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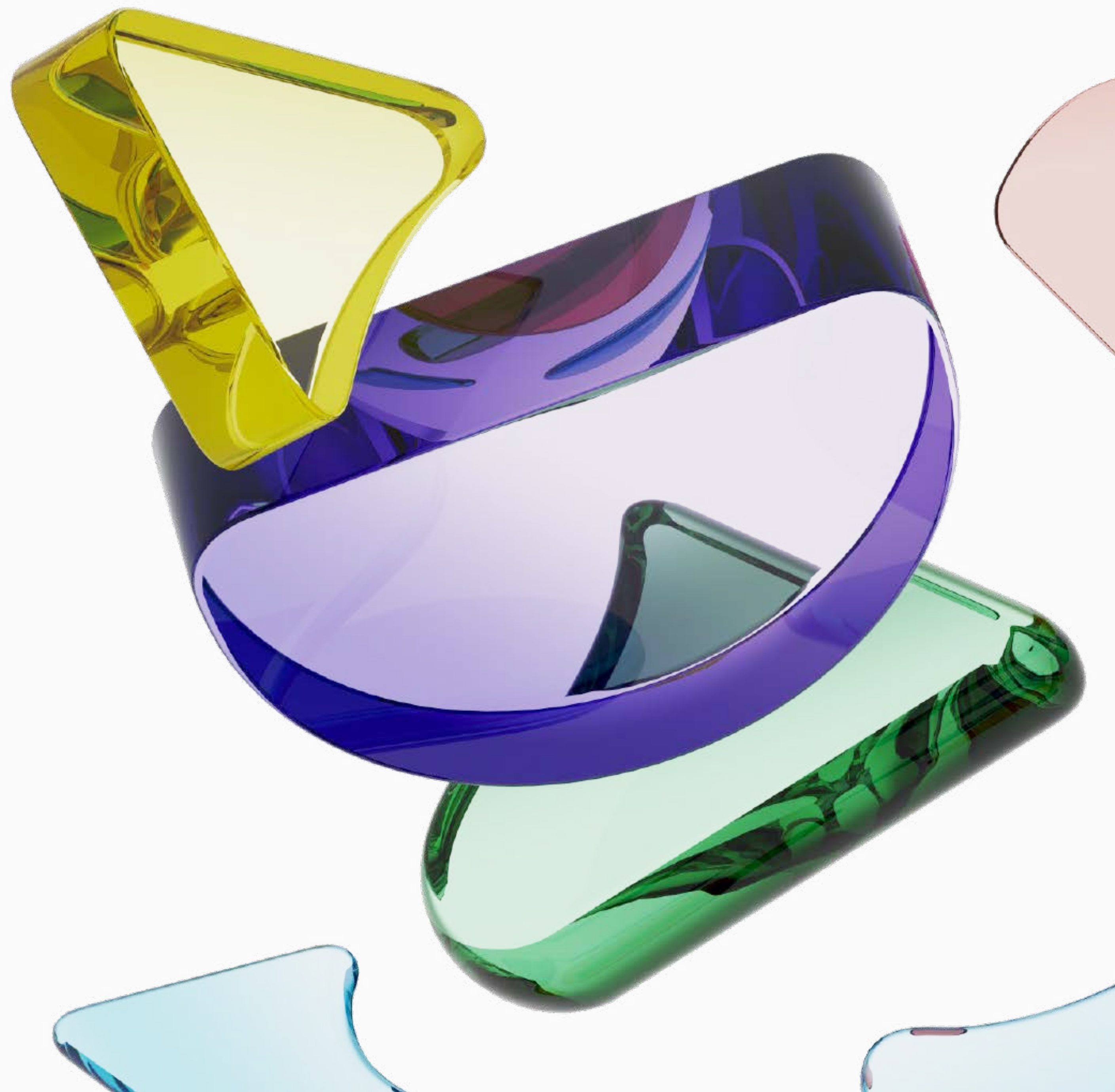
BSI Business Growth Toolkit

Beginner's Guide to Standards



Innovate
UK

Business
Growth



Beginner's Guide to Standards

The BSI Business Growth Toolkit is helping innovative businesses, who are working with Innovate Edge Business Growth, to grow and scale. The Toolkit provides free online access to thousands of standards, as well as training, tools and insights.

As part of the Toolkit, this guide explores why standards are so useful in promoting growth and innovation and explains some of the basic concepts, important definitions and key information that you'll need to get started.

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Businesses can learn a lot from standards about how to grow; they don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Martin McGurk Head of Operations and Impact, Innovate Edge Business Growth



What is a standard?

Standards are blueprints for excellence, providing strategies for minimizing risk, ensuring safety and championing sustainability.

These aren't just arbitrary guidelines: they are thoroughly vetted and detailed criteria that represent the distilled wisdom of what 'good' looks like. When implemented, they serve as robust rules, clear guidelines, or precise definitions that businesses can lean on to ensure operational excellence.

Standards cover a wide range of subjects. They can be extremely specific, such as about a particular type of product, or they can be more general, such as management practices. The point of a standard is to provide a reliable basis for people to share the same expectations about a product or service.

What can standards do?

- ✓ Improve productivity
- ✓ Increase efficiency
- ✓ Reduce costs
- ✓ Fine tune performance
- ✓ Accelerate innovation
- ✓ Agree good practice
- ✓ Build trust with consumers
- ✓ Enable international trade
- ✓ Embed sustainability
- ✓ Create a common technical understanding
- ✓ Ensure interoperability
- ✓ Manage risk and compliance

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Modern standards are becoming less about what you must do, and more about performance and how you question whether what you're doing is productive.

Jennifer Juritz David Morley Architects

Standards can either be prescriptive or informative (non-prescriptive)

Prescriptive:

- Specifications
- Methods of text
- Vocabularies
- Classifications

Non-prescriptive (informative):

- Recommendations
- Codes of practice
- Guides





The role of standards in innovation

Standards can encourage innovation in a variety of ways.

- Firstly, the information set out in standards can serve as one input for further innovation. Additionally, that shared knowledge can help to coordinate innovation activities and collaboration both within and between organizations.
- Standards can also help to communicate information about product characteristics to potential users and consumers, helping to accelerate the adoption of new technologies. This is a strong factor in de-risking investments and driving sales.
- Standards can also have the effect of reducing the variety of goods and services to an optimal level to minimize cost.
- By defining a minimum level of quality and safety, standards can help create trust among early adopters of emerging technologies and avoid incidents that undermine trust in new products.

- Because standards can support the interoperability and compatibility of technologies –particularly digital – they can have an important positive effect on the efficiency and speed of innovation.
- Finally, standards can help responsible innovators achieve greater sustained impact, both economically and socially.

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If you want to scale technology, you have to be developing it to standards. Because you won't be able to get it into commercial technology deployments with certain customers without it.

Peter Stirling Delta G

The commercial value of standards:

28.4%

Of annual UK GDP growth can be attributed to standards, equivalent to **£8.2 billion**

41%

SMEs are **41% more likely to export** if they use standards and larger companies are **36% more likely** to export

84%

of companies say that using standards **enhances their reputation**

89%

of companies say that using standards contribute to the **optimization of compliance** with regulations such as health and safety legislation

73%

of companies say that standards allow greater control of **environmental problems**

37.4%

of **UK productivity** can be attributed to standards

£8.2bn

is the amount that standards contribute to the **UK economy**

£6.1bn

of additional **UK exports** per year can be attributed to standards

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We know that as small businesses grow, they need formal systems and processes to expand their teams, products and markets. But many business owners don't realise that a lot of this work has already been done for them, in the form of standards.

Martin McGurk

Head of Operations and Impact, Innovate Edge Business Growth



Using standards matters to us because it's a way of setting ourselves apart.

Mark Clogg Maverick SkateParks

What are the differences between standards and regulation?

Standards

- Based on recommendations
- Voluntary, market-led
- Established by consensus and public consultation
- Based on consolidated results of science, technology and experiences
- Published by recognized standardization body
- Can be supported through measurement, testing, certification, accreditation
- Can be used to demonstrate compliance with regulations

Regulations

- Based on legislation
- Adoption is mandatory, minimum legal requirements
- Developed by a regulatory authority, usually involving consultation
- Guidelines provide technical specifications either directly or by reference
- Adopted by legal authority
- Oversight by regulatory bodies

What are the different types of British Standards?

BS	British Standard, developed by BSI and originating in the UK.
BS EN	British Standard adopted from a European Standard (EN).
EN ISO	An international standard adopted by the European Union. (When an international standard is adopted at a regional level, it obtains a prefix to indicate association).
BS EN ISO	An EN ISO standard that's been released in British English by BSI. (An EN ISO must be released in one of the official languages of the EU).
PAS	Open to all organizations, a PAS standard is a sponsored piece of work allowing organizations flexibility in the rapid creation of a standard.
BSI Flex	Fast-track standard developed by BSI using an iterative process to keep pace with a rapidly changing area.
ISO	Standard developed by the International Organization for Standardization.
IEC	Standard developed by the International Electrotechnical Commission.



What are the differences and similarities between national, European and international standards?

In addition to BSI's own national standards, British standards can originate or derive from standards developed at an international or a European level. But what makes a standard a BS, BS EN, BS ISO, BS IEC or BS ISO/IEC, and what are the differences?

1. What are British (BS) standards?

The creation of a national British standard is a well-established process that draws on technical expertise from industry in a formal way.

1. A group of stakeholders draft the British standard
2. A technical committee creates and reviews the content
3. BSI supports those stakeholders with the help of a Standards Development Manager and an Editorial Project Manager





There are seven types of British standard:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Specifications | 4. Guides |
| 2. Management systems standards | 5. Vocabularies |
| 3. Methods | 6. Codes of practice |
| | 7. Classifications |

These can carry the prefix 'BS', which stands for British Standard and has a high level of authority and status.

There are also related documents, which are not actual standards, but can provide additional guidance and information. For example, Published Documents (PD) and Technical Specifications (TS).

2. What are British international (ISO/IEC) standards?

There are two main international level issuing bodies:

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|---|---|
| 1. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) | 2. The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). |
|---|---|

National Standards Bodies that are members of ISO or IEC, like BSI, can get involved in the development of international standards through technical committees. The technical committees all collaborate to reach consensus on the international standard subject matter.

BSI has the option to adopt international standards. International standards that have not yet been adopted in Europe, but which are published in the UK, have the prefix 'BS ISO', 'BS IEC' or 'BS ISO/IEC' (see table on [page 8](#)).

What are the differences between standards?

British-adopted European and international standards usually have identical content to the original standard, though they may be modified by BSI's technical committees, with additional national content included – for example, a National Annex. In the case where modifications have been made, details can be found in the national foreword of all BSI's adopted standards.

What's in the national forward?

The national foreword appears within the first couple of pages of every standard and provides a variety of informative material about the standard. For example, if the standard was produced for guidance to support another standard, or if it is a direct implementation of another standard.

How are standards developed?

A standard is a collective work. Representatives of organizations having an interest and expertise in the subject matter are brought together by BSI to form a technical committee to draw up the standard. Typically, these committees comprise representatives of industry bodies, research and testing organizations, local and central government, consumers, and standards users.

Standards Committees contain members from:

- Consumer bodies
- Trade associations
- Certification bodies
- Government departments
- Enforcement bodies
- Professional institutions
- Standards users
- Research organisations
- Public sector
- Education bodies

These committees can develop national British standards and/or contribute to the development of standards at an international level, via the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) or the European Committee for Standardization (CEN/CENELEC). BSI's national committees nominate members to represent them on these international standards committees.

The development time for a British standard is between one and four years, depending on the complexity of the subject and the range of stakeholders involved. For this reason, international standards usually take longer to develop than those produced locally.

A quicker route (months rather than years) to a standard when development time is of the essence might be a fast-tracked standard with expert guidance from BSI. A fast-track standard establishes best practices for products, services and processes. BSI offers two main pathways for this: a PAS standard, or an iterative BSI Flex standard, both of which are tailored to your industry's needs.



You can also have your say on standards

Engaging with standards-making helps you gain insight into, and ensure your voice is heard in, the standards that matter most to you. What's more, for your employees, getting involved can sharpen their leadership, communication and collaboration skills.

There are many ways to get involved in helping to define and develop standards. These include viewing and commenting on draft standards or on proposals for new standards via a dedicated [online portal](#).

Anyone can make suggestions for new British and International standards or support the creation of a fast-tracked standard (PAS or Flex) to meet a specific need.

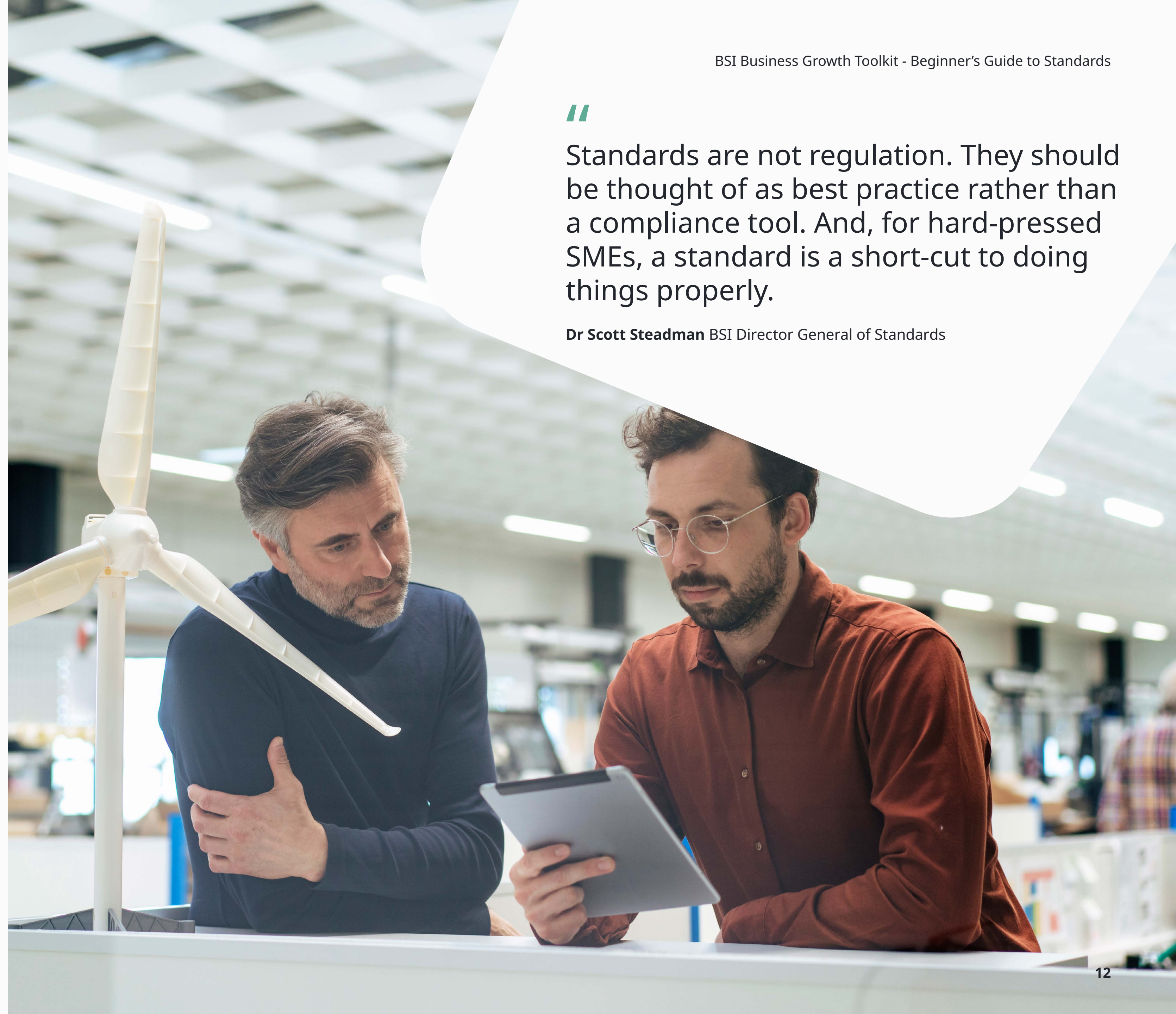
Nearly 14,000 experts very much like yourself already volunteer their knowledge and time to participate in BSI committees and contribute to the drafting of standards. These committees comprise manufacturers, users, research organizations, government departments and consumers who all work together to address industry challenges and produce standards to overcome them.

Whichever route you choose, you will find BSI will welcome the knowledge of anyone interested in developing standards.



Standards are not regulation. They should be thought of as best practice rather than a compliance tool. And, for hard-pressed SMEs, a standard is a short-cut to doing things properly.

Dr Scott Steadman BSI Director General of Standards





Access standards for free

As an SME working with Innovate Edge Business Growth, you can have free access to BSOL. It's the online standards tool packed with thousands of different standards. BSOL is a great way to explore the standards that could help your organization innovate and grow.

To find out more about access and to ask any further questions about the BSI Business Growth Toolkit or standards in general, get in touch here: standardsforgrowth@bsigroup.com

Our specialist team of standards experts will be happy to help.

What is BSI?

Formed in 1901, BSI was the world's first National Standards Body. We were responsible for originating many of the world's most used management standards and publish around 2,500 standards annually.

BSI has a presence on every continent, with 87 offices in 31 countries across the world. Standards users range from globally recognized brands to small, local businesses.



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