



BSI Product Certification to British Security Standards, enhances performance for security service providers Stopfordian and West Valley.

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Laura White,
Office Manager – Stopfordian Limited

Customer objectives

- Comply with proposed security industry licensing requirements
- Reassure clients of a quality service
- Assist the integration of two companies
- Improve the calibre of people and processes
- Boost business performance

Customer benefits

- Compliance with proposed security industry business licensing
- Client reassurance
- Seamless integration of two companies' processes
- Improved people skills and process efficiency
- 'Badge on the wall' best practice
- Enhanced performance and reputation

Customer background

Stopfordian is a Cheshire security company that focuses on the protection of both people and property, and specializes in emergency and non-emergency call-out services. It was established in 2005 by local founders, who had the vision to forego short-term profits in order to build a successful, high quality business.

In 2014 Stopfordian formed a strategic partnership with West Valley, a business with over 18 years of experience providing security services to residential and commercial clients in an adjacent area. The two firms now work together to protect their collective clients at work, home and everywhere in between.

Based in the heart of Cheshire, Stopfordian and West Valley operate with a minimum of 20 active personnel and concentrates its services within a specific radius, to guarantee a rapid speed of response. Its ability to offer clients an average call-out time of just six minutes, including multi-vehicle response due to its 'constant patrol' policy, produces high levels of customer satisfaction.

Why certification?

All the businesses' 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.

From 6 April 2015, however, in addition to individuals, it is proposed that all private security businesses will be required to hold an SIA business licence, in order to demonstrate their competence to deliver security services.

To meet this proposed new legal requirement, Stopfordian and West Valley have taken advantage of a new pathway for security firms to meet the competency requirements needed for an SIA business licence – via third-party Product Certification to British Security Standards from BSI.

The relevant Standards for the two companies are: security screening of individuals employed in a security environment (BS 7858) and key-holding and response services (BS 7984).

In addition to meeting the proposed new statutory licensing requirements, Stopfordian and West Valley are determined to build

on their existing good performance and reputation. As Laura White, part of the senior management team, explains, "Both companies have developed from start-ups into well-established security specialists. We understand that adopting the right structures and procedures is fundamental to improving our services. We believe we are unrivalled, but we must drive ourselves harder and faster to maintain our lead. Product Certification to British Security Standards and business licensing is a tool we can use to help us do that."

Benefits

White managed the implementation of standards for both companies and has already observed tangible benefits from the product certification process. "The accuracy and the strict structure provided for the screening and vetting (BS 7858) was extremely attractive to the businesses," she says. "It's undoubtedly an important tool for a security organization when taking on new guards and people who will have access to sensitive client material."

She continues, "Client peace of mind and trust are vital to us, and BSI product certification has strengthened these two factors in a big way. It provides clients reassurance that any officer entering their venue has been stringently assessed."

As two separate entities, the businesses were already confident that they were providing an outstanding service. Now they are operating together, White says a key benefit of the product certification process has been in helping them both maintain their quality ethos, and building upon it to make day-to-day running as efficient as possible.

Product certification has ensured that the two companies mirror each other in terms of procedures and service. As a result, "they are not only able to serve existing clients, but also to promote the new merged entity in a way that is quality assured. We are now able to increase business while running the companies in the most efficient way – saving money and driving profits."

A further benefit is that by achieving the standard for key-holding and alarm response services (BS 7984) the two companies can utilize the BSI and UKAS logos giving clients confidence that the businesses are professional and thorough in the approach to the service they provide.

Implementation

According to White, both Stopfordian and West Valley already had many good practices in place prior to seeking the product certifications. "The real challenge was demonstrating that they were relevant to the actions being taken and were in line with the correct procedures."

The process enabled the companies "to look deeper in to what they do and how they do it", leading them to devise and implement improved structures and processes. "The fastidious approach to even seemingly small parts of the job meant that all aspects of the company were looked into, considered and improved. For example, stringent key-holding procedures ensure the safety of clients' venues. Screening and vetting procedures, whilst time-consuming, are beneficial as we are able to verify that our staff are of the highest quality," explains White.

A renewed emphasis was placed on staff training and development and, in particular, on rigorous documenting of procedures. "Both companies embraced the new concepts and, as a result, are better for them," says White. "Being more efficient and having structures in place means that rather than correcting errors, time is now spent moving the company forward."

BSI's role

From the outset, the firms had confidence in BSI "due to its reputation and credibility", says White. "BSI's role was important as it allowed the companies to get procedures and structures verified against set guidelines, reassuring them that they were on the right path, and that any changes resulting from the merger of the two companies didn't deviate from the overall quality of the business."

Looking to the future, BSI also highlighted objectives that will allow the companies to grow and work towards further certifications in due course. In the meantime, Stopfordian and West Valley are confident they can meet any future legal obligation to hold an SIA business licence and continue to reap benefits in the day-to-day workings of the business.