

## How do standards add value to a business?



Standards are an agreed way of doing something, based on the knowledge of individuals who have experience and expertise in a given area, such as manufacturers, sellers, buyers, customers, trade associations, users or regulators.

Standards add value to a business in all kinds of different ways; by giving you the knowledge and tools you need to follow best practice for your processes, products and services, standards can help you to save time, cut costs and become more competitive.

Standards are made by convening representatives from industry bodies, research and testing organizations, local and central government as well as consumers and standards users, and gaining their collective agreement around best practice.

We ensure our committees are representative, inclusive and accessible and the process is rigorous and transparent.

There are over 60,000 standards currently in use and they're all different depending on the sector, process, product or business they're created for. This FAQ-style guide will help you get started with standards, so you can better understand how they work and how adopting a standard could add value to your organization.

### With standards, you can...

- Qualify to bid for bigger projects with larger profit margins
- Boost productivity by learning more efficient ways to do things
- Enhance your reputation by showing you meet the "gold standard"
- Strengthen client and customer relations by offering consistency and reliability
- Improve the quality of your goods and services by following best practice
- Offer staff training and development opportunities by engaging with the standard
- Become more innovative, guided by sector knowledge



## How can standards add value to my business?

Essentially, standards are a guide to a best practice approach, whether that's about how you clean lab equipment or the best way to stress-test machinery. By looking closely at how you do something, you'll find ways to improve it – and other things, too.

Some of the many benefits that standards can offer are detailed in the introduction to this guide, but other benefits include:

- Time and cost savings
- Compliance with statutory regulations
- Better risk management
- Consistent, high-quality output
- Improved health and safety
- Increase in reputation
- Competitive advantage
- Greater productivity and efficiency
- Easier to retain staff
- More time for creativity
- Enhanced business continuity and agility

And remember – you can start enjoying the benefits of standards by just adopting a few (or even one!) recommendations before you implement the whole standard.

Standards are constantly evolving to ensure its guidance is relevant, up to date, and reflective of industry best practice.

## Which standards are relevant to my industry?

Standards cover a wide range of industries and topics, covering specific processes as well as more general approaches. Around 12,000 experts across 1,200 BSI committees contribute to the development of standards, with more evolving all the time to keep up with new technology and ways of doing things.

Chances are, there are hundreds of standards relevant to your business. It could be focused specifically on goods or services you provide (e.g. improving product quality), on how you work (e.g. keeping data secure with an information security standard), or your goals (e.g. a sustainability standard to reduce waste and save energy).

## How long does it take to adopt a standard?

The answer depends on the size of your business, the complexity of the standard and whether you are taking a few examples of best practice or implementing the standard to gain certification.

Of course, devoting more time and resource to adopting a standard can speed up the implementation process.





## How do I know if my business needs standards?

Look closely at your business – are there any areas that could be improved? Maybe part of your production line could be more efficient, or customer service could be improved by having protocols to follow.

You can always talk to BSI about any challenges your business may be facing and see how standards can help solve them.

## My business is compliant with all the necessary regulations. Why would it need standards?

A standard isn't a regulation or legal requirement – it's a benchmark that enables organizations to do things better. Being compliant with industry regulations is the base level required to operate, but being accredited to a standard can be a mark of your commitment to going above and beyond.

Adopting a standard without certification can also help you improve various aspects of your business, such as improving processes and saving time and money. A standard is often the most effective tool to ensure you are up-to-date with what's happening in your industry.

## Will I have to completely overhaul how my business does things?

You don't have to change how you do things, but the majority of standards users find that following the approach outlined in the standard – and then applying that knowledge to the wider organization – is hugely beneficial.

Adopting any standard is about improving your existing processes and bringing the way you operate in line with best practice. This means looking closely at how you do things and assessing – honestly – how well they serve you.

There are lots of ways to adopt a standard; you can implement certain parts of it and see benefits in specific areas, or implement lots of smaller changes leading to incremental benefits. A standard will change things – but for the better.



## Is it expensive to buy standards?

Costs vary from one standard to another. Before purchasing, it's wise to do your research and ensure that the standard you choose meets your requirements. You can preview the introduction to the standard at [BSI Knowledge](#), or BSI can help you.

Remember though – a standard will quickly pay for itself through improved processes, greater efficiency at every level and the resulting time savings.

A standard gives you access to expert knowledge and guidance – without the price tag of external consultancy.



## How many people within my business will need to be involved in implementing standards?

You can involve as many people as you like in the adoption of a standard, but engaging with your entire team about the process will increase buy-in and enthusiasm, making implementation easier through a more collaborative effort.

Creating working groups, defining responsibilities and involving staff in the adoption process offers employees an opportunity to gain valuable skills around the standard, as well as making the implementation process easier.

## Do I have to get accredited?

No, not if you don't want to. Many businesses realise the benefits of standards without certification, choosing instead to adopt some of the best practice outlined in the standard.

However, businesses aim for certification to demonstrate their expertise and commitment to areas including (but not limited to) health and safety, sustainability and environmental protection, training and quality. And don't forget that when it comes to tendering for projects, or working with new clients, a certification can be a real bonus.

## What support is available when implementing standards?

If you decide to implement a standard, BSI, and other UKAS providers, can help you to:

- Adapt the standard for your business' specific needs
- Understand the impact and benefits of the standard
- Communicate with your colleagues about the standard
- Train your staff about the standard's requirements
- Choose an implementation process that suits your business
- Prepare for, and gain, certification



## What happens after I'm accredited?

Certification is by no means the point at which a business has derived all the value to be had from a standard – although it might feel like crossing the finishing line. Because standards are current and evolving, the list of benefits is always growing, meaning that organizations continue to see new improvements long after certification.



**Start your standards journey**

Visit [BSI Knowledge](#) to explore over 60,000 standards or, to find out more about standards for your business, contact our customer service team on 0345 086 9001.