

CASE STUDY

James Investment Research Xenia, OH

TESTIMONIALS

Barry James:
President & CEO

Assette's software has allowed us to keep our staffing levels the same, and spend more time with clients. Assette makes us more scalable and allows us to focus more on proactive client service - especially important in these difficult markets.

Brian Culpepper:
First Vice President

We're a relatively small firm, and it's vital that we remain efficient as we grow. Assette has provided that efficiency by seamlessly integrating with our Advent APX accounting platform and delivering high quality, professional looking client reports.

Annette Quinter:
Operations Associate

In the past, it had taken us more than an hour to create a client meeting presentation. With Assette, customized client reporting books can be prepared in just minutes - an incredibly valuable tool especially for those last minute, unscheduled meetings that previously had us scrambling.

Background

James Investment Research (James) has been successfully managing client portfolios since 1972. The company's client base includes corporations, foundations, hospitals, financial institutions, and private investors. Products include mutual funds, private client accounts and wrap accounts. The firm's investment philosophy focuses on growing clients' assets while stressing the preservation of principal and the reduction of risk. James began using Assette Presentations in July of 2008.

The Problem

James is a growing investment advisor with about \$2 billion in assets under management and a goal to reach \$5 billion. But that growth has placed increasing demands upon the firm's 25-person staff. James produces highly customized quarterly reports, presentations for annual client meetings, and sales presentations. Each packet is produced by hand, taking more than an hour to create as data is manually input and checked for errors.

The growing number of clients serviced by the firm, as well as an increase in the frequency of client meetings each year, naturally required an increase in reports. Staffers who were qualified for greater face-to-face client responsibilities found themselves devoting precious hours to assembling packets, when they could have been providing greater value through client service and account management. James needed to invest in the right technology to keep pace with its own expansion.

"We were at the point of either adding staff or cutting time with clients," says Brian Culpepper, First Vice President, Portfolio Manager, and Investment Committee member. "Our goal was to automate and keep the staff at the same size."

The Solution

Initially, James considered developing its own client reporting software. But that would have meant hiring a full-time programmer for at least a year. The firm decided that the cost for that hire, along with the time it would take to get the job done, wasn't feasible. When James decided to look at vendors, they wanted a product that could quickly produce customized reports for various time periods and that could work with Microsoft's PowerPoint.

The Outcome

James was familiar with Assette and its management from an earlier business engagement. But more importantly, James chose Assette Presentations because it was the only client reporting product that Culpepper could find that met the PowerPoint requirement.

Since purchasing Assette Presentations, James has been able to integrate it with its portfolio accounting system, Advent Portfolio Exchange, and Culpepper says "the overall product has been great." Assette was able to add 15 report objects (i.e. tables, charts, and graphs) to the system that helps James maintain the unique "down home" feel that the firm tries to deliver in every customized report. The average client packet now takes about 15 minutes or less to prepare, rather than an hour-plus. When clients call to request unscheduled meetings, tailored presentations can be created in minutes without the scramble that was previously required. Cost savings have also been achieved, since there has not been a need to hire additional staff.