

COMPANY PROFILE



BY GLENN TALBOT

Verified – applying technology to simplify compliance & monitor contractor performance

The last 12 months has seen Verified introduce their product to many major corporate clients, who acknowledge it as the leading edge solution to control maintenance. With 1000's of buildings using Verified's unique logbook system, FM magazine spoke to the Managing Director, Glenn Talbot, to find out about the many benefits of Verified.

FM: Where did the Verified concept come from?

GT During my involvement with a major service provider our clients were continually venting their frustrations in not getting the information required to meet their regulatory requirements. We recognized that this was a complicated task when you have multiple buildings, States with differing regulations, dealings with many contractors on over 40 plus service items and with frequencies ranging from weekly to 24 yearly. Existing solutions left a lot to be desired.

FM: So how did you go about providing a solution for this complicated task?

GT We originally set out with one major aim - we wanted to manage all this information without complicating the maintenance process, or adding cost to the clients or contractors. All the information is out there, we just had to come up with an effective way to bring it all together on a common platform, and then analyse it.

FM: How is the information gathered?

GT Most routine inspection, testing and maintenance is done in accordance with an Australian Standard. Maintenance contractors record their testing and inspection results in logbooks in accordance with these Standards. Verified has taken this existing recording process

and applied scanning technology to develop it into a fully automated electronic solution.

FM: How does the scanning work?

GT Still retaining the Australian Standards basis of our logbooks, we redesigned the layout to allow the written information on the test sheet to be scanned. We can then electronically read the data using the latest in Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) and Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) technology. This allows all the information on the actual test sheet to be analysed and an electronic image of the original test sheet to be stored.

FM: What happens to the information after it is scanned?

GT The information from the sheet is interrogated, stored and filed in the Verified database. Reports are then automatically generated and sent to the Facility Manager, with the data also posted to the Verified website (available via a secure login). In other words, no human intervention occurs once the logbook sheet is received by Verified. It's entirely automatic.

FM: What information is in the reports?

GT The system provides automatic notification via email of system faults, test failures and missed tests. The missed tests report provides details of the

frequency that has been missed as well as the date range the test should have been performed, the last test date and also the contractor's details. The facility manager now has the ability to follow up contractors with accurate information, without leaving his desktop.

All this information, including an image of all the actual scanned sheets is readily available and searchable on the Verified website.

FM: Can this information be used to prepare an annual compliance report?

GT Yes. An annual report to suit each States requirements can be generated via the website. It embeds all the testing information from the previous 12 months into a compliance report that shows all the essential services and safety measures, contractors details, the maintenance regime in place, and details of all the tests that have been completed. As a result, signing these documents is no longer an onerous task, since the report is simply an actual account of what has occurred.

FM: So the process is fully automated?

GT Yes. The process does not require input from the FM'er, as there is no checking of logbooks required, no manuals to complete, and no software to manually update. Verified does it all for you. The FM'er only needs to be involved when notified by exception, for example a fault that has been detected, or a test missed.



FM: What about learning the software?

GT Verified is not a software product. It works like a bureau service. You only need your existing email and Internet access to utilise the benefits of Verified.

FM: Is it difficult to implement?

GT No. We provide the FM with a simple "How it works" document for your service providers including a "Contractors FAQ" sheet. The contractors' logbooks are then replaced with Verified's logbooks and that's all that is required to implement Verified.

FM: Do the contractors have to do anything different?

GT The maintenance regime remains unchanged. The only change is that the contractors will now use Verified logbooks instead of their own. They send the top sheet to Verified using our supplied reply-paid envelopes; the rest is an automated process.

FM: How will Verified affect the FM'er relationship with their contractors?

GT It won't, if the contractors are doing a good job. Some contractors have seen benefit in using it to manage their sub-contractors and subsequent performance. Verified provides real-time interrogation of test and inspection results and subsequent real-time

interrogation of your contractors performance. If a test doesn't happen or fails, you will know immediately.

FM: Do contractors accept the Verified system?

GT Yes, hundreds of contractors are currently using Verified. The implementation by the FMer dictates the use of Verified, which really only replaces logbooks already provided at the contractors cost.

FM: Can anyone use Verified?

GT Yes. It provides a common recording and reporting structure across all services. Even if you engage a building surveyor, or do some of the work in-house, the Verified logbooks are used. This ensures that you receive consistent reporting no matter who conducts the tests or inspections.

FM: What have some of your reports shown?

GT We think the most surprising results so far is how many tests have been missed. All of our clients have contracts in place to ensure that all the required testing and inspections are completed, and they pay for all of these required tests. Verified reports show that many of these tests are in fact not done. We now have clients using the Verified website to authorize contractor payments. If there is no service there is no payment.

A recent report for a client showed that around 40% of all the required tests had not been done.

Clients have also realised that the Verified reporting process identifies defects and test failures with plant and equipment that they never knew existed.

FM: Is it expensive?

GT No. Whether you have 1 or 10,000 buildings Verified is a cost effective solution to manage your process. Many clients receive more than their investment in Verified back through the amount of time that it saves as well as the amount of money saved via the 'No service, No payment' principle.

WHERE CAN WE GET MORE INFORMATION?

You can visit our website at www.verified.com.au or call us on 1300 133 950.

Glenn Talbot's involvement in the Building Services Industry spans 20 years. Originally a Fire Protection Engineer, he became General Manager of the Wormald group, which included various fire protection and air conditioning service companies. He is currently the Vice Chairman of the Victorian chapter of the Fire Protection Association, and is an essential services sub committee member of the Building Regulation Advisory Committee.