

# Bell Alliance

Leading real estate law firm improves client service and reduces costs by hundreds of thousands of dollars annually using Adobe® Acrobat® Pro software

## Bell Alliance

www.bellalliance.ca



## Industry

Legal

## Challenges

- Improve client service
- Safeguard and effectively track legal documents
- Reduce paper use

## Solution

- Digital Signatures
  - Electronic Document Processing
- Bell Alliance uses Adobe Acrobat Pro to improve completing, submitting, processing, and archiving real estate transaction documents.

## Results

- Eased client stress and enhanced services by streamlining real estate transactions
- Reduced document processing, management, and delivery costs by hundreds of thousands of dollars annually
- Cut the time required to process real estate transactions from days to seconds
- Saved more than 200 hours of staff time each month
- Helped ensure security with digital signatures
- Reduced environmental footprint

## Systems At A Glance

- Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro

## Fewer costs and environmental effects

As a leading real estate law firm, Bell Alliance works closely with its clients, other law firms, and the Land Title and Survey Authority of British Columbia (LTSA) to manage thousands of property transactions annually. The typically paper-intensive real estate transactions can involve distributing and reviewing millions of pages of documents throughout the year.

To streamline land title processing and enhance client services, Bell Alliance uses Adobe Acrobat Pro software to deliver project documents electronically as more secure, interactive Adobe PDF files. The firm also leverages an electronic forms solution developed by LTSA for rapid, reliable submission of land title forms in PDF.

“Given the time-sensitive nature of real estate transactions, lawyers often incur high out-of-pocket costs to quickly hand deliver project documents to clients and agencies like LTSA,” says Ron Usher, senior counsel with Bell Alliance. “With the electronic filing system built by LTSA using Adobe Acrobat Pro, paperwork for real estate transactions can be submitted and processed electronically in seconds, enabling us to eliminate the costs, client stress, and environmental impacts of using paper.”

## Accelerating high-dollar transactions

In addition to being costly, previous paper-based processes for handling documents were slow and could lead to inadvertent errors. For instance, if land title registration forms were submitted on paper, information on the documents would have to be rekeyed into LTSA systems, increasing the chance for errors and delaying processing.

“If clients have to wait days for paperwork to be processed, it can increase their stress,” says Usher. “Now, land title and other transaction documents in PDF can be dealt with digitally in seconds through the automated processes. It greatly accelerates processing and lets us deliver more efficient, responsive client services.”

Bell Alliance staff has adopted the LTSA electronic filing system with enthusiasm. The system uses Adobe Acrobat Pro and leverages built-in support for digital signatures in PDF and industry-standard public key infrastructure (PKI) tools. To promote ease of use and adoption, the Adobe solutions enable LTSA to deliver forms that look exactly like already familiar paper forms to make the digital processes even easier for lawyers and notaries.

## A secure, reliable process

As lawyers and notaries submit land title forms, custom applications within the LTSA system pull digital certificates from the PDF forms and verify the certificates against a registry created to support the LTSA application.

*"I haven't physically signed or had difficulty finding a real estate document in three years. I view that as a testament to how effective Adobe Acrobat can be in streamlining document processes by using digital forms and signatures."*

Ron Usher,  
Senior counsel,  
Bell Alliance

**For More Information**

[www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/)

Employees at Bell Alliance download the appropriate PDF forms from the LTSA website. Using Acrobat Pro or the free Adobe Reader® software, staff can complete the forms and route them internally for review and additional input. When the forms are complete, lawyers and notaries can apply their digital signatures to the PDF forms. They can also integrate accompanying documents, such as mortgage terms, into a single PDF file that includes the digitally signed form. The approved file is then uploaded to the LTSA website, where data on forms is automatically extracted and stored in back-end systems.

**Growing adoption leads to increased efficiency**

From 2006 to 2009, Bell Alliance has created more than 290,000 PDF documents including many thousands of signed PDF documents for submission to the LTSA system. Usher notes that his firm is saving a minimum of one to two hours per transaction, with approximately 200 transactions completed every month; a major improvement in staff productivity.

The advantages of sharing and collaborating on digital documents go beyond the LTSA submissions and touch all areas of Bell Alliance's business. A full range of project documents can be converted to PDF for internal review by the firm's staff or for sharing with outside lawyers working on a deal. In addition, documents can be archived as fully searchable PDF files for fast, reliable access.

"Adobe Acrobat Pro eliminates lost documents and improves tracking and access," says Usher. "With Acrobat, we can reduce document management and processing costs by hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. Plus, our lawyers and staff have ready access to everything they need to complete their jobs."

**Gaining a competitive edge**

Having an electronic process for managing documents is important for the firm, especially because most work comes in through referrals from mortgage brokers and realtors. Today, if a broker calls for a copy of a document, Bell Alliance can provide it within seconds. According to Usher, this level of responsiveness has created a significant competitive advantage for the firm.

For Usher, Adobe solutions are crucial to the firm because Bell Alliance was formed with two key goals in mind: deliver outstanding client service, and create a paperless office that fully exploits digital documents and electronic signatures to improve staff effectiveness and efficiency, and lessen the firm's environmental footprint. By converting project documents to PDF using Acrobat Pro, Bell Alliance is achieving both goals.

"I haven't physically signed or had difficulty finding a real estate document in three years," says Usher. "I view that as a testament to how effective Adobe Acrobat can be in streamlining document processes by using digital forms and signatures."



**Adobe**

**Adobe Systems Incorporated**  
345 Park Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95110-2704  
USA  
[www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)

Adobe, the Adobe logo, Acrobat, and Reader are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

© 2009 Adobe Systems Incorporated. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.  
91010407 09/09 A