



Three ways to a smarter business in 2021

As we enter a new year, it's time for small businesses to reflect on the highs and lows of 2020 in order to make better business decisions and hit the ground running in 2021.

Although it's been a turbulent time for businesses of all sizes, it seems that entrepreneurial spirit and drive is still plentiful, as more companies are now trading in the UK than ever before.

However, 2020 highlighted how important it is to prepare your business for the unexpected, so your plans aren't derailed by periods of uncertainty.

By taking a standards-led approach to planning and management you can pinpoint the risks to your business, and develop decision-making processes to manage and avoid these threats.

1. Listen, adjust and evolve

Much has changed when it comes to consumer habits and typical working practices over the course of 2020. Many long-held assumptions have been turned on their heads. Business owners must continue to adjust to the new operating landscape. Transparency, authenticity and honesty mean more now than ever.

Take the time to speak to customers and listen to feedback.

Standards can help you to review the nature of your products, processes and services and then establish new systems to better meet customer expectations.

2. Protect your information

One of the lasting impacts of the pandemic was the acceleration of several digital trends. Suddenly many more people were forced to socialize, shop and access entertainment online.

Predictably, perhaps, this led to an increase in hacking attempts and other cyberattacks. Sound information security management is vital for SMEs – protecting both their own and that of customers and partners.

Nobody wants a fine, so it's important to have a plan to keep this information safe. Perhaps more importantly, improving the way you manage your information will improve your credibility as you showcase your commitment to security.

3. Put your people first

Now more than ever, consumers want to support businesses which reflect their own values, which is why it's important to take care of the people who make your goods and services possible.

Pay attention to the wellbeing of your staff and use agreed frameworks to help develop, support and engage them. After all, any recovery or growth plans will hinge on their health, dedication and happiness.

Standards can help SMEs learn the lessons of 2020 and adjust operations to evolve efficiently as well as build a greater resilience. They allow business owners to draw on the experience and knowledge of global experts to improve quality and performance.

Summary

- Use the new year as an opportunity to reflect and build on the lessons of the last 12-months.
- Standards will help transform learnings into action and build on the knowledge of global experts.
- Assess your businesses' risk and identify what areas of your operations need your attention the most.
- Listen to your customers and be ready to adapt your offering.
- Protect your information to minimize disruption from potential threats and increase trust with your customers and suppliers.
- Put people first and look after your employees to motivate, support and engage your workforce.

Find out more about standards and small businesses: <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/standards>