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Technology House of the Year
ZE PowerGroup Inc.

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With Asia attracting more and more attention from energy traders, it is increasingly important that companies in the region have access to the high-quality information needed to support and inform their trading activities.

Bearing this in mind, Vancouver-based data management software vendor ZE PowerGroup Inc. (ZE) set up an office in Singapore to serve its Asian clients two years ago. It has been gradually expanding its offering ever since and can now provide clients with on-the-ground support, as well as a range of Asia-specific data feeds.

The technology underlying ZE's ZEMA software suite allows for a high level of customisation, meaning firms can easily expand it to fit their Asian operations.

"When we built ZEMA, we didn't presuppose the way the client would interact with the product," explains Waleed El-Ramly, the firm's Chief Product Officer. "It's very scalable and modular, so it can accommodate the client's needs very well. No two companies use our products in exactly the same way."

The ZEMA Suite consists of nine products that are grouped into three functional areas: data acquisition, analytics and reporting, and integration. Using the integration product, users can create forward curves and then integrate them with a wide variety of third-party products for comparison purposes, or load them into their existing energy trading and risk management (ETRM) systems.

"No matter what end-system a client has, ZE's products can communicate with it. We pride ourselves on accommodating clients'

preferences for technology," says El-Ramly.

Clients can licence just one or all nine of the functionalities, depending on what they need. In addition to providing software as a service, ZE differs from its competitors in data management by providing the only perpetual on-premise licensing option. This allows clients to licence its software without paying ongoing



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fees if they decide to discontinue support from ZE.

The firm released the fourth version of ZEMA during 2012. It takes advantage of new technologies and improved search capabilities to enhance and speed up the user experience.

ZE adds continuously to its collection of data feeds, which now come from more than 400 different providers. In Asia, one of its most important data offerings is a feed from the Singapore-based Energy Market Company (EMC), which operates the country's wholesale power market. Beyond this, ZE also offers Asia-focused reports from a diverse array of entities in the region, including Japanese price reporting agency

Rim Intelligence, the Zhengzhou Commodity Exchange, Petroleum Association of Japan and the Singapore Mercantile Exchange.

The family-run firm has an established client base active in Asian markets, including heavyweights such as Switzerland-based mining and trading firm Glencore Xstrata, Russian state-owned oil and gas giant Gazprom, California-based oil and gas firm Chevron and UK-based oil major Shell. The firm boasts a client retention rate of over 90% and claims it has never lost a customer to a competitor since it was first set up.

According to El-Ramly, much of the company's continuing success is down to the strong ties it builds with data partners and other third parties, such as ETRM software vendors, consulting firms and various energy

industry associations.

An important part of ZE's approach is not to outsource any of ZEMA's development or support services. It operates a training academy for educating software developers about the potential uses of ZEMA, which all new employees have to participate in, regardless of their seniority. The company is also committed to frequent communication with its clients, constantly updating them on broader market trends and how to get the most out of ZE's products. "We produce weekly webinars and a monthly newsletter, which will highlight our new analytics and ensure clients can stay on top of our new developments," says El-Ramly. ■