

CASE STUDY

# Atlas Brown

## Transitioning to Black Diamond®

### A higher level of customization

Working with a technology partner that offers a lot of options can be a real advantage for an advisory firm as its business evolves and its needs change. Such was the case with Atlas Brown and SS&C Advent. The Louisville-based RIA firm opened its doors in 2005 with SS&C Advent's Alys as its core accounting and reporting system, then later migrated to Advent Portfolio Exchange (APX). Ten years later, the firm took a close look at its business and concluded that the Black Diamond Wealth Platform was the best fit for its long-term business strategy.

"Our investment philosophy centers around asset allocation and customization of portfolios for individual needs," explains Senior Vice President, Tim Corley. "What distinguishes our firm from others is that we run several proprietary large-cap portfolios with quite a few alternative investments. We use custom asset classes that may be different from what other advisors do. Being able to report on asset class performance with more flexibility was the main reason we moved to Black Diamond."

SS&C Advent actually suggested the move. "It started with a conversation with the head of services at SS&C Advent's Jacksonville office," Tim recalls. "We agreed that APX was a good fit for us initially, but as we talked about how we wanted to grow and how we were managing accounts, he suggested that Black Diamond was probably a better fit for the long term."

### A smooth transition

Of course, that meant another system conversion. Tim explained: "We had gone through a lot of conversions and headaches before. The process can be pretty daunting. Our staff was used to APX, but we found the conversion to Black Diamond very easy. The service team is second to none. We set very clear and detailed expectations upfront, for both sides. We had regularly scheduled meetings and calls to cross off to-do items, and that made for a smooth conversion."

After Atlas Brown completed the transition to Black Diamond, the benefits were readily apparent.

## Atlas Brown

**Location:** Louisville, Kentucky

**Description:** RIA

**AUM:** \$630 million

**Implementation Year:** 2015

### BACKGROUND:

- Previously used SS&C Advent's Alys® and APX OnDemand®
- Sought a portfolio management system with the flexibility to manage highly customized solutions, proprietary portfolios, and alternative investments

### BENEFITS:

- Improved client engagement with custom, high-quality reporting
- Intuitive, easy to use billing system that saves time
- Broad asset diversification with robust support for alternative investments
- Easy transition with dedicated service team
- Continuous improvement through ongoing dialogue and support

” Black Diamond allows us to tell our story better.

— Tim Corley, Senior Vice President, Atlas Brown

"Black Diamond is just easier from our standpoint. It makes it easy to look at an account in a real-time, see the weightings, and know if we're in line with the target for that client. The web-based aspect of Black Diamond makes it a lot easier from a workflow standpoint too. If a client calls with a question about a position or a holding, it's much easier to bring it up in Black Diamond."

Atlas Brown is seeing additional value from the Black Diamond wealth platform in a number of areas of its business. Chief among them:

**Reporting flexibility:** "Black Diamond just allows us to tell our story better," Tim says. "With our approach, we can really show where the different asset classes are adding value in a portfolio and the reports just look better. We can put in our own custom commentary that's really germane to our client base, instead of canned commentary from an outside service. And it's seamless, so the client knows it's coming from us, and we think that's a real value-add."

**Billing:** "The Black Diamond billing system was very simple to set up and navigate. It shows an understanding of the RIA space, how we bill, and the issues that we might have such as exceptions or restrictions."

**Daily performance:** "We found a great deal of value in having daily performance. It has added more clarity and transparency for our clients. We can tell them how their accounts have done as of yesterday's close."

Managing alternative investments: "The Black Diamond Alternative Investments capabilities are working great for us," Tim reports. "We've really run the gamut with the alternatives. We put money with hedge fund managers, we buy private real estate, and we've done direct venture deals, private equity deals— really across the spectrum of alternatives. We have a strong process for alternatives, and once we input the data into the system, we can manage it all on Black Diamond."

### The people factor

Tim notes that the level of service the firm experienced during the conversion has continued into the day-to-day relationship. "We're in contact with them probably every week," he says. "We have a Client Advocate there and she's fantastic."

Atlas Brown also values the ongoing dialogue about how to make the platform even better. "Sometimes we'll think about a new feature that we need, and we'll say, 'Wouldn't it be great if that was in Black Diamond?' They're very good about receiving feedback from advisors like us and looking at new functionality. They're also very good about continually updating the system. New features are always coming out."

*To learn more about Atlas Brown, visit their website at [www.atlasbrown.com](http://www.atlasbrown.com).*

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you'd like to learn more about how the Black Diamond Wealth Platform can support your business, please call 1-800-727-0605 or email [info@advent.com](mailto:info@advent.com).

” Daily performance has added more clarity and transparency for our clients. We can tell them how their accounts have done as of yesterday's close.

— Tim Corley, Senior Vice President, Atlas Brown