

Lawrence Johnson & Associates

Leading pension administration firm reduces costs by tens of thousands of dollars and enhances customer service with Adobe Acrobat

PROFILE

- A leading pension consulting and administration firm
- Employees: 45
- Headquarters: Oakland, California
- www.lj-a.com

BENEFITS SUMMARY

- By distributing retirement statements as Adobe PDF files, LJA has reduced paperwork and cut costs by more than \$100,000 per year.
- Clients receive retirement documents two weeks faster by accessing them online in Adobe PDF.
- Clients can access their statements from anywhere, a benefit for employees who travel frequently.
- By providing the appropriate retirement forms online as Adobe PDF files, both LJA and its clients save administrative costs and time.
- Advanced features in Acrobat will allow LJA clients to fill in forms online and implement digital signatures in the future.
- Adobe PDF files retain the exact formatting of the paper documents, so they are familiar to clients.
- Adobe PDF allows LJA to distribute documents to clients without worrying about their computer platforms or software applications.
- Adobe PDF enables LJA to keep legally binding documents secure.

Administering pension plans can be an expensive, paper-intensive process. Pension firms must deliver 401(k) reports and statements to clients and their employees each quarter, and any changes to retirement accounts require a significant amount of paperwork. Lawrence Johnson & Associates (LJA), a leading pension consulting and administration firm, wanted to reduce the paperwork burden of administering pension plans so that it could focus on delivering value-added services to customers. By using Adobe Acrobat software and Adobe PDF to deliver statements and documents electronically to clients, LJA is enhancing customer service and dramatically reducing administrative costs.

With Acrobat, LJA reduced paperwork, cut costs by as much as \$30,000 per quarter, and accelerated the delivery of retirement documents. In addition, LJA is providing online access to Adobe PDF forms for changing beneficiaries, conducting withdrawals, and other important activities. It used to be time-consuming for LJA and its clients to provide specific forms to employees who needed to make changes to their retirement accounts, but by providing immediate access to these documents online, LJA has reduced administrative time and costs while increasing client convenience.

“Acrobat and Adobe PDF allow us to publish and send information to clients in a standard, universally accepted format. This method of publishing also results in substantial savings that we can pass along to our clients,” says Larry Johnson, president and CEO of Lawrence Johnson & Associates.

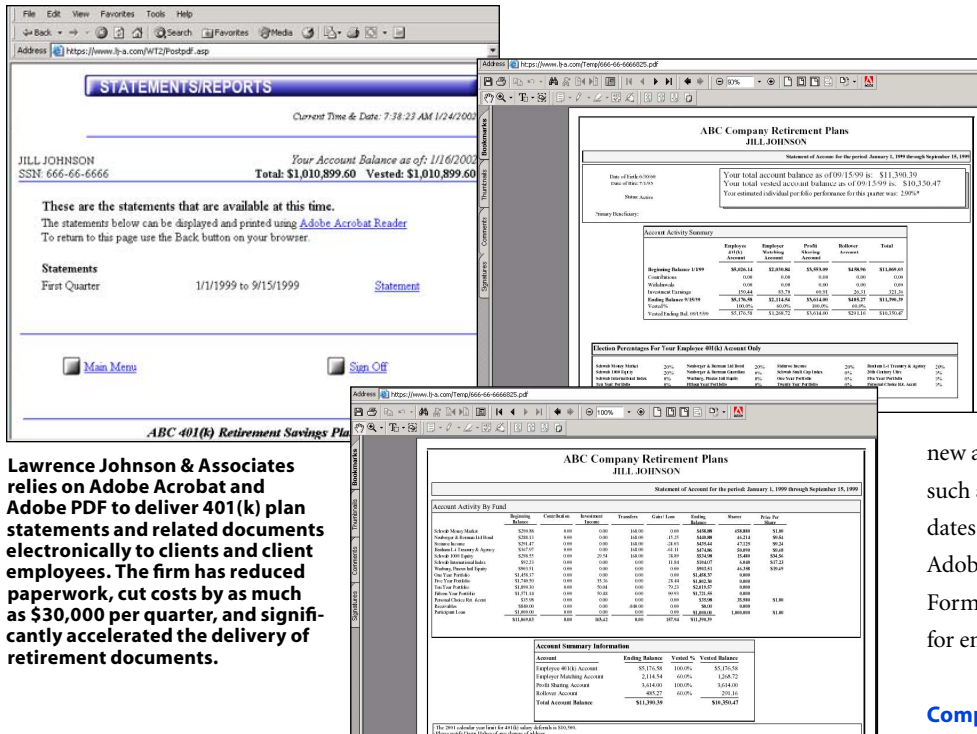
A familiar, easy-to-use format

LJA serves more than 450 clients, including Montgomery Asset Management, Adobe Systems, and Ghirardelli Chocolate Company. Combined, LJA clients receive about 20,000 two-page statements each quarter. “Our clients prefer receiving their retirement statements electronically in Adobe PDF and having them posted on our secure extranet,” says Johnson. “Statements arrive several weeks faster, and employees can access them from anywhere, even while they are traveling.”

In addition to their immediacy, Adobe PDF files retain the exact formatting of the paper documents, so clients feel comfortable viewing and using the electronic versions of their 401(k) statements and other documents. Adobe PDF is also familiar and easy to use. Clients do not have to invest in costly software to access their materials. Instead they can download the freely available Adobe Acrobat Reader® software and access documents regardless of their computer platform or different software applications.

Immediate access to forms

LJA provides many forms online in Adobe PDF for administrative activities such as withdrawals, beneficiary changes, and account rollovers. Using virtually any authoring application, LJA can customize the documents to meet the unique needs of clients, and then easily convert them to compact Adobe PDF files for electronic delivery, preserving the exact look and feel of the original documents.



Lawrence Johnson & Associates relies on Adobe Acrobat and Adobe PDF to deliver 401(k) plan statements and related documents electronically to clients and client employees. The firm has reduced paperwork, cut costs by as much as \$30,000 per quarter, and significantly accelerated the delivery of retirement documents.

“From digital signatures to automatic population of form fields with database information, Adobe Acrobat provides advanced features that help us continually reduce costs and improve customer service.”

Larry Johnson
President and CEO
Lawrence Johnson & Associates

Clients can print the Adobe PDF forms, fill them out, and return them to LJA for processing. Previously, clients contacted LJA or their human resources departments to obtain forms. By providing the forms online, both LJA and its clients save administrative costs and time. “Our staff no longer has to print forms for employees, because they can go online and print them. This results in additional savings for us because we don’t have to take time to reproduce forms,” says Helen Hauge, senior manager of equity compensation for Adobe Systems.

More efficient administration

LJA plans to enhance future delivery of electronic documents in Adobe PDF by allowing clients to fill in forms online and digitally sign them using Adobe Acrobat—two steps that promise to greatly streamline management and processing of retirement forms. Clients will spend less time filling out forms because Acrobat and LJA’s database systems will automatically populate many of the form fields. Another major benefit is that LJA can link the electronic forms to its back-end systems, allowing information entered by clients to automatically flow into

LJA’s database records. This capability will eliminate the need to manually reenter client information when account changes or updates are made.

Further streamlining administrative processes at LJA, Adobe Acrobat makes it easier for LJA to extract information from Adobe PDF files. When clients establish

new accounts, they often send initial information such as social security numbers, names, and birth dates to LJA in Adobe PDF. LJA can convert the Adobe PDF documents to files in RTF (Rich Text Format), and then easily extract the information for entry into back-end database systems.

Compliance with federal regulations

Adobe PDF is crucial to LJA’s ability to comply with regulations governing the administration of pension plans. After converting retirement documents to Adobe PDF, LJA can secure files so that viewers can print documents and enter information, but not change the look or content of the original document. This is important because retirement documents are considered legally binding.

As LJA expands and enhances its services, Acrobat and Adobe PDF are helping the firm differentiate itself from competitors while keeping administrative costs low. “From digital signatures to automatic population of form fields with database information, Adobe Acrobat provides advanced features that help us continually reduce costs and improve customer service,” says Johnson.

TOOLBOX

Adobe Acrobat
Adobe Acrobat Reader

PCs
Power Macintosh computers



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