Gulf Insurance
&Reinsurance | gig GULF INSURANCE GROUP

هدفنا جعل التأمين أكثر جاذبية
We exist to make insurance more desirable

Gulf Insurance Group K.S.C (GIG) increases their resilience to reassure clients and gain a competitive edge by implementing ISO 27001

'The ISMS has given us greater confidence in storing and processing information. The ISMS has helped build a mature and secure system. It helped the team understand the threats and vulnerabilities that exist in today's environment and proactively control them. It has led to a greater awareness, vigilance and enthusiasm for information security'.

- Mr. Tareq Al-Sahaf - General Manager.

Customer Objectives

- Improve internal and external security
- Demonstrate due diligence on compliance in handling sensitive information
- Adopt best practice management framework
- Continuous improvement of business processes in order to protect data

Customer Benefits

- Enabled GIG to manage client information more securely
- Gained confidence in storing and processing information
- Greater security awareness across all levels of the organisation
- Embedded a culture of continuous improvement
- Assurance to clients that GIG has a robust ISMS in place
- Enhanced brand reputation

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Customer Background

Gulf Insurance Group K.S.C. (GIG) was established in 1962 as Gulf Insurance Company K.S.C (GIC). It is a public shareholding company listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange. Gulf Insurance is currently the largest insurance company in Kuwait in terms of written and retained premiums.

The company for the second consecutive year has maintained its S&P (Standards & Poor's) Financial Strength Ratings and Issuer Credit Rating to 'A-'. GIG offers a range of products and services involving various classes of insurance: Motor, Marine & Aviation, Property & Casualty, Engineering and Life & Health in conventional and Takaful (Islamic insurance based on Sharia principles) basis.

Gulf Insurance has become one of the largest insurance networks in the Middle East and North Africa.

Why Certification?

The primary motivation with GIG seeking certification to ISO 27001, Information Security Management System, was a desire to adopt a internationally recognised best practice management system. This would allow them to better maintain the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information and assets.

'Information security threats are ever increasing due to an advanced level of connectivity globally, through emails, the internet and online services. This generates an enormous security risk. GIG is in the business of covering and protecting risks for business organizations and individuals, so in our mind we had to consider protecting our own risks as well". **- Mr. Tareq Al-Sahaf General Manager.**

GIG looked to address these issues by adopting the continuous improvement model to protect both its client's data and their own reputation. The consensus amongst the management team was to closely align the scope to their business objectives and goals. One of these was to ensure that not only their customers' data was secured but that all their staff benefited from deploying a consistent set of policies, processes and procedures.

Gulf Insurance felt that achieving certification to ISO 27001 would be the most effective and tangible way of demonstrating both internally and externally the importance of information security.

Key Challenges

The greatest challenge was developing awareness throughout the organisation on information security risks and the requirements for implementing the standard. 'The key to implementing the standard lay in getting staff to think about information security as an integral part of the daily business and not as an additional burden'. **- Mr. Thamer Ibrahim Ali Arab - Assistant General Manager, I.T.**

Another key challenge was to move from a traditional process of managing information to an organized secure manner of communicating, storing and maintaining information. The process was communicated to the relevant teams involved through awareness sessions which talked about a complete transformation. Adapting to the new environment involved new processes, additional tasks and activities to be performed on a daily basis. 'As information Security is all about people, processes and technology, we had to have the right blend of these to manage our information security needs' **- Mr. Thamer Ibrahim Ali Arab - Assistant General Manager, I.T.**

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Implementation Process

Whilst gaining certification to this standard is a significant achievement for GIG, it was not without its challenges. 'Management commitment is the key to implementing any system into an organization. We took the initiative to set up an ISMS forum as a starting point. Any ISMS activities and updates were communicated to the forum, which in turn was communicated to the respective teams and personnel'.

- Mr. Khaled Saoud Abdul Aziz Al Hasan Group CEO.

One of the first activities was the collection of assets across the department. Although the IT department maintained an inventory list of hardware and software, the team had to identify all supporting documents, NDA's, contracts and any supplier related information that was critical to GIG. This activity was carried out in parallel with the other activities. At each section a GAP analysis was performed to understand the current posture of information security. This helped GIG map the existing processes to the ISMS requirements. Therefore GIG was able to identify areas for improvement and provide more attention to these areas. This allowed them to strategically plan the implementation.

The risk assessment exercise required a significant amount of time. An assessment was needed to fully understand and map the assets that exposed threats and vulnerabilities. Identifying the risk owners was a difficult process, as the handling of the infrastructure and maintaining of information was split across teams.

Aligning the processes from their original way to the new ISMS was the biggest challenge. New processes had to be implemented and multiple processes were modified in order to manage the data in an effective and secure manner. One of ways they overcame these difficulties was to send the members of the implementation team on a BSI ISO 27001 Lead Auditing course. This prepared the members for a comprehensive understanding of the aspects and processes of implementation. It also gave them a good perspective in understanding the assets and classifying them in a different approach.

The ISMS forum assisted in expediting the process for activities such as asset inventory and risk assessment. Any decisions related to the implementation was decided by the forum and then communicated to the respective teams for a faster response.

GIG decided to work with one of their strategic consultants, Paramount Computer Systems when it came to implementing some of the new processes and procedures. Paramount is a leading regional provider of technology and services for securing the information assets of organisations. Having implemented ISO 27001 across the UAE and Middle East, they brought the necessary experience and expertise in the information security domain, which helped GIG facilitate the program and achieve the certification. GIG was very impressed by the client

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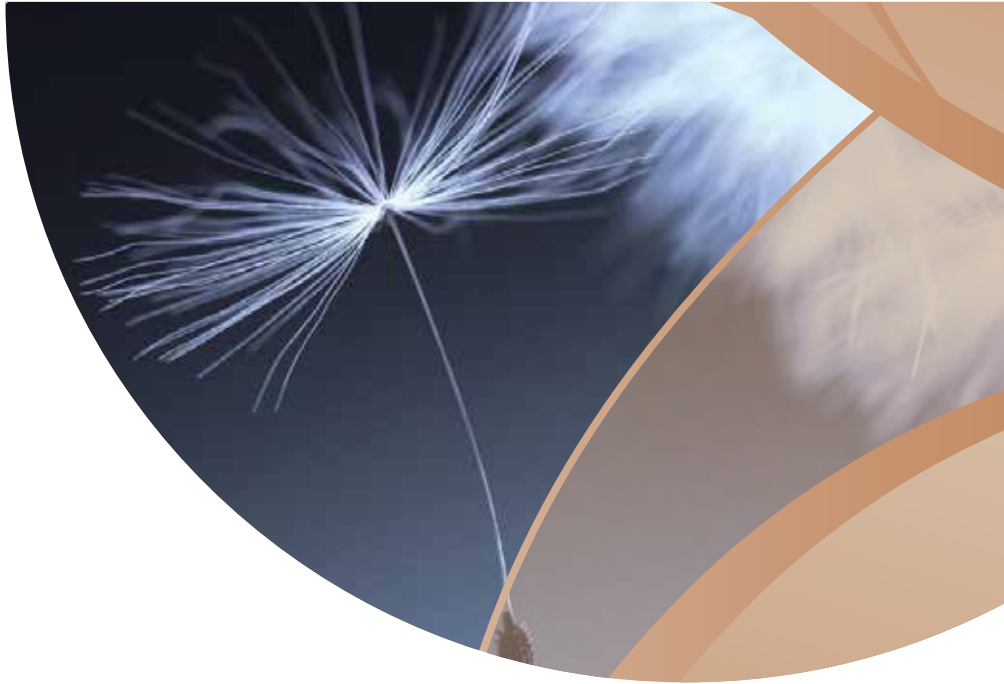
centric and flexible approach that they took and the desire to make the standard fit the organization rather than the other way round.

GIG's certification journey initially started with BS7799 back in 2004. Their most recent certification to ISO 27001:2013 took 45 days.

Benefits:

As an insurance group, GIG has always prioritized security as a priority. A significant improvement emerged in the process of incident reporting. Due to the employees greater awareness more incidents were reported, which in turn lead to improved information security controls.

It has enabled GIG to manage the security of their vendors and suppliers more effectively and securely. It has helped build

a stronger reputation for GIG in being considered a more secure organization. Customers and stakeholders are assured and confident about the security of the GIG systems. This in turn has helped GIG generate more business and add major clients to their company. It assures new and current clients that best practice is being followed. Overall it has helped their commercial image and helped them to maintain a sound legal compliance.

BSI's Role:

BSI has a very good reputation as a market leader for information security GIG was keen to work with a reputable company with a strong track record in auditing.
BSI's trainers have a thorough knowledge of the standard combined with substantial insight into how businesses can best improve themselves and their operations.

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