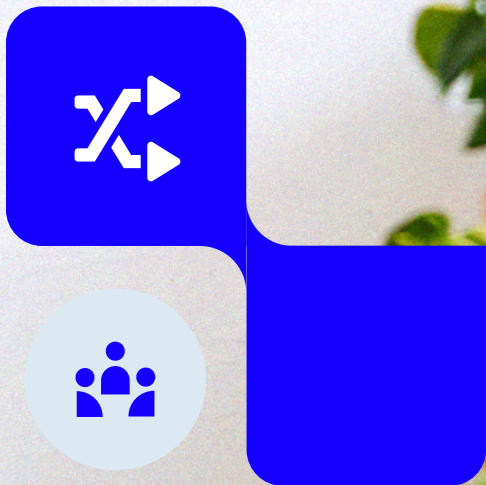




CUSTOMER STORY

Forum Financial Strengthens Digital Communications Supervision with Smarsh Assisted Review





Customer profile

Forum Financial Management, LP is a Registered Investment Adviser (RIA) that has experienced substantial growth since becoming independent in 2009. The firm uses Smarsh to capture and archive electronic communications across multiple channels, including email, mobile, Facebook, LinkedIn, and web content to meet regulatory requirements and industry best practices.



Smarsh results

- 40% increase in volume of emails reviewed with Smarsh Assisted Review vs. in-house
- 99% reduction in manual email reviews
- 16.5+ hours/month saved on manual email reviews

When I brought my concerns to Smarsh, it wasn't about selling me a product. It was about helping solve a real issue – and improving our review strategy in the process.”

Allison Tronnes

Chief Compliance Officer
Forum Financial

The challenge: Maintaining supervision while protecting sensitive information

Forum Financial reviewed all messages in-house. The process was labor-intensive, requiring daily attention to prevent backlogs.

Initially, Forum Financial's Chief Compliance Officer Allison Tronnes managed the reviews herself. She soon expanded the compliance team to include a dedicated specialist who took over responsibility for reviewing flagged communications, updating policies, whitelisting email addresses, and fine-tuning the system to reduce false positives.

However, this internal approach created two significant challenges:

1. It was resource-intensive, consuming time and attention that could have been better spent on higher-value compliance initiatives.
2. It lacked the operational oversight and structure needed to consistently control access to sensitive and confidential information.



The biggest challenge that led us to explore outsourcing was access to confidential information being shared in emails,” Tronnes explains. “Having individuals able to access that sensitive HR information was concerning.”

When the team member handling email reviews left the firm, Forum saw an opportunity to rethink their approach. Rather than continue to stretch internal resources and risk inconsistent supervision practices, they turned to Smarsh Assisted Review for a more scalable, secure, and compliant solution.



The solution: Expert supervision without the internal burden

While Forum has been a longtime Smarsh Professional Archive user, their journey to [Smarsh Assisted Review](#) began with a straightforward request for help. Tronnes reached out to her Smarsh account representative seeking guidance on rules and policies to enhance their internal review process and address confidentiality concerns.

Rather than offering more features, Smarsh focused on discussing outcomes. By introducing Smarsh Assisted Review — a managed service that pairs regulatory experts with Smarsh technology to handle first-line supervision — Smarsh was able to deliver a complete compliance solution, not just another tool. This consultative approach made a strong impression.



When I went to Smarsh and talked about our concerns with changing policies and rules, they helped identify a solution,” Tronnes recalls. “They weren’t just selling a product – they delivered a true solution that not only addressed our immediate needs but significantly improved our current process.”

The implementation process was remarkably efficient. “The onboarding process was seamless,” Tronnes says. “Just a few calls with the Assisted Review team, and we were fully up and running. It was a huge relief to hand that over given some changes that were happening to our team internally.”

Smarsh Assisted Review continuously provides comprehensive email supervision through a team of compliance professionals who review flagged communications according to Forum’s policies and escalate only those requiring attention. The service includes:

- Expert policy management and regular updates based on industry trends
- Access to a tested and refined Smarsh Policy Library
- SME consultancy for setting up and optimizing policies and workflows
- Comprehensive reporting and documentation
- Random sampling – a regulatory best practice Forum hadn’t implemented internally
- Secure, confidential review of sensitive communications



Forum initially planned a limited implementation, having Smarsh review only HR and management team emails to protect confidentiality. However, when their internal reviewer departed about two months later, they expanded to full service, outsourcing all email review responsibilities to the Smarsh team.

“The Smarsh Assisted Review team is very proactive in fine-tuning the policies – something we simply didn’t have the internal capacity to manage,” Tronnes shares.



The results: Enhanced scale, quality, efficiency, and peace of mind

The impact was immediate and substantial. Forum now reviews over 1,000 emails monthly – approximately 40% more than their previous internal process – while maintaining higher quality standards and freeing up valuable compliance resources.

“I was impressed by the quality of emails being escalated,” Tronnes says. “Honestly, they were catching emails we probably wouldn’t have identified in our standard review process. That’s something I continue to feel confident about.”

Broader risk coverage through expert oversight

Assisted Review has also strengthened Forum’s ability to identify nuanced compliance issues that may not trigger keyword-based alerts, such as outside business activities, personal conduct concerns, and the context around client communications. The addition of random sampling has provided another layer of risk coverage, helping ensure that no potential issue slips through the cracks.

“I value having an independent set of eyes conducting the reviews,” Tronnes notes. “That external perspective often prompts important questions we might not have asked ourselves – and that insight has been a real benefit.”



Significant time savings and bandwidth for high-impact compliance work

Since offloading a critical, but highly manual part of their compliance workflow, the efficiency gains have been substantial. Instead of manually reviewing hundreds of emails monthly, Tronnes now focuses on just the escalated emails requiring her attention. This dramatic reduction allows her to conduct more thorough investigations of flagged items while freeing time for other priorities. “Our focus is now on the small number of escalated emails,” she notes. “That shift allows for deeper, more meaningful reviews — instead of trying to manage hundreds at a time.”

The time savings have enabled Forum’s compliance team to strengthen other areas of their program by adding new audits, implementing additional testing, and focusing on supervision activities that can’t be outsourced. This has been particularly valuable as the firm continues to experience significant growth.



This partnership has allowed us to redirect our attention to the aspects of supervision that can’t be outsourced — the ones that make the greatest impact on our compliance program.”

Allison Tronnes

Chief Compliance Officer
Forum Financial



As Forum continues to grow, this shift ensures the compliance function scales alongside the business — without being consumed by low-leverage, high-volume review work.

Improved reporting and documentation

The platform’s robust reporting features have also improved visibility and documentation. “The reporting gives us clear visibility into flagged emails and actions taken — it’s improved both our documentation and efficiency.”

Assisted Review has given Forum Financial a more scalable, high-quality, and risk-aware supervision process — allowing the firm to focus resources where it matters most. It also removed the day-to-day burden of managing sensitive content internally, giving the team greater peace of mind and helping ensure information is only seen by those who truly need access.

Smarsh: A true partner; a true unified compliance platform

Forum Financial's success with Assisted Review builds on nearly a decade of using **Smarsh Professional Archive** — a comprehensive compliance platform. The firm uses Professional Archive to capture and retain communications from multiple channels, including email, mobile, Facebook, and LinkedIn, while **Web Archive** ensures all web content is properly captured and preserved.

This integrated approach delivers significant efficiency benefits. “Only having to learn and use one platform has been a major advantage,” Tronnes says. “Smarsh is intuitive and easy to navigate. The reporting is excellent and adding new profiles is simple. Ease of use and efficiency are the key reasons we continue to partner with Smarsh year after year.”

Looking ahead, Tronnes sees the partnership with Smarsh continuing to evolve. “As the Assisted Review team learns more about Forum and our email review process, we’ll keep strengthening the relationship to ensure we stay ahead of changes and aligned with best practices across the industry.”



For smaller teams managing message supervision internally, outsourcing to Smarsh Assisted Review is a smart decision. The return on value more than justifies the cost.”

Allison Tronnes

Chief Compliance Officer
Forum Financial



Key results with Smarsh Assisted Review

- **Enhanced quality of supervision:** Identifies potential compliance issues that could be missed without the right keywords in place
- **Increased efficiency:** Reviews 40% more emails while requiring less internal time and resources
- **Improved confidentiality:** Alleviates concerns about inappropriate access to sensitive information
- **Expert policy management:** Ensures policies remain current with industry trends and regulatory expectations
- **Comprehensive documentation:** Provides detailed reporting for regulatory examinations
- **Random sampling:** Implements regulatory best practices that weren't feasible internally
- **Peace of mind:** Delivers confidence that supervision obligations regarding electronic communications are being met effectively

Forum Financial's experience demonstrates how the right compliance partner can convert a burdensome task into a strategic advantage. By combining expert review services with comprehensive archiving capabilities, Smarsh has enabled Forum to strengthen their compliance program while focusing resources on growth and client service.

Ready to learn how Smarsh Assisted Review can strengthen your compliance program?

Contact our team today to discuss your supervision needs.



Smarsh® enables companies to transform oversight into foresight by surfacing business-critical signals from the most in-demand communications channels. Regulated organizations of all sizes rely upon the Smarsh portfolio of cloud-native digital communications capture, retention and oversight solutions to help them identify regulatory and reputational risks within their communications data before those risks become fines or headlines.

Smarsh serves a global client base spanning the top banks in North America, Europe and Asia, along with leading brokerage firms, insurers, and registered investment advisors and U.S. state and local government agencies. To discover more about the future of communications capture, archiving and oversight, visit www.smarsh.com.

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1-866-762-7741



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