

GRASP CUSTOMER STORY

Six Degrees guides mentoring software provider Grasp to achieve ISO 27001 certification. By doing so, Grasp has opened up new revenue opportunities whilst ensuring the security of personal data.

Grasp, a start-up mentoring software provider, has a mission to break down internal silos and turn every organisation into knowledge sharing communities, fostering a more positive and transparent culture. Grasp continually creates easier ways for employees to find and connect with the right people in and around their organisation.

Challenge

As a mentoring software provider, Grasp has always been aware of the importance of cyber security and data protection. In 2020, Grasp elected to attain ISO 27001 certification in order to gain assurance of its cyber security posture. Rob Cherry, CTO, Grasp, explains: "We're a company that plays in the HR space, so we have personally identifiable information and could potentially hold sensitive information about people. Cyber security is very important to us because people are entrusting us with personal data, so we want to be very careful with what we do with their data, how we treat it, and make sure we protect it to the best of our abilities at all times.

"ISO 27001-wise, it's a good certification to display that you are taking security and data protection seriously. It is also a certification that most of our large corporate clients ask for: one of the very first questions on the RFP is 'how do you deal with data security? Are you ISO 27001 certified?' Getting the certification not only puts us on a good stance towards protecting peoples' data and cyber security, but it also helps us get into those contract pitches, because without it we probably wouldn't make it past the front door."

As a start-up, Grasp elected to work with a partner that would help them achieve ISO 27001 certification.

Solution

Grasp elected to partner with Six Degrees to guide the business through the ISO 27001 audit process. Rob continues: "When it came around to going for ISO 27001, I looked at Six Degrees and I looked at a couple of other providers. The quality of the consultants and the people we'd be working with swayed us towards going with Six Degrees. The fact that Six Degrees' consultants can recite ISO 27001, whilst an interesting party trick, is also definitely a good sign – they obviously know their stuff.

Advantages and Benefits



Tailored approach.

Six Degrees' tailored approach meant that Grasp implemented an ISO 27001 programme that was just right for them, and was workable moving forward.



Audit capabilities.

Six Degrees' consultants are also auditors, and so their thorough pre-audit meant Grasp were well-placed to succeed when it came to the real thing.



Customer assurance.

By achieving ISO 27001 certification, Grasp can demonstrate to its customers that their data is protected to the highest level.



Commercial possibilities.

ISO 27001 has opened up new revenue opportunities to Grasp, enabling them to work with organisations that demand ISO 27001 from their suppliers.

"When I spoke to Six Degrees, it was clear that they were going to do more than just take us through the process – their consultants have also done audits themselves, which means they've got the other perspective as well, which is great. It's not just the consultancy – the consultants know what it's like to go through and do the audit.

"I've been through ISO 27001 before at other companies and it's always the continued compliance that's the challenge. Everyone is super focused on getting through the initial audits and certification but you have to make sure your process supports you after that – you don't want to do it all from scratch at the follow up audits, you want to be prepared for them! Six Degrees were very open to working with us as a young start-up to come up with a process that means we won't just get through that first ISO 27001 audit – we'll have a process we can actually manage ourselves, we can keep complying. It's going to be pitched at our level and our requirements, and not just 'go onto eBay, buy the 32-document pack, and fill that all out.'"

Rob was impressed with how Six Degrees' consultants managed the process. As he explains "The consultants were very, very good. They set up a regular cadence, gave me a good project plan, and they were very clear to explain how things were going to work and unfold, which I quite like. And they were very clear that with the approach they were taking, there would probably be some things that I wouldn't understand in the beginning, but if I would just follow them and do as they asked it would all become clear at the end, which it actually did.

"ISO 27001 is a bit of a beast, and I don't think there's any good way to start. By providing a lot of clarity around how we were going to approach the process, that was great. The second thing was they really pitched the approach to match the stage that we're at as a company. And so when they came in they looked at what we really needed to do; how much documentation did we need, how could we do the processes in a way that was simple and easy for us to comply. That was always at the forefront of their approach."

Rob was impressed with how the compliance process was tailored to Grasp's existing business processes, enabling the process to fit easily with Grasp's day-to-day activities without adding too much additional workload: "Six Degrees really worked hard to customise the approach to match Grasp, as opposed to trying to make Grasp fit into some one-size-fits-all ISO 27001 approach.

"If we had the same approach another company took, we could get the certification, but would then have to spend all of our days trying to stay compliant and not actually doing the business of Grasp. It was great to work with Six Degrees from that perspective."

Six Degrees' consultants carried out a pre-audit to prepare Grasp for the final ISO 27001 audit. Rob says "I also think that having the Six Degrees consultants as internal auditors was just fantastic – it was a very gruelling couple of days, and by the time we came out of that we were completely prepared for the real auditor. They left absolutely no stone unturned."

Outcome

The ISO 27001 audit was a success, and Grasp is now ISO 27001 certified. As Rob explains: "We ran a big marketing campaign when we received our ISO 27001 certification, which was really well received and led to a couple of leads coming in, so that was great. The very next week we went into a bidding process for an RFP, and there were only three questions. Number two was 'are you ISO 27001 certified?'. That was with a huge multi-national corporation. We got through to the next round with them.

"It's really changed quite a lot. Internally we have all of the processes that we set up for ISO 27001, and because Six Degrees' consultants were very focused on light touch right-sizing we still run them, we do our KPIs every month – it's not a massive burden to stay in lock step with ISO 27001 anymore. From a business-side it's been huge. We're getting through to the later stages of RFPs, because we're now certified."

"The biggest thing I found was Six Degrees are knowledgeable but really target it at the size of the company. I have worked with consultancies before where you realise you're getting a cookie cutter approach and it's the same thing just with your name on it. Six Degrees worked really hard to not make that the case."

Our Solutions



Cloud Platform & Data

Modernise your data centre and secure your hybrid cloud future.



Cyber Security & Compliance

Enhance your cyber security posture and safeguard your organisation.



Agile Workspace

Communicate, collaborate and work efficiently, anywhere.



Network Infrastructure

Achieve a step change in your connectivity and your digital transformation journeys.

About Six Degrees

Isn't it time you enjoyed all the game-changing potential of cloud, and more?

You can, when you partner Six Degrees. Because we offer managed cloud services the way they should be. Creating a secure, flexible platform that sets you free to achieve and exceed your boldest aspirations, whatever those may be.

Work in partnership with our strategic cloud experts, and experience how cloud can become your springboard to the future. Where your business is safeguarded by industry-leading protection against cyber threats. And all underpinned by our formal service assurance.

So choose a partner who will be there for you no matter where you are on your journey. And whose resilience brings you less risk, and way more reward.

Six Degrees. Beyond cloud.



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