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Case Study

Tevora Helps Education Company Overcome Obstacles to Meet Aggressive ISO 27001 Certification Deadline

A true partner is there for you through thick and thin. When you hit a bump in the road, they jump in and do whatever it takes to get you back on track. In this case study, we'll describe how Tevora did just that by helping a leading education company overcome significant obstacles to achieve ISO 27001 certification on an aggressive schedule, which enabled them to win a major contract for new business.

To protect our client's confidentiality, we'll refer to them by the fictitious name of Global Education Services (GES).

Initial Engagement

Before this project began, Tevora had been working with GES for several years on data privacy initiatives and had built strong, trusted relationships with the GES team and a reputation for high-quality, on-time delivery.

When GES was presented with an opportunity to bid on a significant contract to provide education services to a state government, they were excited. Winning the contract would represent a substantial revenue increase for GES, taking them to the next level as an education service provider.
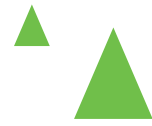
As GES reviewed the contract requirements, they discovered they would need to become ISO 27001-certified within six months to be eligible to bid. After doing some research and consulting with Tevora, they learned that ISO 27001 certification typically takes 12 – 14 months. They knew that they needed help from an experienced team of ISO 27001 experts to meet the aggressive deadline. Based on their excellent experience working with Tevora, it was a no-brainer for them to bring us in as a partner on the project.

The ISO 27001 standard provides requirements for an Information Security Management System (ISMS) and includes best practices for helping organizations manage their information security.

ISO 27001 certification is often required for large contracts, company sales, and mergers.

Planning

Knowing there was a tight timeframe for the project, our team sprung into action immediately. After holding a kickoff meeting to introduce ourselves to the GES team members and review our ISO certification process, we began developing a project plan and agreeing on Tevora and GES resources that would be performing each activity on the plan.
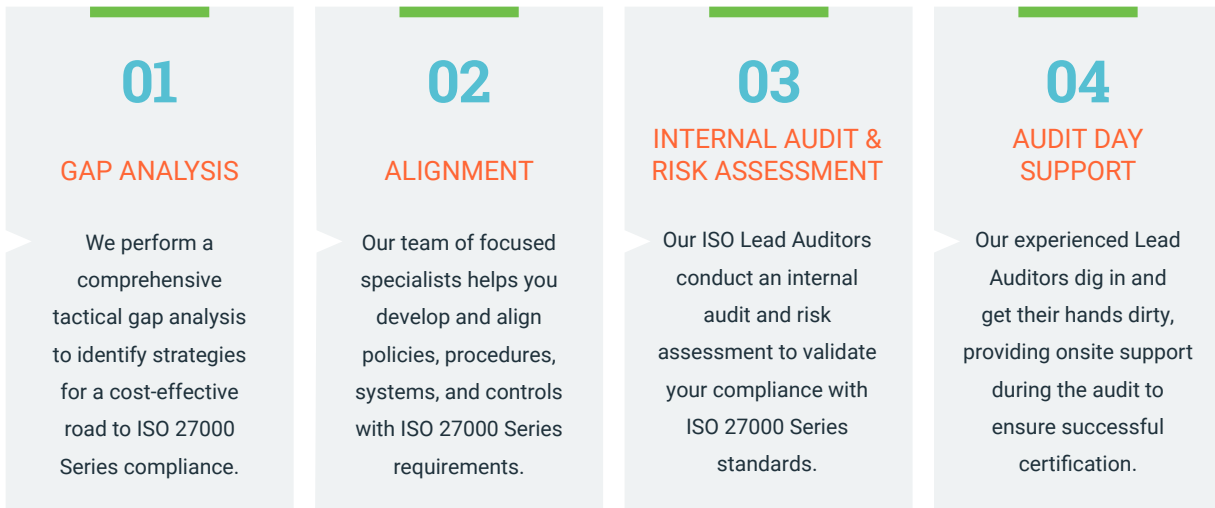
Due to the aggressive schedule and the fact that many GES team members would need to share time with other GES initiatives, we agreed to divide and conquer by having Tevora take on a significant number of tasks, while still leaving many important tasks to be performed by GES staff.
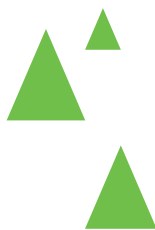
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Tevora's Proven Certification Process

The project plan was centered around Tevora's proven process for helping clients become certified for ISO 27001 and other ISO 27000-series standards. Here's a summary of the process:

01
GAP ANALYSIS
We perform a comprehensive tactical gap analysis to identify strategies for a cost-effective road to ISO 27000 Series compliance.

02
ALIGNMENT
Our team of focused specialists helps you develop and align policies, procedures, systems, and controls with ISO 27000 Series requirements.

03
INTERNAL AUDIT & RISK ASSESSMENT
Our ISO Lead Auditors conduct an internal audit and risk assessment to validate your compliance with ISO 27000 Series standards.

04
AUDIT DAY SUPPORT
Our experienced Lead Auditors dig in and get their hands dirty, providing onsite support during the audit to ensure successful certification.

Off to a Good Start

The project got off to a good start with initial tasks focused on providing comprehensive ISO 27001 training for GES staff and beginning the gap analysis effort. The team was energized to be working on this strategically important project, and initial progress was encouraging.

Obstacles Emerge

After making solid progress for the first three months and tracking to the schedule, several concerning obstacles began to emerge, including:

► **Scope Changes**: GES added two education services to the scope of the project and deleted one. This increased the overall scope and required additional resources to recalibrate the project plan and resource assignments. On a project like this, with an aggressive timeline and limited resources, scope changes can be the kiss of death.

► **Strained Resources:** Several key GES staff members began to show significant signs of stress and fatigue as they struggled to meet project deadlines while continuing to support projects that had been on their plate prior to the ISO 27001 certification effort. A few of their project deliverables began to fall behind schedule by a few days.

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Cracks Begin to Show

In months four and five, the situation deteriorated significantly as the following additional obstacles threatened to derail the project:

Major Delays in GES Tasks: Due to the strained resources described above, many of the tasks assigned to GES staff were delayed by one to two weeks.

Two Project Managers Leave: GES replaced two project managers assigned to the project, and Tevora needed to train the new team members on ISO 27001 and bring them up to speed on the project details.

Unplanned Vacations: We were surprised to learn that several key GES staff members would be taking vacations during the final weeks leading up to the deadline, which significantly increased the risk of missing the project deadline.

New Strategic Project Further Drains GES Resources: One month before the ISO 27001 audit was scheduled to begin, GES was forced to allocate resources to another strategic project, which substantially reduced GES staff availability for this project.

Code Red!

With one month to go before the planned ISO 27001 audit, it was clear to Tevora and GES that the project was in serious trouble and that drastic action would be required to complete it on time.

Tevora and GES management held an emergency meeting and agreed to assign additional Tevora staff to take on the GES tasks that were behind schedule.

Tevora Cranks It up to Eleven

Tevora's additional resources jumped in immediately, and the entire Tevora team worked long days at an aggressive pace until the project was back on schedule. Among many other things, this included developing or modifying over 20 policies and procedures documents to align with ISO 27001 requirements.

Success!

Despite the many challenges faced by the project team, GES was able to successfully complete ISO 27001 certification on time! And that's not all. The ISO 27001 audit found only one Minor Nonconformity—a truly stellar result, even for a Tevora project.

GES staff was so well trained that they only needed Tevora to sit in on 20% of the audit meetings.

100%
SUCCESS RATE

for achieving ISO 27001 certification when engaging with Tevora's services. GES had less then 2 minor non-conformities by the external auditor which is well below the average of 8 minor conformities.

6-12
MONTHS

preparation cycle. In this case, expedited program build out in 6 months.

20%+
EMPLOYMENT COST SAVINGS

are attainable by having Tevora perform the Internal Audit, as the client doesn't have to train or hire specialized resources.

50%
**AVERAGE TIME SAVINGS**

for performing the Risk Assessment and Internal Audit.

By any measure, the project was a screaming success, despite the many obstacles encountered along the way.

Meeting the ISO 27001 certification deadline enabled GES to win the state government contract for education services, which was a huge deal for GES.

Needless to say, GES management was extremely pleased with Tevora for going above and beyond to ensure the project's success. The results of this project served to strengthen and deepen the already strong relationship Tevora has with GES, and our partnership continues to this day.
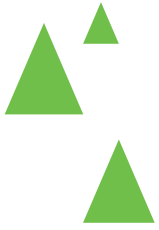
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Tevora Value Proposition

We believe there are many qualities and core competencies that make Tevora unique in the industry and that enabled us to overcome significant obstacles to bring this project to the finish line on time.

► **Partnership:** We work with a long-term outlook. We're motivated to succeed today so we can exceed your expectations again next year. We spend the time to get to know your team and business priorities, which enables us to develop customized solutions, tailor-made to meet your unique requirements. And we're committed to delivering security solutions that you can sustain and maintain long term, so training and equipping are always an integral part of our projects.

► **Dedication:** Our dedicated team of experts is laser-focused on keeping your brand and environment safe. We are committed to providing high-quality services and meeting tight timelines while maintaining flexibility to adapt with you as business conditions change. Going above and beyond is just another day at the office for us.

► **Expertise:** Our team includes many of the foremost cybersecurity experts in the industry. And our expertise extends well beyond ISO 27001 certification to include a broad range of security domains, including:

- Compliance
- Privacy & Risk
- Cyber Solutions
- Penetration Testing
- Incident Response
- Cloud Security

► **Experience:** We have extensive experience helping many of the world's leading companies implement security solutions, and you benefit from the cumulative learnings gained through those engagements.

We Can Help

If you have questions about ISO 27001 or would like Tevora's help certifying for this important security standard, just give us a call at **(833) 292-1609** or email us at **sales@tevora.com**.