



Client Success Story **Aviso Wealth Inc.**

## NEI Investments Sees Continued Success Using Direct Customization and Top-Quality Data

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**Gauhar Mahmood**

Senior Product Manager

**Company**

NEI Investments/Aviso Wealth Inc.

**Product used**

Morningstar Direct

**Use cases**

Research, Compliance, Reporting, Competitive Analysis

**Industry**

Financial Services

### The Challenge

A common challenge in the financial services industry is the demand for customization in the provision of services for advisors, sales, and marketing teams to meet client needs – a challenge which Gauhar Mahmood and his NEI Investments team face. The need to adapt to varying customer preferences and unique requirements presents a hurdle.

Advisors, sellers, and marketing professionals each have distinct needs and expectations. Consequently, there’s a huge array of customizations that the team has to cater to. This calls for flexibility, creativity, and technical expertise in order to meet each client’s specific needs without compromising the quality-of-service delivery.

Moreover, the necessity to have consistent, top-quality data while navigating this complex landscape of customization further amplifies the challenge. This is crucial, as the effectiveness of their tool depends largely on the accuracy and reliability of the data it uses.

### The Solution

Managing all these customizations while ensuring top-notch data quality is no simple feat. But Morningstar Direct helps them handle these customizations in a manageable manner.

“Morningstar provides the ability to customize data, and you’re able to look into different views of the same data,” says Mahmood. “It helps tell different stories, and sales and marketing especially appreciate that view. It helps them get their message across and makes their job easier.”

Mahmood, a senior product manager for NEI Investments, part of Aviso Wealth Inc., discusses his role and the ways in which his team utilizes Morningstar. As part of his responsibilities, Mahmood oversees the fund lineup of NEI Investments, one of Canada’s largest responsible investment firms. He is also the primary contact for inquiries about NEI funds or competitive funds.

### Staying Competitive and Sharp

In supporting his team and other departments within the company like sales and marketing, Mahmood relies heavily on Morningstar Direct for competitive analysis, fund data, and industry analysis, helping them to not only look at the fund performance at the aggregate level, but to go in deeper and look at the many other components of the funds.

“Morningstar is an industry standard when it comes to mutual funds, and even ETFs,” says Mahmood.

"I don't think there's many other players in the space that will give you the level of flexibility, customization, or sheer data coverage that Morningstar offers. It is one of the premier tools for fund analysis, competitor analysis, and industry analysis."

Mahmood further elaborates on the crucial role that Morningstar plays in his position. He creates monthly, quarterly, and even daily reports for the sales and marketing teams using Morningstar's automation features, which significantly improve his productivity and efficiency. Without Morningstar, Mahmood estimates that the completion of these tasks would take days, weeks, or even a month.

"Using Morningstar, we've created many reports that look at different types of fund data, whether it be on the competitor level, or an under-the-hood look into our own funds," shares Mahmood.

## Taking a Direct Path to Peak Efficiency

Direct enables the NEI Investments team to get a wide view of their work landscape, while simultaneously achieving efficiency across all team functions using every corner of its capabilities.

"The analogy I'd give is that Morningstar is like a periscope, to give a view into the mutual fund industry landscape. It is a must-have for any product manager operating in this space," says Mahmood. "I use many different areas of my Morningstar Direct including workspace, Presentation Studio, performance reporting, and portfolio management."

Mahmood highlights the practicality and user-friendliness of Morningstar, which his sales team finds very accessible.

While other platforms might offer varying pieces of service solutions, they often lack the ability to present everything in a user-friendly and compelling manner while supporting a financial professional's entire workflow, from analysis of our high-quality data, to report generation, to ongoing portfolio management, in one place. Given his role as a 'power user', Mahmood utilizes many different areas of Morningstar Direct to cater to the varying needs of different teams.

"I use Morningstar for a lot of competitive analysis. Also, I serve other stakeholders within the company, like the marketing team, to cater to their needs and provide them with fund data and industry analysis."

Ultimately, Morningstar enables Mahmood to provide valuable insights, innovative product reports, and extensive analysis of fund data to his team and the company as a whole.

## Morningstar's ESG Ratings Boost Product Performance

Mahmood describes the influence of Morningstar's ESG framework and globe rating system on product performance was explored, with an emphasis on how Morningstar's ESG ratings are gradually becoming the industry standard, holding a crucial role in responsible investing, akin to their star rating system for performance.

"Being an asset management firm that emphasizes ESG investments within this Canadian mutual fund landscape, we find that the globe ratings help us

tremendously to portray the ESG risk that our fund carries or lack thereof," says Mahmood.

Mahmood further explained how these ratings help to analyze the ESG risks of individual funds, and at times can be a decisive factor in securing a sale. He proudly confirmed that these ratings have notably boosted the sales and marketing of their products. Additionally, the level of granular detail in ESG reports have been a game changer in identifying ESG risk of a given fund.

"Back in the day, most people didn't have a lot of metrics regarding ESG, responsible investing. But over time, Morningstar has really upped their game. They've added a lot of data points regarding responsible investing, different exclusions, different screens that the fund may employ," says Mahmood. "And beyond that, there are many things that Morningstar offers that I don't think other competitors have, like detailed ESG reports. Let's say you look at a report about carbon footprints or sustainability. And you can go into each component of environmental factors, like social factors and governance factors at an overall fund level and also a company level. That granular detail helps advisors gauge the exact ESG risk a fund might have."

From NEI's perspective, Morningstar stands unmatched when it comes to mutual fund and ETF industry analysis.

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## Aviso + Morningstar = Continued Growth and Success

Mahmood concluded by recounting how Morningstar's reputation and tools have become an industry standard, its 40 years of influence leaving an undeniable mark on the mutual fund industry.

He found the reports provided by the tool valuable in his previous advisory role, leading to its integration in his current work as a product analyst.

Stressing the tool's user-friendly interface and time-efficiency, Mahmood noted its effectiveness in assisting their workflow and storytelling. Furthermore, he mentioned the improvements in its search engine, specifically the enhanced search criteria tool for fund queries, expressing appreciation for its updated features. Thus, Mahmood's journey testifies to his professional growth and success achieved through efficient utilization of Morningstar tools.

### **Ready to See for Yourself?**

Morningstar Direct is an all-inclusive platform designed to assist wealth and asset managers in effectively managing their portfolios. It caters to various needs, including market research, product development, strategic positioning, marketing, and distribution approaches.

Visit: <https://www.morningstar.com/try/free-direct-trial>

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