



Certification to ISO/IEC 27001 is helping Bob's Business Ltd streamline procedures and win new business

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Melanie Oldham,
Managing Director, Bob's Business

Certification benefits

- Enhanced credibility and market access
- Customer reassurance
- Competitive advantage
- New business wins
- Streamlined procedures
- Greater efficiency
- Stronger business growth

At a glance

Bob's Business is a rapidly growing provider of online training and awareness materials in information security and data compliance, helping clients to develop a secure culture.

Based in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, the company has grown rapidly to 13 employees and a turnover of over £300,000 and is striving to expand further through innovation and by building a stable foundation that is resilient to changing internal and external factors.

Customer background

Bob's Business provides information security and data compliance e-learning materials, helping organizations develop a security-conscious workforce, minimizing risk and vulnerability from internal and external risks. As Managing Director, Melanie Oldham, explains, "Our aim is to get people thinking about information security as second nature and to realize that it's not purely a technical issue. We give them the education and the tools to enable them to behave in a secure manner."

The company's customers include organizations that handle or process confidential or sensitive information, provide services to the public sector, or are working towards ISO/IEC 27001 or the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCIDSS). Key markets include central and local government, IT and communications companies and charities.

Why certification?

Bob's Business was motivated to seek BSI certification in order to be seen as trusted and credible in its marketplace. "More than anything, we wanted to practise what we preach, so that we could demonstrate that we are a secure organization ourselves," says Oldham.

She continues, "We also wanted to show that we have knowledge and understanding of a standard that we're asking our clients to work towards. We've aligned all our training to ISO/IEC 27001, which makes that journey a little bit easier for them."

Another key driver for the standard was Bob's Business's rapid growth, which created a need to formalize and document business policies and procedures, especially for the benefit of new employees.

Benefits

Oldham says, "The main benefit of certification to ISO/IEC 27001 is that it has helped us win access to new markets, leading to a number of new contracts. It has given us a higher level of credibility at sales exhibitions and events, where we're competing against other organizations in our industry. In particular, it has provided credibility within the legal and financial sector, where we've struggled to win business in the past."

She has observed that when selling to security professionals Bob's Business now has a competitive advantage: "They can trust our organization and the content of our training courses. It puts us on a more professional footing with technically astute partners and resellers."

She continues, "It has also helped us implement processes and procedures that are easy for existing staff and new starters to adopt, which is important for us as a growing company regularly taking on new employees."

She adds, "Staff are able to follow procedures easily and understand their responsibilities in identifying and mitigating risk and enacting business continuity plans, ensuring no loss of productivity in the event of an incident."

While it is too early to quantify cost savings, Oldham has noticed "less duplication of efforts, meaning that we are more efficient as a team, and less time being spent on completing client security and qualifying questionnaires."

Implementation

To implement ISO/IEC 27001, Bob's Business succeeded in securing funds from Innovate UK, a government-backed innovation vouchers scheme for growing organizations. It then engaged an information security consultant who recommended BSI as the company's certification provider.

In terms of specific challenges, Oldham says documenting its policies and procedures was a labour-intensive process, but with dedicated staffing and a project management approach the company was able to meet deadlines on time. "We had one member of the team working full-time on it. They created and issued policies as well as educating staff on the standard and the responsibilities they needed to take on for us to comply."

BSI clearly explained aspects of the certification process via email and face-to-face, and provided supporting documentation and communication. "BSI's assessors were readily available to provide vital feedback whenever we needed it. They were friendly, approachable, efficient and professional."

The whole process, which began towards the end of 2014, took Bob's Business just six months, with certification achieved in the summer of 2015.

BSI's role

Oldham is delighted with the support Bob's Business received from BSI. "They simplified the process where possible," she says. "They appreciate the type of information security risks faced by a small business and were both willing and able to adapt the process to meet our needs."

She continues, "With BSI we felt we had a comprehensive, but fair assessment with clear recommendations," adds Oldham. "They were also quick in awarding our certificate, and made us feel proud of our certification success. Even the high quality mounting of the certificate was very professional and aesthetically pleasing."

Above all, she notes, "BSI has an instantly recognizable professional brand with a reputation for being one of the best in the industry. BSI is perceived to be a market leader and having a high quality UK certification body brings our business kudos in both the UK and international markets."

Looking to the future

Oldham also realized that there would be the potential to develop the relationship so that Bob's Business would be able to deliver on other certifications in future.

And that is where things are heading. Rather than resting on its laurels, the company now aspires to complete standards in other areas including the quality management standard ISO 9001 and the government's cyber protection scheme, Cyber Essentials. "As a growing business we know that we need to continually amend and improve our processes and procedures," says Oldham.

With ISO/IEC 27001 achieved Bob's Business can continue its rapid growth, reassured that it is a secure business with a high level of resilience to future information security threats.

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