



Standards at the Heart of Everything

**SME's guide
to standards**



Enabling better business

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What is a standard?

A standard is a best practice approach to doing something. Every standard is developed from a wide range of sources including industry, government, consumers, academics, environmental organizations and charities to create a guide to 'what good looks like'. Companies can then follow this methodology to improve every aspect of their business, from manufacturing a product, to carrying out a process, to delivering a service.

It's important to note that standards are not rules or regulations. You're in control of which standards you implement and which elements of those standards you follow. While certification from BSI, or another UKAS-approved body, can provide many benefits, it doesn't suit the needs of every business.

Whether you seek certification or not, the most important thing to remember is that standards exist to help your organization function better and not to add extra work or complexity.

Standards and SMEs

Standards can help your small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) solve a wide range of everyday business challenges to boost productivity, reduce costs, stand out against your competitors and much more.

Standards can help you...

- Bid for more profitable work
- Cut costs and increase profits
- Boost your reputation
- Tender for larger projects
- Achieve greater business resilience
- Improve product and service quality
- Be more competitive
- Enhance processes and productivity
- Take on training opportunities
- Find new customers and scale up



How standards help make SMEs more competitive

Small and medium-sized businesses often find themselves in competition with much larger firms that are able to draw upon far more extensive resources. For this reason, any tool which can help a smaller business find a cutting edge – a way to streamline a process or deliver higher quality at no extra expense – can make a world of difference.

Standards can do just that. Providing tried and tested best practice methods, they can help your SME implement improvements to drive innovation, growth and profitability – much like an external consultant, but without the hefty price tag.

Take a look at the examples below and see how standards can offer a wide range of benefits to businesses just like yours.

Improve productivity

Research shows that there is a sizeable productivity gap between SMEs and their larger counterparts ([source](#)). Standards help close this gap by:

- Arming your SME with industry-leading knowledge, thus levelling the playing field
- Simplifying your internal processes, making them more efficient
- Helping you introduce structures and policies that enable ongoing improvement

Win new customers and boost your sales

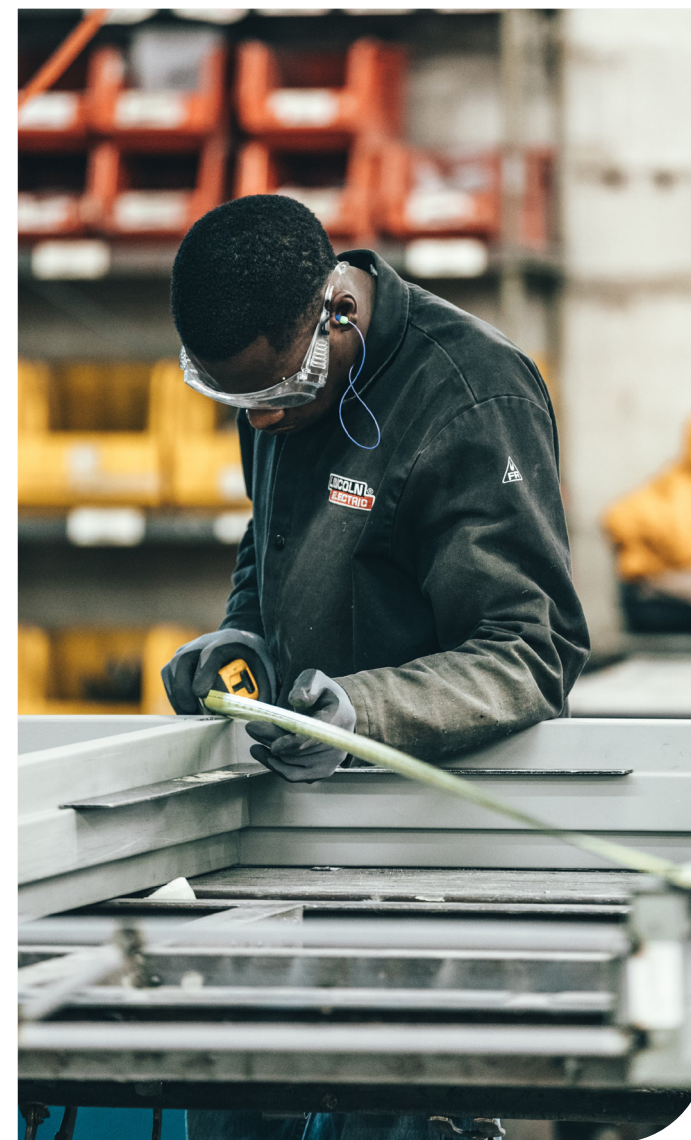
With 5.6 million private sector SMEs in the UK, standing out from the crowd is essential to secure contracts, win business and increase your profits. Standards can help you grow your business by:

- Improving the quality and consistency of goods and services
- Showing your commitment to issues such as safety, security and the environment
- Demonstrating that your business goes the extra mile, especially if you choose to become certified
- Providing opportunities to work with customers who insist their suppliers meet specific standards

Enhance your knowledge and mitigate risks

Operational efficiency and opportunities for growth are just some of the benefits standards provide for SMEs. Standards can also help you to:

- Identify risks and plan continuity strategies for disruptive events
- Attract top talent to your company
- Provide your staff with additional training, for example in auditing
- Connect you to a wider community and provide opportunities to share knowledge



Which standards could help you?

A huge range of different standards are available, each of which contains information that can help you solve specific business challenges, whatever those may be.

By boosting productivity, making better use of resources, maximising efficiency and offering a best practice approach, standards allow you to spend more time innovating and strengthening your organization's market position.

If you're not sure of where to start, here are four standards that can help your business on its way to a better future:



ISO 9001: The quality management standard

Used by over one million organizations in 170 countries, the ISO 9001 family of standards sets out the criteria for creating a quality management system (QMS) ([source](#)). By introducing processes and policies that guarantee the quality of your goods and services, you'll improve efficiency at every stage of operations.

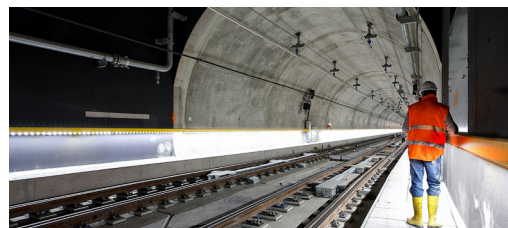
- Save time and money by preventing mistakes and improving consistency
- Provide more reliable production and delivery schedules to clients and customers
- Measure performance more accurately, supporting continuous improvement



ISO/IEC 27001: The information security standard

Data security breaches can be catastrophic for SMEs. ISO/IEC 27001 shows you how to create an Information Security Management System (ISMS) to ensure data is kept safe and secure.

- Improve data security and reduce the risk of disruption due to cyber attacks
- Guarantee that all customer, client and business information is kept safe
- Optimise the efficiency of your wider IT infrastructure



ISO 45001: The health and safety standard

A business' most important asset is its people. ISO 45001 helps you identify risks and create better, safer working conditions for your team.

- Protect staff from injury and illness in the workplace
- Reduce staff absences and turnover, improving overall productivity
- Create a health and safety culture and encourage the involvement of staff



ISO 50001: The energy management standard

As reducing environmental impact becomes more of a priority for both businesses and consumers, ISO 50001 shows you how to create and follow a policy for more efficient energy use.

- Reduces energy consumption and improves decision making around energy use
- Gain tender opportunities by certifying your compliance and green credentials
- Better manage the risks associated with future energy supply

Case study: How Ooni went global with standards

After experiencing rapid growth during the lockdown period, the world's number 1 portable pizza oven manufacturer, Ooni, decided to expand its trade worldwide, upscaling from a small business to a global, award-winning company. Using standards, Ooni was able to ensure consistency across its manufacturing process and guarantee compliance with regulations in new foreign markets.

Standards offered Ooni an easy and effective way to create a growth framework and attract customers. With a Quality Management System (QMS) in place, as well as audits, the company was able to produce high-quality products that met local requirements, including food equipment laws.



Standards implemented by Ooni:

PAS 7100

A PAS standard is a fast-tracked standard that is typically created in less time than a BS (British Standard) or an ISO (International Standard). PAS 7100 helps to put systems in place in the event of a product recall. As well as building resilience by protecting brands, employees and customers, the PAS makes discussions about risk easier by clarifying communications and the views of stakeholders, mitigating any potential problems.

BS EN ISO 14001

Ooni's work to control the carbon footprint of the company is supported by this standard and other environmental management standards. These help to educate companies on sustainability and how to monitor carbon emissions by understanding the lifecycle of products.

ISO 45001

This standard, based on human capital, is soon to be implemented to help Ooni to understand the value of investing in people. This may include standards around occupational health and safety, including mental health, such as ISO 45001.

Allan Sellers Head of Product Compliance at Ooni

“Standards can be perceived as being quite dry or black and white, but they are all about the story they can tell. If you have a goal you want to achieve, a standard often has a process to follow that is written down, and following it will help you to realise the benefits.”

Start your standards journey

Visit [BSI Knowledge](#) to explore over 60,000 standards and see how the right one can transform your business for the better. To find out more about standards for your business contact our customer service team on 0345 086 9001.

