



## Cleardata's certification commitment to key management standards has helped it secure new business and grow the company

"I'm convinced that we wouldn't be where we are today without BSI certification to the standards... numerous headaches have been avoided because we have the right systems in place"

**David Bryce,**  
Managing Director, Cleardata

### Customer benefits

- Winning new business
- Gaining competitive advantage
- Improved quality of products and services
- Simplified tender processes
- Incentivised workforce
- More manageable client-led audits

### At a glance

Document management company Cleardata ([www.cleardatagroup.co.uk](http://www.cleardatagroup.co.uk)) is now one of the leading scanning providers in the country, offering its varied client base a wide range of storage services and solutions.

The company has recognized the benefits of a standards-driven environment, achieving certification first to quality management standard ISO 9001, followed by information security standard ISO 27001, and most recently BS 10008, the standard that outlines best practice for the management and storage of electronic information.

### Customer background

Cleardata is a leader in the field of document management, providing document scanning, archive storage, data capture, mailroom operations and invoice processing services to help businesses reduce their overheads, protect sensitive information, and save time. Whether it's managing medical records for NHS trusts, or digitizing complex legal documents that may be used in court, the company's 65-strong UK wide team operates a service that is used and trusted by many clients, from the health and social care sectors to law firms and the aerospace industry. Indeed, its recent accolade of Tyneside and Northumberland Small Business of the Year has helped strengthen its pole position in what has become a highly competitive marketplace, as the paper market contracts and the digital environment expands.

### Why certification?

David Bryce, Managing Director of Cleardata, embraced certification from the outset. He explains: "I wanted to achieve ISO 9001 while we were still small, because I felt it was easier for the company to grow with a culture of quality as part of our DNA, rather than try to introduce this when we were more mature." Originally a marketing-led decision, he soon realized that maintaining the standard resulted in a process of continual improvement. "And if we're always good at what we do," he says, "our customers will stay and we will grow."

When it came to ISO 27001 the external driver for Cleardata was initially to gain competitive advantage. "Many of our clients are concerned about entrusting their sensitive data to a third party," says Bryce. "Certification to ISO 27001 reassures them our systems are robust enough to protect their information and give them confidence."

That confidence has been strengthened further by the award of BS 10008, which covers the legal admissibility of electronic information. "If scanning is done to BS 10008 it has a stamp of confidence as far as our clients are concerned and takes the issue of compliance away from them," explains Bryce.

### Benefits

Certification has certainly helped Cleardata win new business, instilling confidence not only in clients but also in employees' ability to deal with them. Bryce explains: "Bidding for contracts can be a lengthy process, indeed a recent win has taken four years to achieve. We often have quite rigorous audits conducted on us by potential clients, so we need to be unflappable – being kept on our toes by BSI helps us handle clients' demands."

One job alone has delivered about £750,000 of income over the last five years and Bryce has ISO 27001 to thank for it. He explains: "The great thing about having standards is it helps you stay ahead of the competition, and you're not just competing on price but on quality. We got that contract because we already had ISO 27001 in place."

The added benefit of having a quality management system in place is the ripple effect it has had throughout the business. "First we'll be best and then we'll be first – that's our motto," says Bryce. "And that really is how we run Cleardata. Quality is paramount, indeed the staff bonus scheme is based not only on company profitability but also on an individual 'quality score.'" So, he explains, with each member of staff being scored for quality, the business is able to monitor any customer-related issues, and having this concrete incentive to work not only benefits staff in their bonuses but also customers' confidence in the company.

### Implementation

Bryce continues, "There have certainly been financial implications with certification, not least improving our hardware and software, particularly with regard to penetration testing – a very costly way of finding out how impervious we are to external hackers."

Having three standards to adhere to also means more cost and time, but Bryce feels sufficiently passionate that certification is well worth the investment because it helps to differentiate the business from the competition, and ultimately it helps win contracts. He expands: "I'm convinced

that we wouldn't be where we are today without BSI certification to the standards. I would have had more headaches because we wouldn't have had the systems in place. There would be more customer issues, more repetition of problems, and consequently more reworking, which is very expensive. Thankfully, the amount of rework we do is minimal."

Any implementation issues appear to have been outweighed by the advantages of having certification, and where standards used to be the last thing on the boardroom agenda, they are now intrinsic to the business.

### BSI's role

Bryce regards BSI as "partner to our business", with a flexible and approachable attitude towards certification processes. "BSI is understanding of the way we write our procedures, and can see that sometimes what we have come up with is better than what they might have suggested," he says.

As far as Cleardata is concerned, the BSI brand is an assurance of quality, giving its customers confidence that the company is being audited properly, and for Bryce, that auditing process has been invaluable. "We've obviously got to hit the certification requirements, but BSI has helped us develop systems in line with our business, and not just with standards requirements."

He concludes, "We need to know that we're doing everything properly, and BSI supports us in that."

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