

What to consider when you're implementing standards

Your guide to getting the most out of the implementation process

Whether you're planning ahead or at the point where you're ready to start adopting standards into your business, it's essential to be prepared for the implementation phase. This is where you'll begin to align your organization's way of doing things with that outlined in the standard.

This guide will help to make implementation easier by highlighting the potential challenges that you might encounter and offering advice on how to overcome them.

Are you ready for implementation?

Implementation comes after the planning phase and before certification. Even if you choose not to get certified to your chosen standard, you will still begin to reap the benefits throughout the implementation phase as you adopt some (or many) parts of the standard.

It's important to remember that implementing standards isn't an overnight process. The length of time it takes can vary from business to business depending on the scope of the standard, the size of the organization and how closely its current processes align with the frameworks provided.

Whether it takes three months or a year, implementation should be carefully planned and carried out to ensure a smooth transition.

Before you start to implement the standard, have you:

- Assessed your business to identify areas for improvement?
- Researched the standard fully to understand how it adds value to your business?
- Purchased the standard and familiarised yourself with its requirements?
- Decided on which route you're taking: certified or non-certified?
- Compared your current system against those outlined in the standard (gap analysis)?
- Planned your implementation strategy?



Now you're ready, here are a list of common obstacles and suggestions on how to overcome them.

Boosting team morale

Implementation is more effective when everyone is involved, on the same page and confident in what's changing and why. To maintain enthusiasm, make sure:

- The benefits and requirements of the standard have been promoted
- The standard is discussed with everyone early on to encourage buy-in
- Remember to celebrate and recognise everyone's hard work throughout!

Staying connected

If you have multiple departments within your business, consider how these teams work together and what can be done to prevent silos during implementation. You might want to try:

- Assigning workgroups made up of different levels of staff from various departments that can identify and bridge any gaps
- Speaking to your stakeholders to see if they have any suggestions for improvement
- Encouraging open discussion to gauge progress and staff opinion

Further support

Implementation might feel like a daunting task but it doesn't have to be, especially with so much support available. If this is the case then perhaps consider:

- Contacting a third-party UKAS-approved certification body, such as BSI, for additional support
- Asking clients and customers for constructive feedback
- Speaking to other individuals or businesses who use standards for insight and advice

Learn as much as you can

View adopting standards into your business as an opportunity to take a step back and look at your processes with fresh eyes. This will allow you to make the improvements needed to enjoy long-term benefits and make sure you're always working at the best you can be.

- Train staff as internal auditors to deepen their understanding of the standard and help identify any problems or opportunities that may arise during implementation
- Speak to stakeholders at every level to get feedback on your implementation strategy



Start your standards journey

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