

Hancock Askew Finds Key to Consistency, Scalability with ADP®



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Overview

Hancock Askew is a full-service tax, audit, accounting and advisory firm with origins that date back to 1910. With six offices throughout Florida and Georgia, the firm staffs more than 250 highly qualified professionals who help support clients' entrepreneurial spirit and help them achieve their business and financial goals.

Driven by its core values — trusted, passionate, engaged, and best — that serve as the basis for every interaction, the firm specializes in serving various industries including health and fitness franchises, restaurants, and technology companies.

The firm has no doubt experienced significant growth since its start more than 100 years ago. Throughout this growth, Hancock Askew's dedication to its clients, as well as its employees, has remained a strong and differentiating success factor. In fact, the firm was named one of Accounting Today's Best Accounting Firms to Work For in 2022. The firm is also a Rootworks and BDO Alliance USA member.

Helping to fuel Hancock Askew's growth and bring greater value to its clients is the firm's long-standing partnership with ADP. By partnering with ADP, the firm was able to achieve the consistent processes and scalability it desired, which led to greater efficiencies, improved client experience, and better-quality work life for staff.

The Challenges

Throughout the years, the firm continued to grow but the rapid rise in technology solutions being used by clients and the amount of client data being created came with its share of challenges. Chief among them was inconsistency.

The firm supported a number of client-dictated payroll solutions which, at first glance, seemed to benefit its clients, but the disadvantages proved to be far greater than the advantages.

"The biggest issue we were trying to solve was consistency. We felt like we couldn't provide a great service to our clients and a great client experience if we were all over the place," said Rebecca Thiel, a senior manager in the firm's Client Accounting and Advisory Services (CAAS) Group. "We felt like we were at risk to miss a payroll deadline, and that is one thing that you don't want to miss. People depend on their paychecks."



“Payroll is high risk and deadline driven. We were able to make it scalable which is quite difficult to do, but it’s what ADP did for us.”

— Rebecca Thiel
Senior Manager
Client Accounting and Advisory
Services (CAAS) Group



Unfortunately, when a client dictates which solution a firm will use it results in significant inefficiencies for staff and, ultimately, impacts the quality of customer service the firm provides. In a high-risk service offering like payroll, this is not ideal, to say the least. As the challenges of this approach became increasingly clear, the firm knew it had to make a change.

Hancock Askew needed to find a payroll solution, and a best-of-breed tech stack for all its clients, to drive consistency and scalability.

“As trusted advisors for our clients, we can’t be experts in all products. We identify the products we believe are going to best serve them, and become experts in those,” Thiel said.

ADP: The Right Fit

At the time, little did the firm know that a call from an ADP representative would prove game changing. That call, roughly seven years ago, resulted in a long-time partnership that has been significant for both the firm and its clients.

“We vetted many payroll providers and ADP came out on top as best in class. We also enjoyed the people that we met. The relationships have grown over time and they’ve become a great resource and partnership for HAC,” Thiel said.

Today, the firm has many ADP clients nationally, offering multiple solutions within the ADP portfolio including HR, Time and Retirement, through RUN Powered by ADP® Payroll for Partners, ADP’s wholesale payroll & HR platform for accounting professionals. For larger clients with 50 or more employees, the firm recommends ADP Workforce Now®.

One of the reasons why ADP was such an ideal fit for Hancock Askew was its scalability.

“We were trying to think ahead. We want to serve clients on a large scale. We didn’t want to limit our market for the clients we can provide services for, so we felt ADP could evolve with us as we grew,” Thiel said.

In addition to ADP’s scalability, the firm also found ADP’s [Accountant ConnectSM](#) cloud-based portal to be extremely beneficial, especially when onboarding and staying connected to all their authorized ADP clients’ data across every HAC office.



“Accountant Connect made a big difference for us... our clients appear on one dashboard for our team members.”

— Kristen Brand
Practice Leader &
Managing Partner
Client Accounting and Advisory
Services (CAAS) Group



Said Kristen Brand, practice line leader in the CAAS group and a managing partner for the Tampa office, “Accountant Connect made a big difference for us too. We tried other payroll providers and when we would add a new client the onboarding experience was like this: ‘Call the 800 number, give them your first born, and then we’ll add your client to your account so that you can do business.’ With Accountant Connect our clients appear on one dashboard for our team members.”

In addition to being able to quickly add new clients to the dashboard, the firm gained the ability to access client reports, smart analytics, exclusive compensation benchmark data and more, all in one place with Accountant Connect.

Given ADP’s scalability and innovative functionality, the firm knew that ADP was the right fit. “They’ve really become an extension of our staff,” Brand said.

The Results

Through its partnership with ADP, and the ability to manage all of its clients from one platform, the firm is now seeing the consistency and scalability it desired. Furthermore, the firm has been able to mitigate its risk, which is an especially crucial factor in payroll.

“Payroll is high risk and deadline driven. We were able to make it scalable which is quite difficult to do, but it’s what ADP did for us,” Thiel said.

The result is a better, more seamless client experience.

“It ends up being a better client experience because if you have turnover, or someone is on vacation, you don’t have to extract that institutional knowledge out of that employee’s head. ... It just takes out so many questions,” Brand said.

Furthermore, through its partnership with ADP, the firm has been able to strengthen staff development and is now recognized as a Certified ADP Partner after completing the [RUN for Partners Certification Program](#).

Having the right tools and resources in place to improve the client experience, drive greater consistency, and empower staff has been instrumental in the firm’s success, and was a factor in Hancock Askew being named among Accounting Today’s Best Accounting Firms to Work For in 2022.

"Standardizing our process gives our staff confidence in their voice and in their messaging to clients. It sets boundaries for clients," said Brand. "...Staff can hand off their work to a colleague and that person will understand the payroll schedule by looking at the ADP dashboard. It's not like you can never go on vacation on a payroll day."

Added Thiel, "In order to keep our staff happy, there must be boundaries. We have processes in place and products like ADP, along with others in our tech stack, that deliver and set expectations. Our staff knows what to expect and understand what their deadlines are. It is consistency that is scalable. We go in and are aware of what needs to be done."

Accountants who are interested in learning more about working with ADP can visit adp.com/accountant.