

LUCIANO SIRACUSANO



Photo by Sara Hougan

BIO
Firm WISDOMTREE
Title CHIEF INVESTMENT STRATEGIST
Location NYC
AUM in ETFs \$43 BILLION

Nearly 10 years ago, WisdomTree launched its first ETFs using its own fundamentally weighted indexes, offering a new product wrinkle to the ETF industry. The only pure-play public ETF company, the firm has gone on to blaze an independent path to become the fifth-largest ETF issuer in the U.S.

Over the past two years, WisdomTree’s currency-hedged ETFs have been some of the most embraced products on the market, and the company continues to make waves in the smart-beta space as well. The ahead-of-the-curve product development has earned the company a reputation as a paragon of innovation in the ETF industry, and the industry is always wondering what WisdomTree will do next.

Luciano Siracusano, chief investment strategist, is the face of WisdomTree, as well as the sales muscle. Taking over sales in 2008 when the company had \$3 billion in assets under management, he has since shaped the company into its role as a leading ETF issuer and has grown assets to more than \$50 billion at the end of 2015 in the U.S. and Europe.

“The vast majority of our inflow growth has been organic. And it comes from WisdomTree creating our own indexes, creating our own investment strategies and then launching ETFs to track them,” Siracusano told ETF Report.

“So that’s very impressive that you can not just be successful within the ETF industry, but in the constellation of all the other alternatives people have, including asset management complexes that have their own private banks,” he added. “And you can still compete very well against them.”

WisdomTree is the rare independent breed in the ETF space, with no large bank or asset manager bankrolling the company. Instead, it went the stock market route, and offers transparency perhaps better than any other ETF issuer.

“We may be the most transparent [ETF issuer],” Siracusano said of WisdomTree because of its public-company status. “Everything we do is out there in the open. The stock trades in the marketplace every day. So, every day, people are buying and selling, and putting a value on how they think our company and our enterprise are doing.”

As for what’s next, the company has just launched its first ETFs with dynamic currency hedges that can be adjusted anywhere from 0 to 100% hedged based on three signals.

“We really think that’s the next step. Particularly if managing currency risk is not being done by active managers, this is a way for advisors basically to outsource that decision to a rules-based algorithm,” Siracusano added.

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—Drew Voros