



Risk advisor leading stakeholders to succeed in downturn with sound Corporate Governance strategies

風管顧問以卓越管治領導持份者逆流而上

Cora Wan

**R**isk management is every company's life blood in the persistent fighting of a lingering global pandemic. Insurance brokerage and advisory industry faces a real test on their resilience in advising clients whose businesses are disrupted by unprecedented challenges, while needing to maintain its own business volume and quality with a shrinking client budget. HKIoD has recognised a particularly outstanding director in this area: Mr Yip Kam Keung Alex, Chief Executive Officer - Greater China, Lockton Companies (Hong Kong) Limited, in the category of Executive Directors, Non-listed Companies, who has led his company to make sound and swift decisions to turn challenges into opportunities by deploying sound corporate governance strategies and maximising its advantage as a non-listed company.

"Alex is a strong believer in contributing back to the community and has a passion in promoting environmental friendliness. He has good understanding and execution of compliance and risk management at both the Asia management board and CEO levels. With the strategic mindset, he has taken the company to a high level in corporate governance. Moreover, he is an advocate of the development of the industry through active participation in industry affiliations and support of development of young talents for the industry," said the panel of judges. *The 21st Century Director* had the pleasure to interview Alex and share with the readers his secret of success in leading his company to achieve growth against all odds during this challenging period.

“The biggest challenge we faced over the past two years is how to engage clients in a world where travelling to meet and discuss important matters with senior decision makers is no longer an option,” said Alex.

As an insurance brokerage and consultancy that assists clients to reach best risk management solutions in complex situations, Alex’s team used to rely heavily on face-to-face dialogue with clients who are usually top stakeholders at influential corporations.

Internally, the team of professional consultants and field experts who used to work side by side at the office and conference room setting were also forced to stop all in-person contact at the peak of the pandemic. Fortunately, the firm’s investment in the sunny days in virtual office infrastructure has proven to be capable of supporting clients and the team to quickly back to business as usual.

“It is a pleasant surprise to witness how our team and clients have adapted to the new normal so seamlessly. This has led us to further firm up our mind to invest in technology significantly to support our next stage of growth globally,” he added.

### **Technological investment for next stage growth**

Though the global pandemic has forced Alex’s team and clients to overcome new challenges, it has also created new legacy that will leave positive changes for the years to come. For example, the company now operates in a more flexible manner by embracing a hybrid mode that allow a portion of the team members to have the flexibility to work from home. This is a welcomed change by staff members, which



▲ Alex Yip in a regular meeting with department heads.  
葉錦強先生與各部門主管的例行會議。

will help to retain and acquire talent.

Alongside human capital, which has been traditionally the most important investment for the company, Lockton also has made technological investment a top priority in the company’s development direction. “We will continue to invest in technology and update our system so as to make sure the efficiency of our daily operations. Furthermore, we will place a key focus on data collection for analysis, so that we can deliver informed solutions to client in complicated situations,” said Alex.

### **Emerging risks seen by as a risk expert**

Looking ahead, Alex sees a lot of growth potential for the company. In terms of top-of-mind emerging risks faced by clients, he said that cyber-attack and data breach are expected to have an even bigger and more expensive impact to businesses, because companies now rely much heavier on their virtual infrastructure to operate and service. On the other hand, climate change also exposed almost all industries to higher risks on their assets and opera-

tions from natural disasters that are expected to be more frequent and drastic in nature.

“As a risk advisor, we always have our ears to the ground for risks that could affect clients business with the changing landscape in the new normal,” said Alex who understands the company’s success is closely linked to client’s success. Under a more challenging and volatile business environment, there is a higher likelihood of potential credit risk and counterparty risks and thus the team is communicating more closely with stakeholders to manage these risks effectively.

### **Support clients with creativity**

While the emerging risks look positive to a firm that exists to manage them like Lockton, it is not all so straightforward to turn these risks into opportunity.

“It is unrealistic to offer clients insurance coverage to counter all the new emerging risks, especially when many clients cannot even afford the premium they used to pay because of a shrinking business,” Alex

pointed out. As a hands-on client advisory lead, Alex offers trust and independence to encourage his team to tailor solutions with new thinking and strategies. Notably, their advisors are supporting some clients to differentiate themselves by achieving certain safety measures and qualities recognisable to insurance providers, in order to convince insurance providers' underwriting that these client's risks deserve a preferable rate and secure a more affordable premium for clients.

"We notice a clear mismatch between the insurance market risk premium's uneven uplift and clients' cost pressure. While this is a clear challenge for our business, I am very glad that our team of professionals and experts have proven to clients and suppliers how our creativity, aided by cutting edge technologies, can achieve win-win situation to stakeholders on both sides," he added.

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### Maximise corporate governance advantage

Alex believes that the company enjoys clear advantage as a non-listed company in its corporate governance, "Our ability to make nimble long-term strategic decisions is enabled by our nature as a non-listed company where our focus is clouded by quarterly reporting and analysts relationships."

He further illustrated that the local board in Asia is delegated sufficient power to independently make investments and established policies, according to the

organisation's strategic vision. With the headquarters setting the big picture direction for the entire group, local board processes decisions under these directions prudently yet speedily to set its focal point at the three most important stakeholders: clients, team and the community.

However, he emphasised that the success of corporate governance is not due to that they have less obligations on disclosure, but the right level and focus of disclosure.

"As part of a highly regulated industry, financial services, we always have multiple levels of mechanisms to maintain good checks and balances and internal controls. In addition to regulatory requirements that we need to constantly fulfil, we also put in place careful internal risk management and control measures as well as non-financial audit on our processes to safeguard the integrity and quality of our business decisions across all levels," said Alex.

### Directors Of The Year Awards inspires further ESG advances

As leader to steer the team during this



▲ Alex Yip was one of the officiating guests in Fearless Dragon Charity Virtual Run 2020 which was organized by Hong Kong Network for the Promotion of Inclusive Society. 葉錦強先生獲邀為2020年「猛龍慈善跑」網上開幕典禮擔任主禮嘉賓，該籌款活動由香港傷健共融網絡主辦。

unprecedented difficult time, Alex is keenly aware of the new everyday challenges his team are facing, such as working from home, client's higher expectation on flexibility of insurance solutions, and potential burnout.

"I am a believer in leading by example. As a hands-on practitioner, I face the same set of challenges our team do, therefore, it allows me to see things from their perspective and be more human and realistic to extend my care and support to them," said Alex who seeks to proactively explore ways to help his team overcome various challenges. In addition to finding solutions to the real problems of operations and client services, Alex also leverages technology to stay close to his team and remind them on the importance of wellbeing by holding virtual townhall meetings and yoga and sports sessions, etc.

Commenting on winning HKIoD Directors Of The Year Awards 2021, Alex attributed this corporate governance achievement to the entire board of directors. "This award belongs to all the directors on the board. The leadership and support by each of them contributes to the success of our business growth and strategic development," said Alex.

While Lockton is always supportive of the community and environment, Alex said that the Award has inspired him and the board to up its game in the ESG area, "As a professional services firm, we are heading to the 100% paperless direction. In the past year, we cast support and donation to environment campaigns, such as supporting a local campaign to power the air conditioning of buses with solar energy. I also had the pleasure to join a fund raiser and participate in a triathlon with three physically impaired contestants," said Alex.



▲ Alex Yip and team receiving MPFA's MPF Good Employer Award 2021.  
葉錦強先生與團隊接受由香港強制性公積金計劃管理局頒發的2021年「積金好僱主」嘉許計劃獎狀。

"The HKIoD Directors Of The Year Awards gave us an opportunity to recount what we did in the ESG area and help us realise that there is much more potential for us to achieve growth in the ESG area. Looking ahead, we will explore more creative ways to further flex our ESG muscle to make positive impact to the community for sustainability, while supporting our client and team's success."

### 全

球疫情持續，風險管理乃每間公司在這場持久戰的命脈。商業保險經紀和諮詢業正面對重重考驗，需要在客戶預算緊絀下卻仍需維持工作量和風管方案的質素。香港董事學會認證了業界其中一位出色的董事：諾德保險經紀有限公司大中華區行政總裁葉錦強先生（Alex），其成功領導公司作出有效及敏捷的決策，採用完善的企業管治策略並積極地發揮非上市公司的優勢將挑戰化為機會，因此獲頒年度傑出董事獎（非上市公司執行董事類別）予以表揚。

評選團的評價是：「Alex堅信要回饋社會

且熱心推動環保。他對亞洲區管理委員會和行政總裁層面的合規和風險管理有廣博的認識和執行經驗。葉先生擅長策略，領導公司提高管治成效，此外亦主張積極跟業界建立聯繫和支持培育年輕的業界人才，藉此推動業界發展。」《廿一世紀董事》很榮幸訪問Alex，跟讀者分享他在當前時艱成功領導公司克服困難實現增長的秘訣。

Alex表示：「過去兩年我們面對的最大挑戰，是如何對客戶保持聯繫及維持服務質素，和無法親身跟高層決策者商討重要事項。」

Alex效力的保險經紀與諮詢機構專門幫助客戶在複雜情況下制定最佳風險管理方案。他的團隊很著重與客戶面對面談話和保持緊密聯絡，而這些客戶是公司舉足輕重的最高層持份者。

公司內部，在疫情高峰期各員不得不暫停一切人際接觸，雖然未能像疫情前與各部門專業顧問和業界專家並肩在辦公室工作。幸好，公司未雨綢繆早已備妥網上辦公基礎設施，可支援客戶和團隊迅速如常營業和工作。

他補充：「令人意外且欣慰的是我們的團隊和客戶如何無縫地適應新常態，使我們更堅決要投放更多資源於科技為公司未來在全球增長的階段作好準備。」

### 投資科技推動下一階段增長

雖然全球疫情令Alex的團隊和客戶要克服各項新挑戰，但亦造就嶄新承傳，當中的轉變亦可使公司長期受惠。例如，公司現時以更靈活的營運方式，採用混合模式，安排部分成員在家工作。這項轉變受到員工歡迎，亦有助挽留和吸引人才。

諾德保險經紀有限公司向來最重視投資人力資本，還將科技投資定為公司發展方向的最優先事項。Alex說：「我們會繼續投資於科技和提升系統以確保保持高效日常營運，此外亦會重視收集數據供分析用途，以便根據有關資訊因應複雜情況為客戶制定解決方案。」

### 風管專家眼中的新風險

Alex深諳公司的成功跟客戶的成功息息相關。他說：「作為風管顧問，我們時刻注意在不時轉變的新常態環境有什麼風險可能影響客戶的業務。」在更艱巨、更波動的營商環境下，信貸風險和違約風險有較大可能發生，團隊必須跟持份者有更密切溝通以達至更高效管理這類風險。

### 以創意支持客戶

新風險浮現無疑對諾德保險經紀這類風險管理公司來說更能發揮所長，將風險化為機遇。

Alex說：「為客戶提供涵蓋所有新風險的保險並不實際，尤其很多客戶因為業務縮減而根本無法負擔保費。」Alex領導團隊親身為客戶提供意見，並予以同事絕對信任和自主，鼓勵他們新思維和新策略因應客戶的需要制定解決方案。特別一提的是，公司的顧問人員支持客戶提昇自身的風險質素，例如

採取某些安全措施和取得保險供應商認可的資歷，使保險供應商相信在核保方面時為客戶提供更優惠條件，從而降低客戶的保費。

他補充說：「我們注意到保險市場明顯出現錯配，一方面保險商對風險保費有上調壓力，另一面客戶在疫情下本身已面對龐大的成本壓力。這無疑對業界構成挑戰，但我樂見本公司的專業和專家團隊向客戶和供應商證明，在先進科技協助下我們能夠憑藉創造力為持份者實現雙贏。」

### 盡量發揮企業管治優勢

Alex認為公司的非上市地位帶來明顯的管治優勢。他說：「作為非上市公司，我們無需將注意放在季度匯報，故此有能力作出更靈活和長遠的策略性決定。」

他進而說明亞洲區的當地董事會獲賦予足夠權力，可配合公司的策略性願景獨立投資和制定政策。總公司為整個集團訂定大方向，由各區董事會遵照大方向針對三大重要的持份者：客戶、團隊和社區迅速審慎決策。

不過，他強調企業管治的成功關鍵並非披露責任較少，而是程度和焦點得宜。

Alex說：「金融服務是受高度規管的行業，我們有多層機制維持有效制衡和內部管控。除了時刻符合規管要求之外，還實施審慎的內部風險管理和管控措施，並對流程進行非財務審計以確保各層級實現誠信及精明的商業決定。」

### 傑出董事獎對提昇環境、社會及企業管治的啟迪

作為領導者帶領團隊向前邁進特別在這空前困難的時艱，Alex也清楚意識到並密切關注團隊的日常新挑戰，例如居家工作、客戶對靈活保險方案有更高期望，和員工可能身心勞累。

Alex說：「我相信以身作則。我事事親力親

為，故團隊的挑戰就是我的挑戰，因此我可以從團隊的角度看事物，從而更貼心、更務實地向他們提供關懷和支援。」Alex會主動找方法協助團隊克服各種挑戰。除了為實際的營運問題和客戶服務制定解決方案之外，他還借助科技跟團隊保持密切連繫，並舉行網上全員大會、瑜珈班和體育活動，以提醒員工保持身心舒泰。

談到獲香港董事學會頒發「2021年傑出董事獎」時，Alex將這項企業管治成就歸功於董事會全人。他說：「這項殊榮是屬於董事會的各位董事。全賴每位董事的領導和支持，公司的業務增長和策略性發展才得以成功。」

諾德保險經紀有限公司向來支持社區和環保，Alex說這個獎項啟發他和董事要加強努力提昇環境、社會及企業管治。他說：「作為專業服務公司，我們致力百分百無紙化。去年，我們支持和捐助了多項環保運動，例如我們支持了本地一項推廣以太陽能發動巴士空調的運動。另外，我亦有幸參加一項籌款活動和跟三位傷健人士一起參加「三項全能」比賽。香港董事學會頒發的「2021年傑出董事獎」讓我有機會講述我們在環境、社會及企業管治方面的工作，使我們體會到這方面還有很大的增長潛力。在未來，我們會發掘更多創新方法擴大環境、社會及企業管治工作，使社區可更持續發展，同時支持客戶和團隊邁向成功。」

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