

The defining role of pre-written documents

Documentation – the hardest part

The hardest, most exhausting part of achieving ISO27001 certification is the documentation of the Information Security Management System (the 'ISMS'). Even if you're developing an ISMS in accordance with ISO27002, but not going for certification, the documentation will still be the hardest part.

The risk assessment, the selection of controls, the implementation of security improvements – these look hard but, in comparison, they're quite straightforward. The standard itself is a slim document, but the documentation that is necessary to create a conforming system can, particularly in more complex businesses, push up toward a thousand pages.

That's quite scary. The resource, time and management implications of making that happen are immense. And in a smaller organization, where the amount of documentation required is much less, the available resources with which to tackle the task are also more limited.

Then there's the "how to do it" issue. If you've never built a quality system - or an ISMS - before, there's a lot of learning (some of it by costly trial and error) before you get the documentation formula and process working effectively. And that's time and credibility down the drain – costs you can ill-afford when there's an ISMS to build.

Consultants can be expensive

That's why many organizations turn to outside consultants. But consultants are expensive and don't necessarily leave an organization owning the ISMS - and this sense of ownership is crucial for your long term success. The logical alternative, therefore, is to buy a set of model pre-written policies and procedures.

Pre-written policies and procedure should accelerate the whole project, reducing trial and error and helping toward early adoption of best practice. You can purchase "policy generators" on the Internet. The problem is, they're usually only at the policy level, not at the detailed procedure and work instruction level - and that's where all the hard work really is. They're not necessarily logically aligned with the standard either, and they simply don't give the detailed, point-by-point drafting advice that are required if they are to be truly useful.

Selection criteria

Content is critical in effective solutions. It should be well researched, practical, pragmatic and follow industry-standard routines. It should be as instantly recognizable to a quality manager as it is to a line manager or IT technician. And it should be in an application as easy to edit and customize as MS Word.

Pre-written policies and procedures should accelerate your total project, by

- Saving you research time
- Speeding your policy deployment
- Improving your procedure writing
- Simplifying and speeding implementation

Most important, you don't want hundreds and hundreds of policies – after all, ISO27001/ISO27002 specifically only requires 7 policies) what you need is a set of procedures that really enable you to implement ISO27001.

The right package

It's not enough that the documents are well put together. You have to be able to customize them. You need a combination of on-the-page customization advice and a real world support service that can provide feedback and help when you're not sure how a specific issue should be tackled. Without that combination of support, it's difficult to get full value from any pre-written policies and procedures.

Our conclusion

That's why we finally released a public version of our **ISMS Documentation Toolkit**. It's a unique product, it costs less than a day of a consultant's time and it's packaged with 12 months of online drafting support and advice. It makes it easier for organizations of all sizes, anywhere in the world, to succeed with a ISMS project.

It's spent the last three years helping organizations all over the world achieve ISO27001 certification.

Download a full contents list, document samples and a free trial of our **[Complete ISMS Documentation Toolkit](#)**.

It contains a pre-written information security manual (including a model information security policy and a model Statement of Applicability) as well as 120 pre-written policies, procedures and templates. It has detailed, "at the point you need it" guidance and comes packaged with 12 months of automatic updates and 6 months of documentation support – a unique facility for you to get e-mail answers about policy and procedure drafting issues.