

# SENIOR CONSULTANT

The Voice of the Investment Management Consultant

## Fidelity Closer To Paperless Office

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As investment management consultants look for ways to create more operating efficiencies in their practice, Fidelity Investment Advisor Group (FIAG) has created new internet-based technology which will move the registered investment advisor toward a paperless office.

The new FIAG technology will help the consultant achieve greater back office efficiency, save time and money on paper processing and storage, and will make them more responsive to their clients' needs, by creating electronic access to client account statements via the internet. The standard in the industry for account information had been Schwab Link where client account statements were put on CDs and mailed to the advisor each month or quarter, depending on the activity in the account. "The new electronic account statement saves mailing time and simplifies the administrative aspects of running a business," said Raymond Marcinowski, president of Fidelity Investment Advisor Group. "Timely electronic access to statements offers advisors an easier way to research and reconcile client account histories and to respond more quickly and accurately to client inquiries while access to electronic archives will simplify research and historical records," says George Baumgartner, director of Systems Development and Technology at FIAG.

The new electronic statements, in addition to enabling advisors to electronically store and retrieve statements, offer the advisor the opportunity to reduce cost associated with receiving and handling mail, maintaining paper files and warehousing paper archives. The electronic statements are the latest enhancements to FIAG's "Advisor Channel" software and internet technology offering which includes trading, asset allo-

cation and reporting capabilities. "Our RIA clients tend to be technologically savvy," said Marcinowski. "These latest enhancement to 'Advisor Channel' are part of FIAG's on-going commitment to develop innovative solutions that bring our clients a step closer to realizing the benefits of the paperless office."

Concurrent with the electronic statement announcement, FIAG also announced they can now suppress, at the advisor's request, the mailing of proxy statements, annual reports and other shareholder communications to their clients. With proxy suppression, which requires the authorization of each account holder, only one set of proxy statements, annual reports and other shareholder communications for most investment holdings are sent directly to the advisor. This enables advisors with investment discretion to evaluate the information and vote proxies on behalf of clients. Proxy suppression may be applied to all accounts or on an individual account basis.

Many independent financial advisors are increasingly looking to Fidelity, Charles Schwab and Jack White for their SEC-required record-

keeping, portfolio construction technology, as well as access to a broad array of investment products such as the innovative mutual fund market places which they pioneered. Because Fidelity views the independent advisor as a client, they are particularly responsive to their advisors' needs. They are fast building a technology platform which is ideally suited for independent advisors who use a highly structured investment process to construct custom client portfolios.

Fidelity, Jack White and Charles Schwab will have a significant impact on the financial services industry at-large in the development and pricing of technology and support services. ■

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