First Derivatives is one of the world’s leading providers of software solutions and consulting services to the global capital markets industry. On a typical day at his company’s headquarters in Newry, Northern Ireland, CEO Brian Conlan will check the overnight activities in Asia and the afternoon openings of the North American markets, and in between meet with regional and senior managers on strategy and operations.

But as concerned as he is with this market information, Brian is just as concerned with the technology that generates it. This means — in addition to carrying out First Derivatives’ strategic plans, advising its business groups, and directing its new business efforts — he’s actively involved in the design of the company’s business processes and high-level technology decision-making. And it’s in these latter two areas that Brian’s life has been made easier by Kx Systems.

“We were introduced to the original kdb in 1998,” says Brian, “and it didn’t take us long to appreciate that this was a special piece of technology. We decided early on that a key goal should be to establish the largest talent pool of kdb+ developers in the world.”

That talent pool was largely responsible for developing Delta Suite, the company’s data management and trading software, using kdb+ as part of the backbone of the product’s core offerings. Deployed in some of the world’s largest banks, exchanges, and hedge funds, Delta applications are designed for “volume and velocity”: low-latency, high-throughput applications delivered as a hosted service or deployed locally — from reference and market data management, CEP and exchange management and surveillance to treasury risk management and algorithmic, FX, and high-frequency trading.

In selecting kdb+ as its database of choice, Brian cites a prior knowledge of the product’s benefits: “We already had a clear understanding of kdb+’s strengths over other database and in-memory engines from our involvement in numerous proof-of-concepts with our data and trading clients. The technical priorities when developing our software were performance and scalability, and no other vendor to our knowledge was able to compete.”

Add to that the ease with which the q language allowed First Derivatives to provide rich functionality quickly for its clients, and the selection of kdb+ became even more obvious. “FD is a customer-centric company,” notes Brian. “Our decision to adopt a certain technology revolves around the benefits that it provides to our client base. We look for technologies that allow us
to rapidly develop and deploy tailored solutions that are robust and scalable while allowing the flexibility to evolve to meet clients’ future business requirements.”

Today, First Derivatives continues to use kdb+ and q for high-volume feed processing, data management and analytics, execution engines, and risk applications, and looks forward to processing ever larger datasets in the future.

“Our ultimate reward,” says Brian, “has been the enduring satisfaction of our customers and their continuing eagerness to extend the use of our software.”

One for all
Kx technology runs on Linux, Solaris, Windows, and OS X operating systems, and requires only commodity hardware. kdb+ takes full advantage of the latest generation of processors built for vector arithmetic, giving it tremendous speed and making it especially well-suited for high-performance applications in a broad array of industries.

Industry players
Kx’s mission has always been to provide powerful software that allows companies to tackle the most complex and data-intensive applications. That’s why Kx customers tend to be market leaders in their fields — from top investment banks and hedge funds to premier energy companies, pharmaceutical firms, and scientific research institutions. All of these enterprises share a common objective: to gain competitive industry advantage.

Worldwide coverage
Based in Palo Alto, California, Kx has offices in North America, Europe, and Asia, and counts among its customers more than 100 top-tier companies, including global OEM customers. In addition to conducting its own sales, Kx retains strategic sales partners around the world.

For more information about Kx Systems, please visit our website at kx.com, or send us an email, to info@kx.com.