

# RESIDENTIAL



SOLVING THE BIG APPLE'S COMPLIANCE PUZZLE

SiteCompli

JASON GRIFFITH AND ROSS GOLDENBERG

## COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT

## Solving The Big Apple's Compliance Puzzle

#### SiteCompli

Staying on top of New York City's complex building laws is a problem that property owners, managers, consultants and service companies struggle with every day. Tracking complaints, violations, hearings, equipment inspections, as well as staying current with new regulations from the alphabet soup of city agencies, is time consuming, increasingly costly and, as part of New York City's real estate business, unavoidable.

The solution: SiteCompli, a new service designed specifically to simplify and alleviate the challenges of compliance. SiteCompli's technology automatically and continuously aggregates and analyzes compliance data on violations, complaints, inspections and more from various New York City government agencies. By crunching this data in a fraction of the time that it takes for a real estate staff to do it manually, SiteCompli ensures that key compliance issues don't slip through the cracks.

Started just under three years ago, SiteCompli now boasts some of the largest and most influential owners, managers and service companies as clients, including Langsam Property Services, Pan Am Equities, Orsid Realty and Jack Resnick & Sons.

SiteCompli was founded by Jason Griffith and Ross Goldenberg, who first met while earning their MBAs at Columbia Business School. Following graduation, Jason went to head up sales and business development organizations at ServiceChannel, a leading retail facilities software company, while Ross managed Internet brands for such national companies as NetZero and Kraft Foods. "We knew we wanted to work together," notes Jason. "We had complementary strengths, and we shared passions for real estate, technology and entrepreneurship. We began searching for a need we might fill." As they interviewed real estate owners, managers, developers, and service companies, a growing problem kept surfacing: compliance.

"We heard again and again that managing compliance, which was once just a nuisance, was becoming riddled with increasingly complicated laws and fast-growing fines," says Jason, "and that staying on top of these issues was becoming extremely costly for building owners and the organizations that manage and service their properties. We heard repeatedly that compliance bureaucracy and paperwork were preventing real estate professionals from focusing on their core competencies and actually solving problems."

"Instead," adds Ross, "managers were spending more and more of their time hunting down paperwork and combing though disparate and cumbersome city websites. Moreover, failing to track their building compliance in a timely and accurate manner resulted in costly fines and a growing number of headaches that diverted attention from their main business. We went to work honing the concept for our business and creating the proprietary codes and algorithms that gather, synthesize and disseminate compliance information. We

developed a pilot, and tested it with several prospects. They loved it—and we launched SiteCompli officially."

Today, SiteCompli tracks compliance for thousands of buildings throughout the five boroughs. Data is monitored across the DOB, ECB, DEP, HPD, and FDNY and encompasses complaints, violations, emergency repairs, tenant litigation as well as mandated inspections for elevators, boilers and façades.

Clients interface with SiteCompli two ways. They access the data in real time from any Internet connection via the company's website, www.sitecompli.com, and they receive reminders via e-mail when critical events approach, such as ECB hearings, HPD compliance due dates and upcoming equipment inspection deadlines. In addition, clients receive automatic notices and explanations of critical changes pertaining to a portfolio, such as updated inspection statuses, 311 complaints, vacate orders and stop-work orders. If reports and violations are in paper form rather than online with the city, SiteCompli can capture, scan and relay them through its website.

"Our system," Jason notes, "brings it all into one place exactly the way our clients want it. Instead of searching for paperwork, Site-Compli brings critical issues right to them, plus detailed commentary on how best to handle any of the hundreds of compliance issues that might arise. It also provides links to NYC forms or reference documents that might be necessary to ameliorate the situation." Adds Ross: "The technology knows your properties, your organization and your vendors, ensuring that the right information makes it to the right property manager, contractor or consultant, at the right time. Our clients have avoided tens of thousands of dollars in fines and penalties because SiteCompli alerted them to critical issues before any serious consequences set in."

The SiteCompli interface is simple yet powerful. Used by senior executives and superintendents alike, the site offers a number of value-added services. Calendar Integration allows clients, with the click of a button, to integrate key compliance dates with Outlook, Blackberry, Apple iCal and Google Calendar in real time. On-Demand reporting lets users focus on key trends that expose them to risk and impact their bottom line. Notes, documents and photographs can be attached to any violation, complaint, inspection or property on SiteCompli for comments or updates. SiteCompli's system even automatically generates work orders for certain types of compliance issues that require follow-up.

SiteCompli also offers clients a dedicated account team that provides hands-on training, turn-key account configuration and the benefit of the firm's own unparalleled experience in compliance monitoring. "SiteCompli goes far beyond their website and email alerts," says Adam Phillips of the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB), a SiteCompli client, "Their expertise on NYC compliance



and excellent communication have been invaluable to UHAB. After the DOB recently released a new type of violation, we searched for days to find information about it, to no avail. Then just like that, SiteCompli sent us a full explanation of the new DOB rules and how to have the violation removed. It was like they read our minds!"

#### **Unbeatable Introduction**

For firms that want to try SiteCompli, the firm offers an unbeatable introduction. "Companies can try our service for one month at no cost and with no obligation to continue," explains Ross. "We'll set up and configure the client's properties and users in our system. What's more, the client gets to keep all of the data SiteCompli collects during the pilot. Once they sign up, they can cancel at any time, with no penalty, allowing would-be clients to evaluate the SiteCompli return on investment before spending a dime. It's all upside and risk-free."

"Our biggest challenge," explains Jason, "is getting an organization to just try the service. It's difficult to conceptualize, but the first time that SiteCompli alerts you to a critical item and you can take action before you're faced with a costly problem, the value becomes obvious." As evidence, SiteCompli's client base has been growing and diversifying dramatically, including owners, managers, developers, consultants and service companies in both the commercial and residential arenas. Clients include Arco & T.U.C Management,

CB Richard Ellis, PRC Management, Rosenberg/Diamond Development Corp., Prestige Management, Walter & Samuels, Kaled Management and many others.

Says one client, Adam Parkoff of The Parkoff Organization: "Site-Compli is at the forefront of a constantly evolving regulatory land-scape. Increasingly complicated laws and rapidly escalating fines make compliance management a top priority for The Parkoff Organization, which is why SiteCompli was such an instant success for us." Jeff Katz, Milbrook Properties agrees, citing SiteCompli as a "game-changer" for the New York City real estate industry. But perhaps Newmark Knight Frank's Al Voci sums it up best: "My only regret is not having SiteCompli around in years past."

By Peter Haas

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### Love paying unnecessary fines?

Enjoy being surprised by violations?

Have too much time on your hands?

(We didn't think so.)



SiteCompli is a powerful new technology that helps you keep on top of critical compliance issues, saving you time and money.

SiteCompli automatically and continuously monitors your portfolio's compliance across DOB, ECB, FDNY, HPD and:

- ✓ Notifies you of complaints before they become violations
- ✓ Reminds you of hearing dates so you can avoid unnecessary fines.
- ✓ Ensures your equipment inspections are completed and filed on time
- Tracks key compliance dates, helping you prioritize work & maximize ROI
- ✓ And much more!

