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Sept 2012 Mergence appoints ex-CIOs to boost team

Mergence Investment Managers, the investment subsidiary of Mergence Africa Holdings Group started by Masimo-a-badimo Magerman with assets under management of R8 billion, has strengthened its absolute-return team with the appointment of Patric Ho, previously CIO of Eskom Pension and Provident Fund, and Imtiaz Ahmed, former CIO for Investment Solutions.

Ho joined Mergence on September 1 and takes responsibility for the global assets that form part of the Mergence Africa Absolute Return CPI+5 Fund as well as a new fund being registered, the



Patric Ho



Imtiaz Ahmed

Mergence Africa Absolute Return CPI+6 Fund. He brings over 25 years' investment management experience, which includes seven years as CIO at Eskom before relinquishing his role to set up an

absolute-return fund within the scheme.

Imtiaz Ahmed joined Mergence in mid-September to spearhead the group's growth in balanced mandates, which currently form part of the absolute-return segment and in which the group plans to compete more aggressively going forward. Ahmed brings 20 years' experience, having held the role of CIO of Investment Solutions for two years, and prior to that as executive director and head of external portfolios at Stanlib. He set up boutique hedge fund firm Forte Alternative strategies in 2009. [More online](#)

May 2012 Forssman joins Absa Capital Prime Services

Ruth Forssman has joined the Absa Capital Prime Services team, where she assumes responsibility for client relationship management.

Forssman was previously with Peregrine Securities, which she joined in January 2008, bringing significant experience in the South African hedge fund space.

Prior to working at Peregrine, she was at Investec Bank where she was a



Ruth Forssman

member of the Equity Derivatives desk from February 2004 to December 2007.

She has a BCom Honours (cum-laude) in Mathematics and Economics from RAU.

Headed by Chris Edwards, Absa Capital's Prime Services division now offers synthetic equity access across

six African markets in addition to its multi-asset class offering in South Africa, providing foreign and domestic clients with a local and global service offering. In addition, it plans to introduce international futures and synthetic equity access from the fourth quarter of this year.

Absa Capital is a division of Absa Bank, a leading South African corporate and investment bank with global reach, and is affiliated to Barclays.

Aug 2012 Ex-OMAC duo form Rezco Investment Consultants

Windall Bekker, former head of investment consulting at Old Mutual Actuaries and Consultants (OMAC), and Jann Krynauw, previously OMAC's actuary and senior investment consultant, have established Rezco Investment Consultants, a consulting arm for the Rezco Investment Group.

The consulting business will provide solutions and services to the retirement fund industry, says Bekker.

Under Rezco Investment Consultants the pair plans to offer, amongst

others, customised smooth bonus-type products to retirement funds. With these products, trustees will be able to choose their preferred underlying managers and products, which will then be used as the core building blocks for a retirement fund solution, with risk-management overlays such as smoothing and guarantees where needed.

"We think there's a very good market for customised smoothing products. Traditionally, life companies had these customised products with smoothing

and guarantees, but trustees weren't able to choose the underlying manager or the smoothing methodology and guarantees tended to be very expensive. In our products, the fund managers, whether it be underlying hedge fund managers or traditional managers, will be the underlying building blocks and we will then implement the smoothing methodology, shop around for the best guarantees, and put the product together that best matches our clients' liability book," says Bekker. [More online](#)

Aug 2012 Former Absa team sets up retirement fund advisory

Francois Viljoen, former head of Absa Asset Consulting, together with his former colleagues Morne Nel, Danny Streicher and Francois van Dijk, have set up a specialised advisory business aimed at assisting retirement funds, corporate clients and individuals with structuring their goals-based investment strategies.

The ex-Absa Asset Consulting team left the group at the end of July to set up Johannesburg-based Bateleur Investment Group, which started operating on August 1. The team has identified numerous opportunities to advise retirement funds about National Treasury's series of retirement fund reforms, which is aimed at overhauling the industry in

an effort to improve the rate of individual savings and to reduce the number of people outliving their retirement savings.

Viljoen says that the proposed reforms present an opportunity for retirement funds to implement solutions that focus on the holistic investment and financial planning needs of the individual member. Bateleur Investment Group will advise retirement funds on all aspects of structuring retirement portfolios including preservation and portability of member's assets, reducing fund costs, tax structuring, fund governance and the role of trustees, investment planning for members, and ongoing education of individual members to improve retirement fund savings.

Viljoen sees the advice offered by Bateleur Investment Group as working in partnership with employee benefit consultants but focused on a very specific area of advice, which is developing the strategic roadmap of the investment plan with a focus on the individual member and aiding the education of those members.

Viljoen is also positive on the role of hedge funds in achieving overall investment objectives and says that "non traditional" asset classes such as hedge funds, private equity and property will play a role within the advice they give to retirement funds, particularly where short-term liquidity requirements are less of a constraint.