



Building resilience in the provision of critical national infrastructure with ISO 22301

“Achieving ISO 22301 certification demonstrates our commitment to providing a reliable high quality service to our customers. It shows that we have resources, investment and processes in place to protect ourselves from potential service disruption therefore minimizing impact on our customers.”

Derek McManus
CCO and Board BC Champion,
Telefónica UK Limited

Customer needs

- Safeguard staff welfare and operations
- Ensure faster recovery and continuity of critical operations following disruptions
- Increase customer confidence
- Reassure stakeholders of business resilience

Customer benefits

- Minimizes the impact of service disruptions on customers
- Improved organizational resilience, underpinning Telefónica UK’s competitive edge
- Improved legal and regulatory compliance
- Cost savings and revenue protection

Customer background

O2 is the commercial brand of Telefónica UK Limited and a leading communications company with over 23 million customers.

Employing over 11,000 people in the UK, O2 has 450 retail stores and sponsors The O2, O2 Academy venues and the England rugby team. Telefónica UK is part of Telefónica Europe plc which uses O2 as its commercial brand in the UK, Ireland, Slovakia, Germany and the Czech Republic.

Why certification?

As part of a multi-national organization, O2 makes great use of international standards as a means of promoting consistency in its contact and data centres, retail stores, as well as in its partnerships with third parties as a means of ensuring end-to-end resilience.

O2 is certified to a number of management system standards including ISO 9001 for quality, ISO 14001 for environment, OHSAS 18001 for health and safety, ISO 27001 for information security and will shortly be seeking certification to ISO 20000 for IT service management. Most recently O2 has transitioned from former British Standard BS 25999 to ISO 22301 for business continuity management.

According to O2 CCO Derek McManus "having international and national standards is critical to demonstrating that we run an organization that adopts good practices and that we are constantly evolving to be even better".

O2 has long recognized the importance of having a solid business continuity strategy in place, particularly given its involvement in the provision of critical national infrastructure.

Society's growing reliance on telecommunications has brought with it increased pressure on telecommunications providers like O2 to meet customer expectations and requirements around network coverage, robustness of new products and services, availability of voice and data services, and customer service availability.

Benefits

Through its certification to ISO 22301, O2 has been able to clearly evidence the existence of plans, procedures and contingency for dealing with any continuity incident and demonstrate that business continuity planning is at the heart of what it does.

ISO 22301 has also reduced the need for third party audits of its BCM arrangements by partners wishing to conduct business with O2.

The standard requires O2 to regularly test its business continuity arrangements. As part of its planning for the 2012 Olympics, O2 tested its flexible work arrangements, requiring all staff to work from home for a day. This exercise resulted in positive media coverage for O2, demonstrating its commitment to BCM and support for the environment. Having introduced flexible working to avoid disruption during the Olympic Games O2 now plans to adopt long-term change.

Implementation

As the only mobile operator to have achieved BS 25999 across all of its operations, O2 found the transition straight forward.



O2 has a central BC management team, led by David Clarke and Cheryl Urquhart and supported by 26 BC champions, all of whom are involved in maintaining the system and ensuring its continued relevance and effectiveness.

The first step in realigning its BCM system with the requirements of ISO 22301 was to carry out a review against every clause in the standard. A gap analysis was carried out by BSI to help O2 see where its strengths and weaknesses were and focus its efforts. O2 described the gap analysis as a "real value-add...that enabled us to build our framework and create a timeline" explained David Clarke, O2 Business Continuity Manager.

For the transition, O2 identified five elements that needed to be brought more explicitly into its BC framework - staff welfare, interested parties, BC legal and regulatory requirements, risk management processes, and management reviews of its systems effectiveness.

O2 overcame these challenges through alignment with existing processes and contacts. BC champions participated in the testing of new processes and continuous improvement audits were used to check understanding and ensure that the new processes worked.

An awareness campaign was undertaken to ensure that all O2 employees understood the importance of business continuity and their role in the event of a disruption. In order to embed BCM into the way O2 operates, a business continuity module was added to existing computer-based training to educate staff.

Cheryl Urquhart from O2 explained that the organization found "the transition from the BS standard to the new ISO standard not too onerous". She went on to explain that "in actual fact, it has provided us with an improved framework upon which we can monitor the effectiveness of our BC moving forward."

She went on to explain that "early sight of the standard, as a result of our relationship with the ISO, meant that we could assess the impact and potential changes to our management system early on and make the transition from BS 25999 to ISO 22301 in three months."

BSI's Role

O2 has partnered with BSI since first becoming certified as an ISO 9001 organization over 20 years ago. "BSI has allocated us an account management team to ensure we have a single point of contact in their organization" explained O2's David Clarke.

Having held certification with BSI to BS 25999 since 2009, transitioning to the new ISO 22301 with BSI was a natural choice. BSI client managers worked with O2 from the initial announcement of the new standard to ensure they understood the impact of the proposed changes. Having worked with BSI for many years, one of the great benefits for O2 is that "the BSI assessors understand our organization" explained David Clarke.

"BSI is a well-respected brand both internationally and within the UK. The BSI solution gives our stakeholders the confidence that the process has been audited to a high standard and the accredited certification demonstrates our commitment" explained Derek McManus.



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