

# How 3 Industry Leaders Overcame COVID-19 Challenges



Vincenzo Minino  
*Director of Quality Compliance*



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# Campus Continuity in the Heart of COVID-19

No industry has been immune from the impact of COVID-19; even students looking to finish out their spring semesters are finding a new normal in the commute to the couch rather than the classroom. New Jersey's largest community college, Bergen Community College, was one of the many schools across the country tasked with transitioning their entire campus community to a remote work system, but unlike many others left scrambling, Bergen was able to seamlessly transition their staff to remote work while continuing to offer the same on-campus administrative services students need thanks to Laserfiche.



**Nishika Gupta**

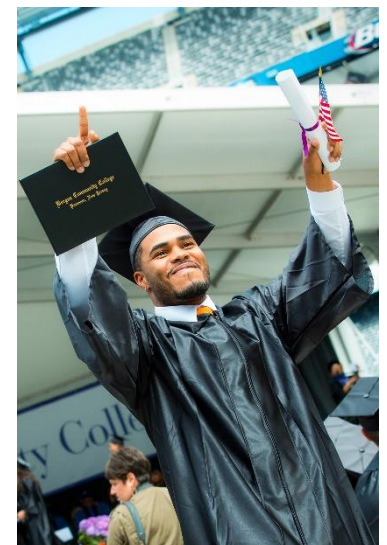
Managing Director, Records &  
Information Management  
Bergen Community College

Long before the COVID-19 pandemic changed the world, Bergen Community College saw a growing need to move beyond the physical campus. Their community of over 32,000 students is a dynamic mix including parents, people with full-time jobs, as well as traditional students, but there was a common thread – having to go to campus to complete simple tasks like submitting forms was getting in the way of their education. Bergen Community College chose Laserfiche for their process management, electronic forms, and document management capabilities with the goal of making their student's lives easier, but what they didn't realize was they were also implementing their ultimate disaster preparedness plan.

Students are at the center of any college community, but without the behind-the-scenes administrative staff students wouldn't have access to many of the services they need to complete their education. These integral staff members need access to countless documents and paper-heavy manual processes, which may sound impossible while working remotely, but not for Bergen. Students can submit electronic forms which are intelligently routed to the correct staff member who can then easily access all their important documents in the digital Laserfiche repository. Beyond keeping things moving for their students, digitizing their office has allowed many of their part-time staff members to easily work from home which would have been almost impossible without Laserfiche.

*"Without Laserfiche, moving to remote would have been a nightmare."*

For Nishika Gupta, Managing Director, Records & Information Management at Bergen Community College, having Laserfiche has been the difference between this transition going smoothly and being detrimental to the college. Having Laserfiche means COVID-19 has not affected the behind-the-scenes process automation that moves tasks through the administrative team's pipeline, meaning less impact on students. These time-saving automated workflows have allowed the college to worry less about whether tasks are being completed, and more about keeping their students, faculty, and staff safe.



Since the move to remote, Gupta has even been able to implement new processes for the college. Bergen recently unveiled an electronic form allowing students to request Emergency Financial Aid Grants through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for expenses related to the campus closing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students can go online and fill out an electronic form to see if they're eligible for aid under the program then staff can quickly process them meaning vital funds can get into the hands of students that need them the most.

Laserfiche has been foundational for process improvement at Bergen Community College for years, but they never imagined it would become a fundamental element of their transition to remote work. The impact of COVID-19 has been felt by everyone, but for the Bergen Community College staff and students, many tasks that would have been almost impossible to complete remotely never missed a beat. Through simplifying life with Laserfiche Bergen has mitigated major disruption to their student's lives while combatting the COVID-19 crisis.



*Bergen Community College was the recipient of the 2018 Laserfiche Run Smarter Award for demonstrating excellence in innovation.*

## COVID Can't Stop Compass Forwarding



No one imagined a month ago they'd need to move a bustling office of 40 to remote work at a moment's notice. Concerns around productivity, making sure daily tasks like receiving payments from clients and processing invoices, and even your staff's ability to access the files they need to do their jobs can even make it seem impossible.

This was the reality for Compass Forwarding, a global leader in transportation and logistics for over 60 years, as the COVID-19 outbreak caused a lockdown of their offices in the virus's US epicenter – New York. Overnight, they needed to find a way to not only keep their staff functional, but also keep their commitments to their global clients. Compass was different, though; unlike many other businesses in New York and across the globe, Compass Forwarding had been preparing for a myriad of disasters for years with Laserfiche.

Laserfiche is the global leader in intelligent content management and business process automation. Through their robust platform organizations can securely store and organize documents in an easy-to-use repository that is accessible worldwide, simplify previously tedious tasks like invoice capture with process automation, and ensure things get done on time and accurately with intelligent reporting and task reminders, all of which are vital to the logistics of an international transportation company.



*“Laserfiche has been a game changer.”*



Long before the COVID-19 outbreak, Compass Forwarding had transformed their previously paper-heavy organization into a digital powerhouse. “Laserfiche is one of our most important assets,” according to Vincenzo Minino, Director of Quality Compliance at Compass Forwarding. Their work in international transport means strict compliance guidelines must be constantly followed. One of their most important functions, getting air cargo shipped on time, involves multiple signatures from various departments.

Before working with Accelerated Information Systems, a leading Laserfiche provider, shipments could make it to the airport with missing signatures meaning potentially detrimental delays for their clients. With Laserfiche’s automated task routing, each shipment leaves the warehouse with every signature, meaning no more delays for their clients.

*“Without Laserfiche, we would have been so crippled.”*

As it became clear daily life would be drastically changed due to COVID-19, figuring out how to set up an office from home and keep businesses running was key. For Compass Forwarding, they simply needed to make sure their staff had the hardware they needed, and Laserfiche handled the rest, no testing required.

*“You don’t want have to have a pandemic to prove your investment was really worth it.”*

With Laserfiche, Compass Forwarding didn’t need to worry about a lag in service for their customers, even though their workforce was no longer physically in their offices. Customer are notified automatically based off key metadata housed within Laserfiche, eliminating the need for staff to call a client to give them a status update. Everyone who needs up-to-the-minute information on a shipment or task has it without the need for manual human follow up. Plus, without a dependence on physical paper, coupled with Laserfiche’s extensive repository search and organizational features, staff never has to worry about if they left important files back in the office - everything is right at their fingertips from any internet-connected device.



Vincenzo Minino  
Director of Quality Compliance  
Compass Forwarding

Beyond the impact on clients, being able to immediately social distance when the order was put in place in New York meant decreasing the risk of spreading COVID-19 to Compass Forwarding staff and their family. The decision between health and career didn't need to be piled on top of stress of living through the pandemic for the Compass team.



Compass Forwarding is also doing their part in helping to fight the COVID-19 pandemic by transporting and delivering critical medical supplies and other items that are in high-demand. These medical supplies include vital materials such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like masks and life-saving ventilators. Weekly air shipments of temperature-controlled pharmaceuticals are still being transported around the world thanks to Compass Forwarding's tireless efforts which are supported by Laserfiche. They even transported an air ambulance helicopter from Europe to the United States in cooperation with their partners. In addition to critical

medical supplies, Compass Forwarding has continued to transport food and beverage shipments as well as spare parts and larger components for the aerospace industry—all in an effort to ensure our lives continue to move forward.

The spread of COVID-19 across the globe has transformed not only the way we live, but also the way we do business. With the unprecedented millions of unemployment claims in early April, seeing a company who prepared for the worst, and has risen to the challenge exemplifies how important it is to have a disaster management plan in place before disaster is even on the horizon. Compass Forwarding's forward-thinking approach helped them not only continue to get business done for their clients, but also mitigate the detrimental effect of halting business for their staff.

## Shufro Rose Keeps Firm Operations & Client Service Running Seamlessly in Time of COVID-19 Crisis

Shufro Rose — a New York City-based independent wealth management firm servicing more than 1,200 clients and \$1.5 billion in assets under management as of March 31, 2020 — is located in the epicenter of the financial world. In March of 2020, the firm also found



itself located within the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States. The firm immediately shifted to working remotely, relying upon a digital strategy and business process automation that have enabled the firm to operate and service clients seamlessly.



**Vibhaw Arya**  
Chief Operating Officer  
Shufro Rose

“We had implemented our operational processes in Laserfiche well before the COVID-19 outbreak,” said Vibhaw Arya, Chief Operating Officer at Shufro Rose. “Our Laserfiche electronic forms and automated workflows have enabled us to standardize, streamline and digitize operational functions. Laserfiche Forms and workflows have stood the test of this unexpected transition. Our processes and execution have remained consistent. We did not have to scramble to continue to service our clients and operate our business despite being suddenly displaced from our office.”

# Modernizing Operations through Process Automation

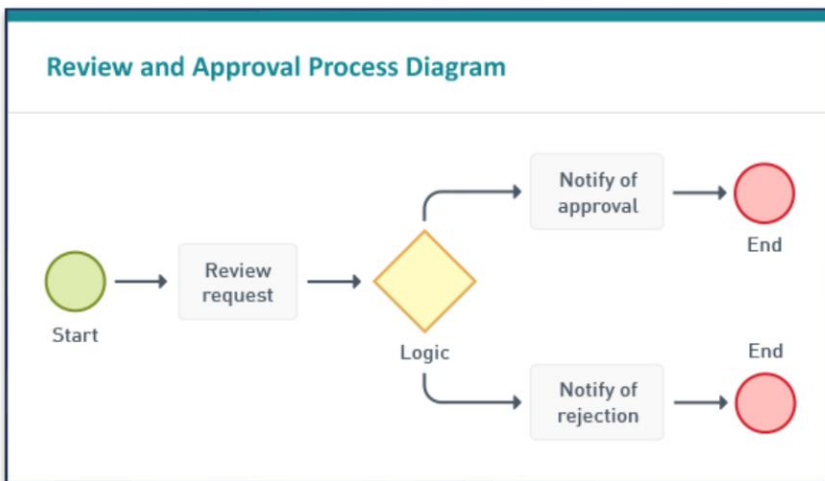
Although Shufro Rose has a firm history dating back over 80 years, the firm has continuously strived to modernize how it operates so that its advisors and client service personnel can remain fully focused on client service.

“Shufro Rose’s approach to digital transformation is firmly rooted in its dedication to serving clients,” said Zaheer Master, president of Accelerated Information Systems, the solution provider that implemented Laserfiche at Shufro Rose. “The firm’s vision and use of Laserfiche has positioned it for success, even in times of dramatic change.”

One of the firm’s significant Laserfiche initiatives has been to streamline the account opening process. This process originally relied heavily upon manual data entry and manually scanning numerous account documents. Shufro Rose created an electronic account opening form in Laserfiche that captures all client information necessary to open a new account in a consistent digital format. A Laserfiche workflow then automatically routes information to relevant operations and client service personnel for execution and review. Any required signatures required for account opening are executed through an integration with DocuSign.



*Shufro Rose was awarded the **2018 Laserfiche Run Smarter Award** for excellence in Laserfiche innovation.*



*With Laserfiche, client-submissions are automatically uploaded, generated, and properly filed within Shufro Rose’s repository.*

Shufro Rose also automated account maintenance processes using Laserfiche. When a client needs to submit changes — for instance, updating beneficiaries, contact information or standing instructions — client service teams submit the change via a Laserfiche Form, including any necessary documentation and instructions. The firm uses corresponding Laserfiche forms for account closures and money movement processes as well. The firm designed and implemented forms to its unique specifications, requiring mandatory data elements to be provided at the outset, which reduces the occurrence of inefficient back-and-forth iterations to capture missing data.

**“We have a full audit trail and documentation of every process executed. Documents are stored in a WORM-compliant format, so we can trust the integrity of information that is stored in Laserfiche.”**

As information is routed through automated processes, all relevant documents are automatically uploaded, generated, and properly filed within the Laserfiche repository. This enables Shufro Rose to comply with a critical books and records regulation established by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) for wealth management firms.

In 2019, Shufro Rose opened 189 new accounts via this revamped account opening process. The firm also executed money movement transactions using Laserfiche, completing approximately 10,000 journal, wires, EFT and check disbursement transactions in the same year.

“In any financial organization, executing client requests and operational processes accurately, swiftly, securely, within compliance guardrails, and fully documented, is a non-negotiable function,” Arya said. “Laserfiche has enabled us to systematically navigate each process through appropriate steps and supervisory/compliance approvals based on the uniqueness of each scenario. We’ve built automated processes that take much of that administrative and compliance burden off individuals so that they can spend more time serving clients.”



## Maintaining Business as Usual as the World Changes



Shifting to digital operations and automated processes are core to Shufro Rose’s strategic vision of operating as a virtual firm. This virtualization approach has provided a dual benefit of serving as the firm’s business continuity plan. Shufro Rose conducts an annual business continuity plan test, the most recent of which took place in Q4 2019. Arya noted that the firm’s BCP process is to essentially leverage the same technology solutions and automated processes from any location outside of the firm’s office.

Shufro Rose’s technology infrastructure and digital strategy were truly put to the test when COVID-19 arrived in New York, forcing the firm to quickly transition employees to work from home. “A couple of days before it was required, we gave our employees the option to work from home,” Arya said. “The transition was relatively seamless. Then on March 16, the entire firm went remote.”

Since then, the firm has been able to maintain business as usual, through a volatile stock market, and has even onboarded new clients and opened multiple new accounts.

“Our primary focus is maintaining normalcy and conducting business as usual. Amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, numerous clients have contacted us to review their beneficiaries on their accounts and ensure that their financial affairs are up to date. Shufro Rose has fully leveraged Laserfiche in this effort of servicing clients on these requests.”

From a management perspective, Arya explained that Laserfiche gives him the ability to monitor the execution processes, which enhances accountability firm-wide. “Every process is tracked and timestamped,” he said. “If a client urgently needs money, we can make sure that the request is completed quickly; if someone is out sick or in a meeting when the request comes through, we can immediately assign the task to another resource to keep things moving along. Laserfiche allows us to be vigilant and gives us the information that we need to make sure business keeps moving.”

## About Accelerated

Accelerated Information Systems (AIS) is an award-winning professional services firm focused on solving business challenges with software solutions. AIS provides expert guidance, utilizing industry expertise and a strong technical skill set to design, implement, and support enterprise solutions.

AIS provides a full suite of professional services including consulting, solution design, implementation, technical support, data conversion, system integration, training, and project management.

Clients of AIS include State and Local Government, Colleges and Universities, Financial Services (Wealth Management, Investment Advisors, Broker-Dealers), Manufacturers, Not-for-Profit Organizations, TV and Media, and Multi-National Non-Governmental Organizations.

Founded in 2005, AIS is headquartered in New York and is also certified in multiple other states as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE). In addition to their status as a Platinum Certified Laserfiche Solution Provider and the 2019 Laserfiche Cloud Solution Provider of the Year, AIS is a Microsoft Cloud Silver Certified Partner.



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