

CASE STUDY

Service at Scale: How Smooth 401(k) Partnered With Vestwell To Accelerate Their Growth

Advisor

“We’ve seen a drop in customer service in our industry, and employers need it now more than ever,” said Brent Teague, Managing Partner at Smooth 401(k). “Smooth 401(k)’s goal is to provide better service for our clients and our financial advisor partners.”

In an industry where the client experience can make or break your business, advisory firm [Smooth 401\(k\)](#) built their brand on white-glove service. As they grew their practice, the firm needed to team up with a recordkeeper who could not only keep all of their plans running smoothly but also deliver the exceptional customer service their clients had come to expect.

They found a match in Vestwell, a modern savings platform building a comprehensive suite of solutions across retirement, health, and education. **One year into the partnership, Smooth 401(k) has 19 active and onboarding retirement plans with Vestwell.** By teaming up with Vestwell, Smooth 401(k) was able to scale their white-glove service model and accelerate their growth.

The Challenge: Finding a Technology Partner That Would Scale Their White-Glove Service Model

“We wanted to work with a partner that was capable of handling our volume and that we could trust with both the technology side and the service side of things,” explained John Zakel Jr., Business Development Director and Partner at Smooth 401(k).

The firm was looking for a solution that was intuitive and user-friendly for savers, clients, and the Smooth 401(k) team themselves. They began their search for a tech-forward provider whose platform could seamlessly integrate with—and enhance—the service model on which they had built their business.

To succeed in an industry where personalized support is increasingly important—and hard to come by—Smooth 401(k) needed to scale their hands-on approach without compromising quality.

“When we were evaluating our options, we interviewed multiple fintech solutions. Without a doubt, Vestwell was the most advisor-friendly in the marketplace.”

John Zakel Jr., Business Development Director and Partner, Smooth 401(k)

The Solution: A Best-in-Class Combination of Modern Technology & Robust Service

Smooth 401(k) partnered with Vestwell to offer their clients a modern, innovative platform with a robust service model. The partnership amplified their support capabilities while driving growth for the firm. One year into the partnership, Smooth 401(k) has 19 active and onboarding plans with Vestwell.

“When we partnered with Vestwell, we looked at it not just as a financial services and recordkeeping company, but as a technology company,” Brent explained. With industry-leading 360° payroll integrations, a streamlined, intuitive portal, and robust service capabilities, Vestwell enables Smooth 401(k) to provide their clients with a seamless experience and unparalleled support.

Extensive Payroll Integrations

“We want to bring 401(k)s into the 21st century, and Vestwell helps us do that with their 360° payroll integrations,” John said. “These integrations have been huge for us and our clients—they make it so much easier to manage a 401(k) plan.”

Vestwell’s capabilities support 100+ [payroll integrations](#), which streamline plan administration for employers and make the retirement plan management process smoother and more efficient overall. Because information is automatically transferred between systems, payroll integrations save time on the backend and help minimize the risk of errors. This automation enhances the experience for Smooth 401(k)’s clients.

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User-Friendly Portals

Vestwell’s platform is thoughtfully designed with the end user in mind. With intuitive, easy-to-navigate portals for savers, employers, and advisors alike, everything Smooth 401(k) and their clients needed was just a few clicks away.

“The portals are very user-friendly,” John said. “On the plan sponsor side, we just walked a client through an end-of-the-year contribution and profit share. It was intuitive and easy to do in Vestwell’s portal. It took you through the whole process in less than five minutes. Our folks who use Vestwell’s employer and saver portals have all loved it.”

Robust Service

Vestwell's expert support team works closely with Smooth 401(k) to address inquiries promptly and effectively so the client experience is frictionless. Having a dedicated relationship manager empowers Smooth 401(k) to exceed client expectations with exceptional customer service.

"Vestwell's client service model has been fantastic. Our clients reach out to them and are able to get any issues resolved really quickly," John said. "Plus, having a dedicated service rep has been great for us. **Knowing that the person we reach out to can get these issues handled has helped enhance our white-glove service model.**"

"Partnering with Vestwell helped us **scale our business tremendously.**"

John Zakel Jr., Business Development
Director and Partner, Smooth 401(k)



The Impact: White-Glove Service at Scale

The partnership with Vestwell has enabled Smooth 401(k) to elevate their service model and accelerate their growth.

"When we're working with Vestwell, we have a system down, and I think that efficiency allows us to serve more clients and at a lower cost," Brent said. The streamlined processes and the use of Vestwell's technology have empowered Smooth 401(k) to manage a growing number of plans efficiently, providing their clients with a seamless, white-glove experience.

John elaborates on the opportunities the partnership has unlocked. “We’ve been able to bring on a large number of plans and scale our practice because we’re able to come to the meetings with all of the boxes checked: the payroll integrations, the user interface, and the exceptional service,” he said. **“It’s been a win-win for our clients and for ourselves.”**

Looking forward, Smooth 401(k) anticipates significant growth, particularly in the conversion space. John said, “We see our partnership with Vestwell evolving in a much bigger capacity in the future.”

The Conclusion

Brent and John knew that in a crowded marketplace, the quality of customer service often determines client loyalty and satisfaction. With Vestwell’s extensive payroll integrations, user-first design, and robust customer service, Smooth 401(k) was able to scale their business without losing the personal touch that their clients value so highly.

By partnering with Vestwell, advisory firms can elevate their workplace savings offerings and accelerate their growth. Vestwell is a modern savings platform building a suite of solutions across retirement, health, and education. Contact us to learn how we can help you make a lasting impact on your clients’ financial futures.

Contact us to learn how Vestwell can help you make a lasting impact on your employees’ financial futures.



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