Cliff Moyce of DataArt challenges status quo in fin-tech

TONY ZERUCHA
FEB. 21, 2016, 11:01 PM

Cliff Moyce liked DataArt so much he joined the company.

Mr. Moyce is a Partner and Global Head of Finance Practice at DataArt, a technology consulting firm which creates end-to-end solutions for clients in financial services, health care, hospitality, media and the Internet of Things. They produce new products, modernize existing enterprise systems and provide managed services.

He joined DataArt in January during a growth period for the company. In 2015, the company posted record revenue of $71 million, a year-over-year increase of 31 percent. Gains of 40 percent or more were seen in many sectors.

Cliff Moyce

More of that revenue is coming from large clients. Those billing more than $1 million every year account for 43 percent of DataArt's portfolio.

DataArt also opened locations in Munich, Germany and Wroclaw, Poland, giving them more than 1,600 specialists in 15 locations across eight countries.

Mr. Moyce's background is in London's financial markets. He led the insurance operations projects for the rescue of Lloyd's of London and automated trading at Europe's largest derivatives exchange.

Clearly an experienced hand at the use of technology in financial services, Mr. Moyce believes incumbents need to fully embrace technology if they intend to stay relevant in the coming decades.

"I often speak to the industry on the need for change in banking," Mr. Moyce said. "And I deliberately challenge them."

"They are facing competition from Alibaba, Tencent and Facebook. How will they survive when Facebook offers free money transfers?"

For the first time in their history financial institutions have to be responsive to their customers' needs, Mr. Moyce said.

That is because technology has fostered an unbundling of the bank. Startups have sliced it up and are offering slivers to the customer, who can create a package of services that meets their own needs.

"People suffered because banks were giving them what the banks wanted the way banks wanted to give it," Mr. Moyce said.

Mr. Moyce knows banks have shifted their thinking because he speaks to them at events and they contact DataArt to help them develop customer-responsive systems.

Many who do call may think they have a clear idea of what they want and need, but many do not. Left unchallenged that could result in a perfectly good system designed to respond to a nonexistent need.

"I challenge people by asking them why they want to build the system they do," Mr. Moyce said.

"What outcome do you want to achieve and why?"

"Who are your customers?"

Following the discussions DataArt presents the customer with a range of options based on their budget. Equally important is to provide a solution the customer can support in the coming years.

Mr. Moyce said banks are well aware of their need to change.

Why is it so hard for them?

"Until I re-engaged with large retail banks, I assumed they had a mindset where they were stuck in the past."

"That's not true."

Banks are battling an entrenched organizational structure where each department works separately from the rest, he explained. Systems repeat themselves across departments, often with their own infrastructure. Less need for communication exacerbates the problem.

A multinational presence also hurts banks as they have to effectively function in many jurisdictions, each with its own laws and currency.

"Such systems are not designed to be integrated," Mr. Moyce said.

In most cases a client's systems do not have to be eliminated, Mr. Moyce explained. They can be linked together for the first time, or decoupled and rejoined in a more efficient fashion.

"We don't build a new modular system," Mr. Moyce said. "We make the existing system modular."

Expect banks to continue to look to fin-tech companies to solve their technology problems for several reasons, Mr. Moyce suggests. For example, why would they develop their own cloud technology when the best talents already work for companies developing those very solutions?

Why should banks develop comprehensive strategies for capitalizing on big data when they can work with an established company sitting years ahead of them in capability?

"Some of these areas are 'nice to haves'," Mr. Moyce said. "How many things can banks do at once?"

Original article – http://www.banklesstimes.com/2016/02/21/cliff-moyce-of-dataart-challenges-status-quo-in-fin-tech/