



Ask the Expert:

JP Midgley,

CEO of Avalon Document Services

Avalon Document Services started as Avalon Legal Copy in 2000 with a focus on servicing professionals in the legal market. During the last dozen years, it has changed its name and grown to a total of five locations and 75 team members. Lehigh became aware of Avalon and the services it provides for the construction industry through the Buffalo Executives Association, a business networking group in which both companies are members. We were able to sit down with JP Midgley to learn more about how Avalon can assist and save time for contractors. Check out our Q&A below, and, for more information, visit www.teamavalon.com.

Q: What services does Avalon offer for the construction industry?

A: One of the main services we provide to the construction industry is plan and specification manual printing. We also offer large-format scanning and large-format color printing capabilities, which are helpful for creating digital copies of old, delicate blueprints; duplicating color line drawings from the field; and printing full-color renderings for presentation material or award submissions. With the addition of a large UV printer to Avalon's arsenal of machines, we are able to print signage for construction sites and job trailers, including banners, and a variety of indoor and outdoor plastics that are frequently used in construction areas that need to be durable and outlast the weather conditions. Last, but not least, we have an Online Planroom, which offers a solution for bid distribution management.

Q: Tell us more about your Online Planroom. Why is it free?

A: The Online Planroom is a virtual bid distribution management system. Our team walks the contractor through a very detailed and quality-checked setup process, and then bid jobs can be posted publicly or privately depending on the contractor's preference. Potential bidders can then visit the website to view and order the project of interest. We print on a per-order basis and communicate with the plan holders that we have received their orders and when they will be ready for pickup, delivery or shipping. We will also post addendums or updates to the website and issue the addendums and updates to the current plan holders through email blasts.

Even though setting up a planroom takes some time, the company that is putting the job out for bid will not be charged for any of Avalon's administrative fees to manage this online portal. Why, you ask? We want companies to take advantage of our Planroom. It is designed to make their lives and their bid distribution easier so they can focus on other aspects of their work.

Q: We frequently deal with confidential information in our industry. What kinds of security and confidentiality precautions does Avalon take?

A: On a daily basis, Avalon has highly confidential documents and projects in its facilities. In order to protect these documents, we are not open to walk-in business. Our doors are always locked, and clients have to be let in by a member of Avalon. Our current customers are the only ones who enter our facility to pick up or drop off a project or to meet with one of Avalon's team members. All of Avalon's team members have signed a nondisclosure/confidentiality agreement before they can even begin their work at Avalon. Each team member also goes through a rigorous background check to ensure we are hiring people that have the capability to live up to our security standards. In addition, any waste copies are shredded on-site. We will never discard documents in the trash; everything must be shredded. When you send your documents to Avalon, you can rest assured that they will remain secure while they are in our possession.

Q: What does Avalon offer that other print companies do not?

A: Avalon prides itself on our value-added services and relies on these services to set us apart from the competition. We go above and beyond to make sure that clients have the best experience possible when working with Avalon. One of the ways that we do that is by providing free pickup and delivery to our clients. Many people today are accustomed to picking up their projects from their print vendor or paying for a delivery service to transport their documents. Not at Avalon!

Another value-added service is our free rush service. If a project needs to be completed same-day or within a few hours, we will make it happen, and there will not be an extra charge for it. Every project is also quality-checked page by page to its originals to ensure that projects are perfect before they go out the door. Additionally, we make ourselves available 24 hours, seven days a week. Avalon does not know the meaning of 9 to 5. Clients can send us projects later in the evening or in the middle of the night, and we will process the order as requested.

Q: And we just have to ask ... what's the deal with those delicious cookies Avalon employees always have on hand?

A: Oh, the cookies! What would Avalon be known for if it were not for the cookies? Ever since the beginning of Avalon, the cookies have been distributed with every order and have become a staple in our shops. The cookies even have a specific standard operating procedure (SOP) in our SOP manual. They are just our way of saying thank you for trusting us with your company's critical jobs.