

# Building the future: How Citadel Securities is shaping Miami's finance scene

By Anna Lyudvig

Since moving its headquarters to Miami nearly three years ago, Citadel Securities has not only embraced the Magic City but also significantly contributed to its growing reputation as a financial powerhouse. Among those who have joined the firm locally is Rodrigo Parada Valencia, COO of US Options Market Making.

Though Citadel Securities is a relatively new presence in Miami, Parada Valencia has called the city home for a decade and has witnessed its evolution firsthand.

"When I first moved to the city, it almost felt like a small town compared to some of the places I'd lived before like New York and Chicago," he shared.

"Now, there are some very compelling career opportunities and no shortage of enriching ways to spend your time outside of the office—whether you're interested in the arts, outdoor recreation, restaurants, or something else," he told Traders Magazine.

Beyond lifestyle improvements, Miami's talent pool has grown significantly due to an influx of top-tier professionals across finance, technology, and healthcare. This trend has been accelerated by major firms, like Citadel Securities, making Miami their home.

Miami offers unique professional opportunities, particularly within Citadel Securities. With many of the firm's senior leaders—including Founder Ken Griffin and CEO Peng Zhao—based in the city, the environment fosters rapid career growth and collaboration.

"That contributes to the culture of our office, which is a really dynamic environment for collaboration, continuous learning, and career advancement," said Parada Valencia. "I think my colleagues and I truly feel like we're part of building something—the office, our careers, and the future of this city through our



**Rodrigo Parada Valencia**

involvement in the community and the work many of my colleagues and I are doing with local non-profits."

Beyond career growth, many Citadel Securities employees have found that relocating to Miami has enhanced their quality of life. "They're spending more time outdoors; they're spending more time on health and wellness; and they're enjoying their lives in a whole new way, all while making an impact at work and moving their careers forward. The ability to strike that balance is pretty special."

Before joining Citadel Securities, Parada Valencia built a diverse career spanning corporate strategy, wealth management, and consulting. He worked on strategic projects at LatAm Airlines, advised ultra-high-net-worth clients at JPMorgan, and later focused on private equity growth strategy at McKinsey.

His decision to join Citadel Securities was driven by the firm's entrepreneurial culture and growth potential.

“The opportunity to join Citadel Securities was too good to pass up,” he explained. “Working for a firm with a track record of incredible success that’s also still in growth mode and is entrepreneurially oriented was really appealing—as was the opportunity to drive some of the firm’s key projects.”

As COO of US Options Market Making, Parada Valencia plays a crucial role in shaping the business’s long-term strategy and execution.

“I’m focused on helping to develop and drive the top-down strategy for the options market-making business in the US,” he said. “Part of my role involves defining the decisions that need to be made by business leaders and serving as a thought partner to them.”

One of his recent key projects has been the launch of OCC self-clearing, a move designed to reduce concentration risk in the market. “Currently, there’s only one provider in the market, so we created the capability in-house to significantly reduce concentration risk,” he explained.

Managing a fast-paced, high-impact business requires a unique skill set. For Parada Valencia, ruthless prioritization, structured thinking, and effective communication have been essential.

“There’s never a shortage of important things to do and critical projects to drive, but there’s only a finite amount of time, so ruthless prioritization and organization is absolutely critical,” he noted.

Another key ability? Translating complexity into clear insights. “The people I’m dealing with are absolute experts in their respective domains... Having a structured way of thinking helps ensure I understand the problem we’re trying to solve, what the most important elements of it are, and where it fits within the broader business strategy.”

## Staying agile in a rapidly changing market

Options trading has reached record-breaking levels, and Parada Valencia sees this as part of a global shift. “Just a few weeks ago, we hit the all-time high for the most options contracts traded on a single day,” he said. “Options volumes in India are particularly high, even surpassing equities as the most traded asset class, and

we are closely watching other emerging markets for possibilities of similar growth in the near future.”

In the US, new options exchanges are emerging, further fragmenting the market. “Two new exchanges launched last year, and we expect two or three others to launch soon,” he noted.

With both institutional and retail trading on the rise, maintaining agility is crucial for market-making firms. “We have built our platform to scale quickly, and we are set up to handle multiples of the highest volumes any particular market has ever seen,” Parada Valencia explained. “When something is important and a response is needed, we’re able to avoid getting bogged down by bureaucracy.”

As Citadel Securities scales its options market-making operations, attracting top talent remains a priority. “We have some tremendous opportunities for growth as a firm, but we also have an extremely high bar for talent that only a portion of the population can meet,” he said.

Risk management is another critical focus. “We’re very focused on balancing our desire to maximize profitability with responsible risk-taking, so designing the right risk limits to monitor and abide by is key.”

Collaboration between business, technology, and research teams is essential to Citadel Securities’ success, Parada Valencia noted: “Working on the COO team at Citadel Securities puts you at the center of the most challenging problems the firm faces.”

“Our clients are at the heart of everything we do and my colleagues across the firm share that focus,” he added.

Looking ahead, Parada Valencia sees Citadel Securities playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of options trading. “As options volumes continue to grow in the US, the role of market makers becomes increasingly important,” he explained.

“Citadel Securities’ ability to leverage technology to create a better trading experience, bring costs down, and improve access and efficiency is unique, and I know we’ll continue to have a positive and profound impact on the markets in which we participate,” he concluded. ■