

Building Your Digital Fund Office

Less Paper, More Member Satisfaction



The world is going green....

Going GREEN - moving to a paperless or less paper customer service model - has become mainstream, especially amid COVID and postal disruptions. Consumers have come to expect it....

Banking: 62% of consumers now primarily use digital banking.

Consumer billing in the US:

- ✦ 37% of billing statements are paperless.
- ✦ 50% of bills are paid online.

IRS Individual tax returns:

- ✦ 89% of individual returns are e-filed (more than 1 billion to date!)



Sources:

Bank of America Trends
in Consumer Mobility;

US Internal Revenue Service

What “green” means for multiemployer plans

- Improved customer service & member satisfaction
- Access, process and share files from anywhere
- No more searching for lost or mis-filed documents
- Big savings on bulk mailings, paper, postage, staff time
- Better data security and ERISA compliance
- A greener planet for the next generation!

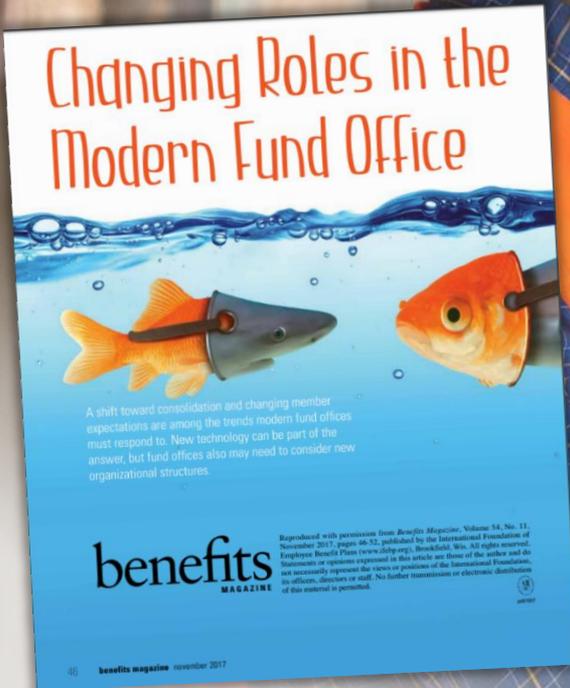


Why NOW?

- ✦ Changing demographics = more members who expect paperless communications.
- ✦ Holding down administrative costs and streamlining processes.
- ✦ Improvements in the security of digital document exchange.
- ✦ Regulatory and legal support for paperless delivery of required documents.
- ✦ During the pandemic and beyond, fund offices want to work seamlessly from anywhere.

Members expect digital access

“Today virtually everyone has a mobile device, which changes the dynamic between members and fund office staff by shifting member expectations around communication channels, turnaround time on benefits applications and access to accurate, real-time information.”



[Download the benefits magazine article from the International Foundation for Employee Benefit Plans.](#)

Your participants are already online

42.3

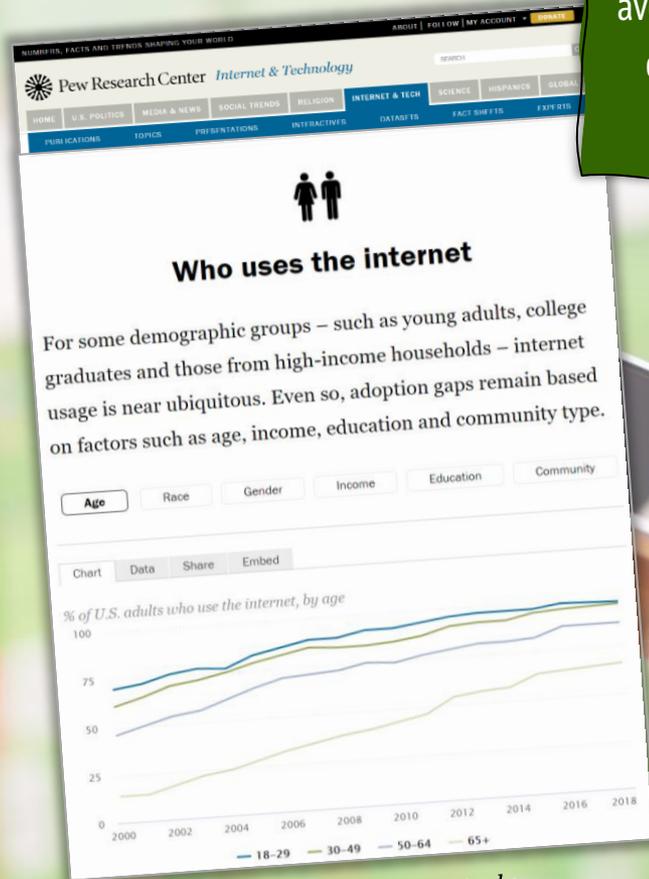
average age of today's construction trade union member

71%

of consumers prefer online self-service to calling customer service

40+%↑

increase in demand for online self-service during COVID pandemic



Read the Pew Research Center study.

Even retirees are ready for less paper

Pew Research Center *Internet & Technology*

HOME U.S. POLITICS MEDIA & NEWS SOCIAL TRENDS RELIGION INTERNET & TECH

PUBLICATIONS TOPICS PRESENTATIONS INTERACTIVES DATASETS

REPORT

MAY 17, 2017

Tech Adoption Climbs Among Older Adults

Roughly two-thirds of those ages 65 and older go online and a record share now own smartphones – although many seniors remain relatively divorced from digital life

BY MONICA ANDERSON AND ANDREW PERRIN

A record 46 million seniors live in the United States today, and older Americans – those age 65 and older – now account for 15% of the overall U.S. population. By 2050, 22% of Americans will be 65 and older, according to U.S. Census Bureau projections.¹

At the same time America is graying, recent Pew Research Center surveys find that seniors are also moving towards more digitally connected lives. Around four-in-ten (42%) adults ages 65 and older now report owning smartphones, up from just 18% in 2013. Internet use and

[Read the Pew Research Center report.](#)

Green offices save
time, save money...



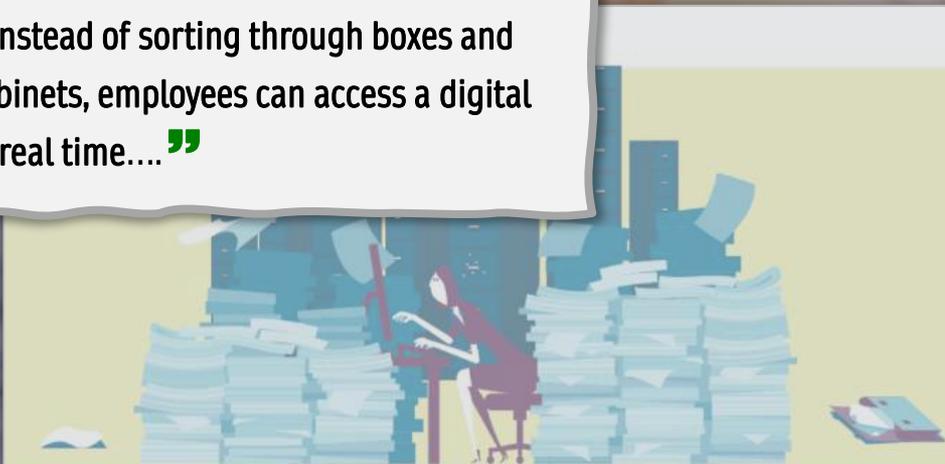
“Think about this: 123 years of National Geographic magazine with high resolution photos, or over 1400 issues, can be stored on just one flash drive. Paperless filing can easily reduce long-term storage costs for your company, as well as allow you to access information near instantaneously. Rather than spending time hunting for a piece of paper in a filing cabinet, you can pull up a document in a digital database within moments. This efficiency means you can focus your manpower on other projects that are critical to the growth of your business.”



Read the full Forbes article.

“When files are scanned and digitized they are assigned keywords, making it easy to search for documents using terms the business and employees use every day. These keywords can link to other documents with the same metadata, making it easy to locate related files. **Instead of sorting through boxes and file cabinets, employees can access a digital file in real time....**”

... and offer less frustration,
more efficiency



Buried in paper? Go digital and dig out

Transitioning your small business from paper to online record keeping is not only smart; it's a lot easier than you think.

[Read the full Boston Globe article.](#)

Going paperless could free your budget to focus on other priorities

“According to the EPA, a paperless office saves roughly \$80 per employee (annually) in costs related to paper, ink, toner, storage space and postage. If you have an organization with 400 employees, this could total more than \$32,000 per year. That’s a substantial chunk of change for any company [or fund office].”



Read the full Inc. magazine article.

How much money are you throwing away?

EXAMPLE

Benefit plan with 25,000 members & their families.

Annual budget for member mailings: **\$ 350,000**
(Printing, mail prep & labor, postage)

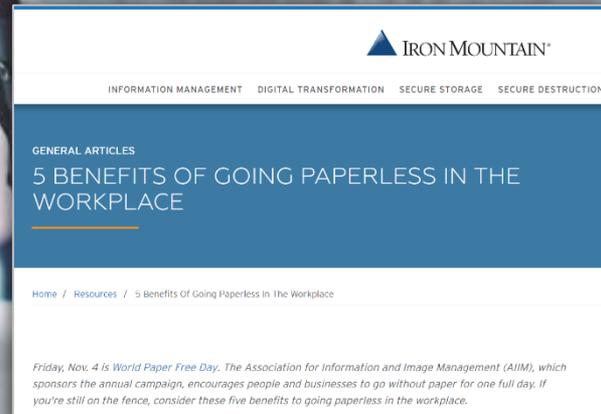
Even if only 25% opt-in
to paperless delivery...

ANNUAL SAVINGS →



Digital also means greater data security

“This might seem an odd benefit to mention considering the frequency of recent cyber attacks, but electronic documents are more secure than printed ones. For one thing, digital records can be rendered unreadable through encryption. They can also be secured against printing, copying and sharing. Access controls can specify viewing privileges to a fine level of granularity. Audit trails reveal who accessed what documents and when. In contrast, printed documents are only as secure as their proximity to a copy machine.”



[Read the full Iron Mountain article.](#)

Work from anywhere: the Virtual Fund Office

At one point during the coronavirus pandemic, more than two-thirds of US employees were working from home at least part of the time. With paperless processing using cloud-based applications and advanced automation, some Taft-Hartley fund offices were able to trade in-person operations for a “Virtual Fund Office” so they could continue to process benefits and serve members without ever going into their buildings.

The world of work is being reinvented before our eyes, and the traditional workplace will probably never be the same. But with green tools and paperless benefits processing you and your team can seamlessly access all your critical records from any secure internet connection and provide uninterrupted benefits, info and support to your plan participants.



ERISA now supports electronic communication

The Department of Labor's ERISA Safe Harbor rules say plans can switch to paperless delivery, so long as they "use appropriate and necessary means" to ensure that documents posted online or sent via secure portal are likely to be seen by the intended recipient.

Safe Harbor's simple eDelivery requirements

1. Obtain email address and consent to opt-in
2. Notify the recipient when document is available
3. Provide similar content & style as print version
4. Ensure privacy
5. Provide print version upon request
6. Monitor to ensure receipt

Requirements and regulations may change. Always consult your plan counsel before making the move!

[Download the full guidelines for ERISA Safe Harbor compliance](#)

What kinds of documents can go green?

- Beneficiary Change form
- Pension application
- Retiree ACH authorization
- Pension and other benefits statements
- Disability Continuation form
- Coordination of Benefits (COB) information form
- Employer delinquency notices
- Notification of Employer audit
- Eligibility for Survivor benefits
- Requests for documents (Marriage Certificate, Birth Certificate, etc.)
- Address Change verification
- Billing Statements
- Open enrollment materials
- Summary Plan Descriptions (SPDs)
- Summaries of Material Modifications (SMMs)
- Summary Annual Reports (SARs)
- QMCSO notices
- HIPAA certificates of creditable coverage
- New Summary of Benefits & Coverage (SBC) under the Affordable Care Act
- Trustee reports & meeting minutes

EXCEPTION:

COBRA docs are still better printed & mailed.



Where to start?

Members are ready to go green, they just want you to tell them how. Here are a few best practices to encourage your plan's stakeholders to leave paper behind and fully embrace the digital fund office.

- ⤴ Offer an incentive: start with documents and processes that members want instant access to – benefits enrollment, dependent updates, address changes, submitting pension applications, downloading ID cards and EOBs.
- ⤴ Make opting in simple and straightforward.
- ⤴ Promote the option on your website and in all printed materials you send to members, employers, trustees, etc.



Helping participants make the leap to green

- ▲ Use your contacts in the field! Customer service reps, business agents, training and apprenticeship contacts and local district councils can all be on your Green Team once they understand the benefits to the plan.
- ▲ Many plans actively use social media to communicate with members and the community. These channels are great for promoting the paperless option – you can even post how-to videos to show how easy it is to make the switch.
- ▲ Start smart: working with your technology vendor on a needs analysis can help determine whether to tackle inbound or outbound docs first.

CONCLUSION:

It's time for the green & digital fund office

- Members expect paperless communications.
- There's significant savings in going paperless.
- Digital documents are more available, secure and efficient than paper documents.
- Regulatory agencies now support going green.
- The digital fund office means you can access all your vital records and process benefits from any secure internet connection.
- You'll contribute to a greener, more sustainable planet for future generations.



Ready for a digital fund office? We can help.

Call 410.850.4900 or email accountexecs@basys.com

Additional references & helpful links

[Virus Makes Paperless Fund Administration Go Viral](#)
(*benefits* magazine)

[DOF finalizes electronic delivery rule for retirement plan notices](#)

[ERISA eDelivery guidelines](#)

[New Technology in the Fund Office](#) (*benefits*)

[E-communications from the Fund Office](#) (*benefits*)

[E-signatures legally valid and enforceable in nearly every industrialized country around the world](#)

[NFL Players Association adopts eSignatures](#)

[Closing the eDelivery Gap](#)

[Pew Research: 90% of Americans Use the Internet \(2019\)](#)

[Best Practices to help billers drive consumer adoption of paperless e-bills](#)

[Bank of America Trends in Consumer Mobility](#)

[IRS: 92% of individual tax returns are E-filed](#)

