



**VAUXHALL**



## Automotive leader Vauxhall strengthens business resilience with ISO 22301 certification

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**John Jack**  
Business Continuity Planning, Vauxhall Ltd

### Customer objectives

- Increase business resilience
- Comply with parent company policy
- Fulfil tender and contract requirements
- Demonstrate best practice
- Provide customer assurance

### Customer benefits

- Enhanced ability to avoid and withstand business interruptions
- Exceeded parent company expectations
- Satisfied customer requirements
- 'Badge on the wall' best practice
- Increased customer retention and new business wins
- Improved employee awareness and motivation

### Customer background

Vauxhall has been the second largest-selling car brand in the UK for over two decades. It began manufacturing cars in 1903 and was acquired by US multinational General Motors (GM) in 1925. It is now part of the German group Adam Opel, a wholly-owned subsidiary of GM.

Vauxhall currently has around 4,000 employees. Its headquarters and major facilities are based in Luton, where light commercial vehicles are manufactured, whilst passenger cars are produced at Ellesmere Port. Around 80% of output is exported.

For many years the company has maintained certification to several management system standards – in areas such as quality (ISO 9001), health and safety (OHSAS 18001) and the environment (ISO 14001). In May 2012 it achieved certification to BS 25999 Business Continuity Management (BCM). A year later it successfully transitioned to the new international BCM standard, ISO 22301.

### Why certification?

Vauxhall's journey to BCM certification began in 2011 when John Jack, manager responsible for business continuity planning across the whole of GM UK, was tasked with creating a BCM system for the firm's key sites at Luton and Ellesmere Port. Jack explains that there were three decisive drivers for the company's decision to strive for certification to ISO 22301.

Firstly, GM has a global corporate policy that requires Vauxhall to have BCM plans in place. "Whilst it doesn't specifically require ISO 22301, we knew that by achieving certification we would fully comply with GM's policy," says Jack.

Secondly, Vauxhall supplies fleet organizations that are covered by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which requires them to adhere to a coherent framework for emergency planning and response. "These customers are obliged to ask us about our BCM provisions and they must have assurance that we are certified," he says.

Thirdly, Vauxhall believes that achieving certification to ISO 22301 is simply the right thing to do, helping to create a 'thinking culture' at the company, where risks are

identified and preventative measures taken: "We don't just respond to business interruptions, but question things that might occur before they actually happen."

### Benefits

Vauxhall has found that first BS 25999 and, more recently, ISO 22301 have fully addressed its three specific business needs. Jack explains: "If the business went down there would be severe financial and reputational costs, so certification enables our GM parent company to be satisfied that we've got a BCM mentality."

"We're also able to demonstrate to our fleet customers that we've got a robust BCM process in place – and that it has been validated by an independent third party in BSI. We can use this in our non-fleet business too – it's a reassurance to all our customers that we're serious about always being 'open for business'."

In addition, Vauxhall has used certification to reinforce its culture of continual improvement. "The whole concept of BCM is based on prevention as well as response," says Jack. "So, whilst we have a structure to be able to respond effectively to a business interruption, we also have a built-in mentality of risk awareness. ISO 22301 isn't just a nice certificate on a desk – our folks really live this."

### Implementation and transition

The main challenge for Vauxhall in implementing BS 25999 was to match the specifications of the standard with GM's existing BCM requirements. "We didn't want to run two management systems for the same purpose, so we created a hybrid, bolting them together," says Jack. "All standards require evidence and documentation, so we developed these and added them to the existing system."

The transition to ISO 22301 in May 2013 went smoothly. Crucially, Vauxhall benefited from early involvement from the top. "The board was right behind us from the start and the HR Director has an open door on these matters, so with their support it was easy to get buy-in," says Jack.

The process was communicated throughout Vauxhall by Jack's team of around 70 business continuity coordinators covering

key business functions such as IT, finance, HR along with all the functions responsible for the manufacturing process. The BCMS is driven by a senior coordinator in each of the four sites involved in the certification. Onsite suppliers are also involved in the process.

"The standard is very well written – it anticipates and circumvents potential problems," says Jack. "There are some subtle changes in wording and some increased requirements for ISO 22301, but not great or insurmountable differences."

He continues, "The standard requires a more active role from management, so we now have quarterly management reviews and an annual review for the whole country. It also requires us to identify internal and external factors that could affect our ability to fulfill our objectives, and we document these."

The company is creative in maintaining the profile of business continuity throughout the organization, for example, by running seminars with expert speakers such as counter-terrorist police and holding staff competitions with prizes. "Our people are our eyes and ears, so we want everyone to participate. The issue belongs to all of us," says Jack.

### BSI's role

BSI's experts have been very supportive. "They were always happy to come in and see us. They'd tell us what was not right and what the requirements of the standard are – after that, we could work out the changes we needed to make," says Jack. "For us, certification to ISO 22301 is a 'no brainer' because if we had a major incident we would pay a high price. It's impossible to know the cost of disasters that haven't happened, but I'd rather leave that as a mystery."

Phil Millward, GMUK HR Director with overall responsibility to the Board for the BCMS concludes, "A disaster can strike any organization, big or small, at any time. And it can arrive in a variety of ways, from a utility failure, to a parts shortage, terrorist bomb, or flood, etc. But when it does, you need to have a process in place that ensures the operation is able to mitigate the impact and return to 'business as usual' as quickly and as painlessly as possible. For us at Vauxhall, ISO 22301 fulfils this critical business need."