



Risk UK article

Business Continuity BS25999 certification update

Business continuity management (BCM) is based on the principle that an organisation can continue its normal business operations at all times. It is an established part of the UK's preparations for possible threats posed to business - this does not only include natural disasters such as floods and fire, but also specific incidents such as postal strikes, an influenza pandemic or a school closure causing staff absence. There are also factors more commonly experienced, such as the loss of IT, people and supply chain disruption.

The BCM standard BS25999 was one of the world's first in this field, developed to help businesses minimise the impact of disruptions. It provides a basis for understanding, developing and implementing business continuity within your organisation and gives you confidence in business-to-business and business-to customer dealings. It also contains a comprehensive set of requirements based on BCM best practice and covers the whole BCM lifecycle.

In the past year there has been a significant rise in the uptake of BS25999 certification and this has exceeded BSI Management Systems' expectations. The result is that it has become the most successful new certification scheme launched by BSI Management Systems.

Julian Thrussell, BSI Management Systems' UK product manager comments "We are delighted at the number of applications we have received for certification to the BCM BS25999 standard, which generated far more during and post launch than any other. This is reassuring and confirms that organisations are realising the importance of a comprehensive BCM strategy. Business continuity should be seen as a necessity, especially in a tough economic climate. It can prepare a business to deal with any kind of disaster and prove to the outside world that they have a tested process in place".

Vodafone UK became the world's first mobile operator to achieve BS25999 certification in September 2008. This was so they could demonstrate to their corporate customers that the 2G key voice network was robust and well protected in any eventuality. By becoming certified by BSI Management Systems to BS25999, Vodafone UK were able to provide a key

sales differentiator, which allowed them to stand out from competitors. Anecdotally, Vodafone has already experienced rewards, including improved sales and customer retention, which can be partly attributed to their BS25999 certification, as it showed potential customers that they take business continuity seriously.

Most recently, in April 2009, Vodafone has also achieved the BS25999 certification for their 3G voice and mobile broadband networks. They are now the only mobile operator globally to have both 2G and 3G networks certified. This certification further supports their role as an essential service provider in the event of a state of emergency.

The risk of unexpected events is especially troublesome for organisations that are tied into dates and deadlines which cannot be moved. The event of disruption will not stop their customers requiring the service. This is the case with Allen and Overy, the International law firm. Allen and Overy need to continue to deliver services to their clients even if a problem arises. The courts will not wait. A structured business continuity plan was implemented around the BS25999 standard and designed in order to deliver a robust response to any incident. This ensures that the law firm continues to deliver to their clients the service that they need by protecting work activities in the event of a disruption at their London site.

Without certification to a management system standard, many organisations overlook the exercising, maintaining and reviewing stage of the BCM plan. By certifying to the BCM BS25999 standard, organisations are showing that they are taking business continuity seriously which reflects favourably on them to their customers. Business continuity is not a luxury but a necessity and certification helps to implement the changes and ensure that they are properly complied with.

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- Business continuity
- Environment

- Food safety
- Health & safety
- Information security
- Integrated management
- Quality
- Social accountability
- Sustainable development
- IT service management

BSI Management Systems is part of **BSI group**, a global independent business services organisation that inspires confidence and delivers assurance to customers with standards-based solutions. Originating as the world's first national standards body, the group has over 2,250 staff in more than 50 global offices. The group's key offerings are:

- Development and sale of private, national and international standards and supporting information
- Second and third-party management systems assessment and certification
- Product testing and certification of services and products
- Performance management software solutions
- Training services in support of standards implementation and business best practice

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