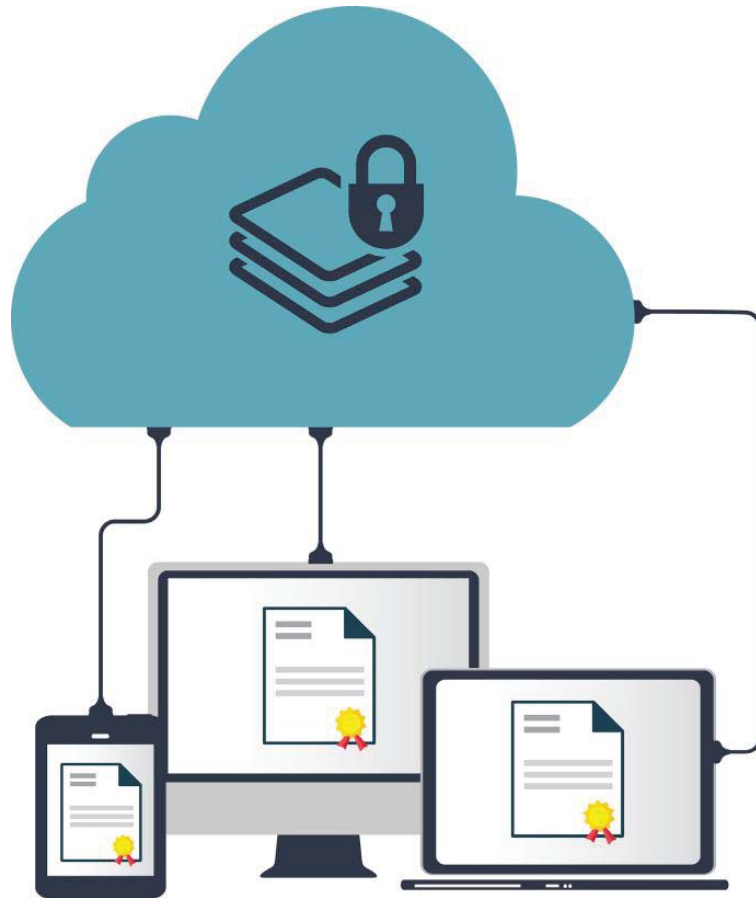


“Where Do You Store Your Equipment Certifications?”



Robert Sombach

When an inspector asks that question of your customer, it's often followed by a call to your office requesting backup copies for various equipment that does not have information. That, in turn, can lead to problems where there's been a lapse in certain certifications. As we all know, the time to discover these certification lapses is not when an inspector is requesting to review them. For most service providers, managing certificates for your customers and making them readily available has an added benefit: it can increase your revenue. Here's how:

Like many processes over the past few years, certification is moving away from paper based systems toward a digital system. There are several benefits to this. Digital systems can be accessed anywhere, saving

time and money. Consider a customer that has multiple locations, and a large facility where some scales or calibrated equipment are not easily accessible. Storing all of this information online can save enormous amounts of time during inspection periods. There is also the security consideration, where information cannot be misplaced or lost, which often results in a further cost to the end user.

Perhaps the most important benefit to you, however, is being able to store your customer's equipment information in a database. This will immediately lead to increased revenue and profit. Once this information becomes digital, it can be referenced in many important ways to improve your business. The most obvious is to ensure that you are not missing any recertification dates. In the

above example where a date had lapsed, that may represent a fine for your customer, and an emergency call to you - but it also represents a missed renewal date. Even if these lapses are not uncovered by inspectors, they still represent lost revenue for your business. In a regulated industry such as scales and measurement, your business is similar to insurance: you buy it because you hope you don't need it. Your customers rely on you to know when they need recertification. Knowing when equipment needs to be serviced and recertified is part of your contractual obligation to your clients. If you're missing these dates, your business

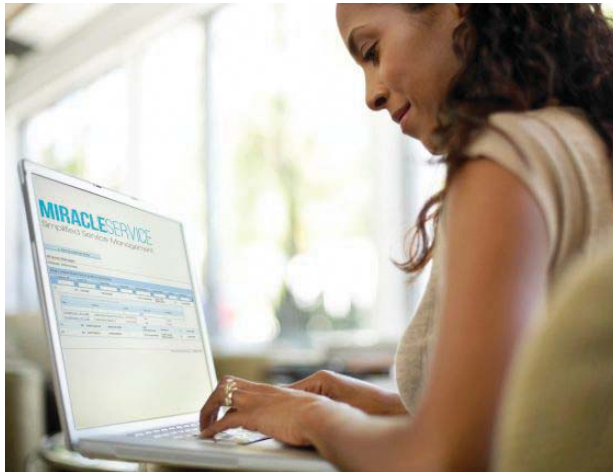
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areas in close proximity. You can ensure the technician has the right assortment of parts if the call may require not just certification or calibration, but also some preventative maintenance.

This information can also be made available online once it is entered into your service management database. Customers can share

these details with inspectors to show them how organized they are. Providing this type of information online is one more reason that the client will continue to use you as their service provider. Once systems become digital, they do not go back to paper, and switching from one provider to another becomes

more onerous as the clients become comfortable with your system. They know where to find it online, how to login, and how to retrieve the information. Customers can still keep their paper-based information as well, but it becomes a backup system, instead of the primary system. As if all of these efficiencies weren't enough, digital storage and management does not need to be provided for free! Customers are willing to pay for this level of premium service. If you make the fee nominal, it ensures the customers see this as a premium. Consider that



is missing a revenue opportunity, and could potentially lose a customer. Once in a database, your customer's assets will remind you when they need attention.

When the equipment information is in a database, you can also start to leverage the information to lower your costs. Perhaps there are certain makes and models that begin to need service or replacement parts around the same time? If you know when a machine begins to no longer function reliably, you can let a customer know in advance that the time is approaching to replace the equipment, or make significant upgrades.

Predicting all of this can also help you plan your service technician's day. If you plan these events in advance, you begin to assign technicians with the proper skills and tools to fix the right devices. You can begin to send them out on calls based on geographic

clients will continue to visit your website to access their information. This traffic can also help leverage sales, as clients will see your latest and greatest products and services.

The next time you get a call from a panicked customer looking for information, acknowledge that there is a better way to service your clients and increase your revenue. After all: good business is a "balance" between keeping your customers happy and your business profitable.

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