



BSI Product Certification to British Security Standards qualifies Renown Protection for a business licence, allowing it to operate and have a competitive edge

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Jay Hollick,
Managing Director – Renown Protection Limited

Customer objectives

- Comply with proposed new legal licensing requirements
- Stay in business
- Reassure clients of a quality service
- Demonstrate good practice
- Improve business performance

Customer benefits

- Compliance with proposed security industry business licensing regime
- Able to continue trading legally
- Ability to demonstrate independently verified best practice
- Increased ability to meet and exceed clients' service expectations
- Improved staff morale and skills
- Enhanced ability to win and retain contracts
- 5% insurance premium reduction

Customer background

Renown Protection Limited offers a range of security services including: close protection of individuals, such as senior executives, celebrities and sports stars; security of media industry assets, such as studio and location sets for shows like Big Brother, Secret Street Crews, Best Bakery, Scottish Professionals, Football League and The Apprentice; overt and covert security for events, such as rock concerts and conferences; as well as static guards, dog units and surveillance.

Based at Shoeburyness in Essex, Renown can provide any level of protection its clients need, from a single, specialist security driver to a team of bodyguards or as many as 200 event security operatives. The company employs about 15 regular staff, but can also draw on a large pool of self-employed operatives, including former police officers and ex-military personnel.

Why certification?

All Renown's security staff are licensed by the Security Industry Authority (SIA), the organization responsible for regulating the private security industry in the UK under the terms of the Private Security Industry Act 2001.

The SIA's licensing of individuals ensures that private security operatives are 'fit and proper' persons who are trained and qualified to do their job.

In addition to the licensing of individuals, the Government is proposing for all private security businesses to hold an SIA business licence, demonstrating their competence to deliver security services. This statutory licensing is expected to come into force from 6 April 2015.

As Jay Hollick, Renown's managing director, explains, "Like many other security companies, we realized we needed to get a business licence, or there was a possibility by early next year we'd be unable to operate legally." Initially, Hollick and his business partner, Keith Chittock, considered closing down the company. "We have more than 25 years' experience in the security and close protection industry, so Keith and I could easily get work on our own," he says. "As a small firm, we wondered if it was worth getting a licence, but when we looked into it more closely, we saw we were already doing a lot of the things we'd need to do."

Renown was also encouraged by the introduction in 2014 of a new, straightforward way for security firms to gain an SIA business

licence – via Product Certification for British Security Standards.

Potential pathways

Renown considered all three possible pathways to a licence that BSI now offers. The first is via the voluntary SIA Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS), which enables security businesses to prove – via third-party certification from BSI – that they are competent, well-managed and deliver a quality service. The second is for firms to use certification of an ISO 9001 Quality Management System (QMS), incorporating the relevant British Security Standards into their QMS scope to demonstrate their ability to deliver 'fit and proper' services. The new third pathway – via product certification – demonstrates a companies' competence to provide security services through third-party Product Certification to British Security Standards by BSI.

Hollick had reservations about the SIA-ACS and did not believe Renown needed a full QMS, but the product certification route seemed ideal "to show we've got approved competency in the services we offer."

Benefits

The company has achieved Product Certification to British Security Standards for: security screening of individuals employed in a security environment (BS 7858); code of practice for close protection services (BS 8507-1); static site guarding and mobile patrol service (BS 7499); and door supervisors (BS 7960).

The product certifications will enable Renown to apply for a business licence from the SIA and meet the Government's proposed new requirements for a security firm – ultimately, keeping the company in business.

Product certification also provides Renown's clients with independent proof of the company's commitment to providing a quality service. "There are companies in our industry operating without premises, without public liability or professional indemnity insurance and without complying with employment law," says Hollick. "Product certification and licensing shows clients and prospects this is how we do business - it proves it, without us having to convince them. Plus we also get the added benefit of reduced insurance premiums - we have saved 5% as a result of gaining Product Certification to British Security Standards."

Hollick also believes the product certification process has boosted staff performance and morale. "We've always trained and supported our operatives, but we're more methodical now," he says. "They're more knowledgeable and aware of what needs to be done every time they deploy. They're more motivated too, which means our clients get a better service."

He adds, "It's early days, but I'm sure it will help us when we come to pitching for new business and retendering. We're already getting positive comments."

Implementation

The biggest challenge was in 'winning hearts and minds'. Hollick continues, "Many of our operatives have been working in the industry for a long time and are highly skilled in doing their specific jobs, so they weren't too keen on change."

Meetings were organized to explain the industry-wide nature of the proposed new licensing regime, and to point out the obvious threat to the company – and jobs – if it failed to comply, as well as the potential upsides. "We soon got buy-in from everyone," says Hollick. "They understood why we needed to complete paperwork, for example, and they could see the benefit of regular training and in-house refreshers, and keeping a record of their CPD."

The company has always taken pride in giving staff thorough induction and training, but whereas it has been largely verbal in the past it is now much better documented, including the use of a new company handbook.

BSI's role

Hollick has been impressed by BSI's input throughout. With contracts rarely used in some parts of the security industry, BSI proved "flexible and creative" in showing how service level agreements could be used to meet the documentation requirements of the Standards. Renown also had a Gap Analysis prior to its first audit. "BSI was really helpful in giving us guidance on how we could provide evidence that we were following the right procedures," says Hollick. And when it came to the audits, "They were very fair – if something was incorrect they gave us the reason why. They wanted us to pass, but they were highly professional in doing their job to the letter."

