



For a small business struggling against larger competitors, standards are a powerful way to differentiate your services and demonstrate expertise. Becoming a BSI Member is the cherry on the cake, adding credibility and cutting costs.

“It’s what I use to persuade people that I’m professional and that my business is professional.”

Chris McCarthy
Managing Director
Apex Security Systems

Customer needs

- Differentiate a small business from larger competitors
- Stay on top of the latest good practice
- Ongoing access to standards

Customer benefits

- Ability to use knowledge of standards as competitive advantage
- Training and consultancy opportunities
- More affordable way to maintain library of standards



What Apex Security Systems does

Apex Security Systems specializes in the design, sales and maintenance of fire and intruder alarm systems and CCTV. Managing director Chris McCarthy is also a trainer and consultant, helping businesses to meet the requirements of the standards for quality management (ISO 9001) and fire detection and alarm systems (BS 5839).

Normally Apex Security Systems employs three people, but takes on temporary staff to support one-off projects.

The challenge

"Business has been slow over the last few years," says Chris. "The biggest challenge for the fire and security industry is that it's not something that people can use to make their business grow. People can feel it's something legislation is forcing on them by the Fire Safety Order or insurance companies."

On top of that, Apex Security Systems is noticeably smaller than its competitors. There's a clear need for the business to make itself stand out, by finding a niche in order to compete – or providing a better service than its competitors.

The solution: differentiating through standards

BSI Membership offers a number of benefits. First of all, as a small business in a market where technical expertise is critical, Membership gives Apex Security Systems credibility. "If people ask, and they do ask, I tell them I'm a Member and I keep up-to-date with the current standards," says Chris.

This familiarity with standards and good practice helps his business to stand out from the competition. For businesses with client-facing premises, the official Membership certificate itself also shows a public commitment to standards and good practice.

Awareness of latest good practice also helps Chris expand the range of services he can offer: he uses his expertise to provide consultancy and training services on top of design and installation work, something which requires access to the very latest industry standards.

"As an educator and a designer I need to be up to date with standards, both on the quality side and the ones we design systems to, like BS 5839 (fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings) and BS 9999 (fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings)."

As a Member, keeping up with standards becomes much cheaper. Chris keeps around 20 standards and saves money on them with the Membership discount of 50%.

Standards build trust for the long term

"Often clients will want a short-term solution," says Chris. "For me it's about persuading them that the standard says to do things in a certain way because it's the safest way, or that it will have the most longevity."

This approach helps build long-term trust with Apex's customers – and ultimately means Apex's work will stand the test of time, unlike some of their competitors. "I was in a shop the other day where a contractor was expanding a fire alarm system. They tied a second cable to an existing one with only plastic cable ties. The client is paying to have the work done safely, and for the contractor to install the second cable with metal cable ties would have cost them a very small amount of money, probably less than £20.

"I'm a great supporter of standards," says Chris. "It's what I use to persuade people that I'm professional and that my business is professional. I'd definitely recommend BSI Membership."

BSI Membership gives you a superb package of benefits and impressive price discounts so that you can make the most of the standards you use. But above all it shows that you're really committed to performing better and delivering excellence.

Find out more about the benefits of BSI Membership and how it can help your organization

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