excellent fit for firms with complex, multi-asset class workflows that require deep functionality and significant configurable features. We've maintained a high level of investment in the product to ensure the architecture evolves with the latest advances.

Eze Eclipse is genuinely turnkey, so it naturally appeals to start-ups and emerging funds looking to get up and running quickly. However, over the past year, we've seen that Eze Eclipse can work just as well for established funds that need to replace legacy systems they've outgrown or that want to reduce overheads and minimise costs.

Q Eze Eclipse is relatively new to the market, but your user base is quickly expanding. What do you think is driving its success?

A Firms need to do more with less, and it's amplified with teams working remotely. Users love the Eze Eclipse interface because it's intuitive, simple and the learning curve is fast. Built-in tutorials and contextual tips make it easy to learn new features and workflows. Users can be on the system with minimal training.

What's unique about Eze Eclipse is the cloud-native microservices architecture enables us to innovate very quickly. We're bringing users new features weekly with no upgrades or disruptions. Because of this, Eze Eclipse is

maturing rapidly. We're finding ourselves talking to CTOs who haven't seen the system in a couple of years, and they are shocked by how much we've done.

Throughout the pandemic, the service team has been exceptional. They've onboarded new clients at an average of 1-2 every week. At the same time, they're laser-focused on our client's success – addressing inquiries quickly, helping them learn new features as we add them, and ensuring each firm is getting the most value from the platform.

This partnership culture, especially in the current environment, really sets us apart from other vendors.

Q As other competitors enter the one-stop shop space, how do you plan to stay ahead?

A Many vendors right now are claiming to be one-stop shop. But it means something different for every vendor and every client.

Our clients' needs are constantly evolving. We don't see that slowing down. As more firms look to reduce their vendor relationships, it's our responsibility to adapt and provide more features, functionality and optionality. Streamlining systems shouldn't mean sacrificing functionality. We help clients create the end-to-end workflow that works for their firm – all without the overhead of supporting a complicated technology stack if they don't want it.

The future of investment management solutions is open and connected. We design our solutions to serve as the hub of a firm's investment operations. Our open architecture enables them to create the ecosystem that works for them. We know first-hand how difficult it can be to achieve true integration across disparate systems. As part of SS&C, we can bring together products in a more meaningful way since we can pull back the curtains and share the code.

While our platforms have always been open, we are focusing on extending that even further. We are improving interoperability with the ultimate goal of delivering new, innovative ways for clients to tie together their workflows across more systems and partners into a single, seamless experience.

At SS&C Eze, we view ourselves as a partner and not just a vendor. That's been a cornerstone of our culture since I first joined the company over a decade ago. We are still a team of hard-working people dedicated to helping clients scale and grow, no matter the market environment. While it's always been a critical part of how we do business, I think our partnership philosophy and that consultative approach to service stand out in times like these.