



Realize your global potential with standards

As a small business owner, it's all too easy to fall into the trap of 'domestic thinking' and dismiss international trading possibilities as something only for larger firms. However, with new technologies opening up trade opportunities and social media networks providing an efficient global marketing platform, there's never been a better time for SMEs to explore trading overseas.

Expanding into international markets provides a significant growth opportunity for businesses of every size. Trading across borders enables SMEs to participate in global supply chains, achieve higher profit margins and compete with larger corporate rivals. It also boosts innovation as you begin to adapt and create new products and services for different markets.

Trading internationally certainly requires a strategic plan, as well as additional resource and time to begin building relationships with new partners. But it can also very easily become a natural extension of your business's current activities, rather than something you need to 'break into'. A reliable approach is for SME owners to use key standards that are designed to accelerate the process and help you get set for international trade.

According to an independent study by the Centre for Economics and Business Research, SMEs are 41% more likely to export if they use standards. What's more, the research found that standards contribute £8.2bn to the UK economy – that's 28.4% of annual GDP growth – with £6.1bn of additional UK exports per year attributed to standards.

It's clear that standards do far more than just help you comply and align with relevant rules and government regulations, particularly from an economic perspective. Standards act as a major catalyst for trade, supporting SMEs moving into export markets by lowering barriers to entry, reducing production costs and offering opportunities for economies of scale. The use of relevant international standards also provides vital confidence to buyers and sellers along the supply chain, proving that products adhere to appropriate levels of quality and safety.



Adopting international standards can also help your business support sustainable economic growth, in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for example helping improve market access for exports from developing countries.

So, which standards can you use to maximize your SME's potential by going global?

ISO 9001 is a great place to start. Developed in order to enhance international trade, it sets out criteria to develop a quality management system and related improvement processes, tailored to your business. It ensures that products and services consistently meet the needs of the consumer, as well as demonstrating your commitment to excellence. It also helps SME owners streamline their processes, reduce errors and improve internal communications.

Other standards that help SME owners plan for international trade include ISO 14001, which helps businesses improve the sustainability of their day-to-day operations.

By demonstrating positive environmental commitment, an SME can enhance its brand reputation, increase employee and customer engagement, reduce costs and build resilience against uncertainty. All of this contributes to an improved competitive position in the international marketplace.

Meanwhile, ISO 45001 promotes first-rate workplace health and safety, providing a global benchmark for your small business. The standard also helps demonstrate compliance with international best practise to optimize confidence in your capabilities and competence, an important consideration in building new cross-border partnerships.

Standards also help you assess and protect your business from risk when trading internationally. ISO 22301 sets out the requirements for a best-practice business continuity management system (BCMS), providing a comprehensive approach to organizational resilience, while ISO/IEC 27001 helps SMEs to keep information assets secure. Both standards work to reassure external stakeholders and supply chain partners, that your small business is robust and able to offer reliable delivery of expected products and services.



Standards also help you assess and protect your business from risk when trading internationally. ISO 22301 sets out the requirements for a best-practice business continuity management system (BCMS), providing a comprehensive approach to organizational resilience, while ISO/IEC 27001 helps SMEs to keep information assets secure. Both standards work to reassure external stakeholders and supply chain partners, that your small business is robust and able to offer reliable delivery of expected products and services.

Moving to a standards-based approach is the best way for SME owners to step towards international trade. A correctly applied standard can provide your small business the same opportunities for expansion as bigger, more established corporations, and BSI is here to support you every step of the way – whether that's through training or certification and assessment. Enhance your reputation, boost stakeholder confidence and compete on an international scale: realize your SME's global potential today.

Bullet Point Summary

- International trade is not just for big companies. Standards act as a major catalyst for cross-border trade, supporting SMEs moving into export markets by lowering barriers to entry, reducing production costs and offering opportunities for economies of scale.
- International standards provide vital confidence to buyers and sellers along the supply chain, representing appropriate levels of quality and safety. ISO 9001 was developed in order to enhance international trade, by setting out essential quality management criteria.
- Beyond quality, ISO 14001 helps SMEs improve the sustainability of their day-to-day operations, demonstrating positive environmental commitment and driving reputational benefits, better stakeholder relationships, as well as reduced costs.

For more information on our innovation standards, visit:

www.bsigroup.com/Innovation



- ISO 45001 provides a global health and safety benchmark for your small business – demonstrating compliance with international best practise in this important area. Similarly ISO 22301 sets out the requirements for continuity management, while ISO/IEC 27001 helps SMEs keep vital information secure.

- These standards provide reassurance that your small business is robust and able to offer reliable delivery of expected products and services, allowing you to compete with larger competitors for new international customers.

For more information on our innovation standards, visit:

www.bsigroup.com/Innovation