

LCSIS (LIFECYCLE SUPPORT INFORMATION SYSTEM) PROTECTS AMERICA'S INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

While America has long been the manufacturing powerhouse of the world, a lot of that emphasis has shifted with the current trend to outsourcing and offshoring, and the manufacturing floor is now often in China. However, American companies still own the intellectual property for the products whose manufacture they outsource, and that IP is the country's (and the company's) major competitive edge. In many cases, American companies have learned hard lessons about maintaining control of their intellectual property when they outsource to foreign manufacturers.

From an intellectual property perspective, outsourcing can be dangerous without sufficient controls. The company that has developed a product, whether it's an automobile, a submarine, or a Swifter mop set, has important data related to that product. The data contains everything from designs to performance specs to software code that ends up being part of the product. And that data must be managed and controlled throughout the outsourcing process, because in it lies the company's core competency. If the intellectual property is pirated or the product is re-engineered, the company loses its place in the market. And if the product is not manufactured in authorized versions, it may lose its reputation for quality. Thus, data should be released only in authorized, trademarked, protected versions to the outsource.

Visible Systems' Lifecycle Support Information System (LCSIS) tool, originally developed for the Department of Defense to track its external contractor relationships, allows all of the intellectual property associated with a manufacturing product to be managed successfully. All product data related to the current design, development and release to production of a product can be tracked with LCSIS, as well as modifications and revisions to the product once it is released to the marketplace.

LCSIS is the newest tool in Visible's information technology toolbox – a complete set of tools built around the famous Zachman Framework architecture – that help the enterprise manage compliance with Sarbanes-Oxley regulations.

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