



Understanding How The Information Security Jigsaw Puzzle Fits Together

Certificate in Information Security Management Principles (CiISMP)

In Summary

British Airways (BA) is one of the world's largest and most successful international airlines, carrying around 36 million passengers to over 550 destinations. The airline's two main operating bases are Heathrow and Gatwick. During 2004/05 BA made a pre-tax profit of £415 million in what has been a very challenging environment. In fact market conditions have been extremely tough since 11 September, 2001, and throughout, BA has ensured that safety, both in the air and on the ground, is a key priority.

In order to provide a safe and secure environment BA has continually invested in its employees (46,000 staff of which 85% are based in the UK). Part of this investment has focused on building the knowledge of its employees in Information Security. As one can imagine, Information Security touches every part of BA's dispersed worldwide network and therefore creating an overall level of competency and consistency in security knowledge across the company is a key goal in 2004/05. By working in partnership with **Ultima Risk Management (URM)** BA has implemented a programme of training, which ensures it has qualified security practitioners across the business.

The Business Challenge

Within BA's Information Security Department there was a need to set a base line standard of competency for IS personnel. Information Security training was identified to improve the overall knowledge of individuals and to test that knowledge with a professionally recognised accreditation. This was critical because the Information Security Department sets the standards and policies that all BA employees

must adhere to. In addition it was felt that staff in this department needed to have a better understanding of general Security Standards and Procedures, for example ISO/IEC 17799 and ISO/IEC 27001. And, it was also felt that BA staff needed to enhance their knowledge of market and industry issues such as the security implications of compliance and the legal requirements affecting companies.

BA reviewed the training courses available in the market and selected URM, a leading provider of high quality, cost effective Information Security consultancy and training, to supply an intensive Information Security training programme. URM was selected to deliver the training because it had a team of very experienced, hands-on professional Information Security consultants. The training programme consisted of a number of highly practical 5-day courses delivered to groups of twelve delegates at a time. The URM Course selected has been accredited by the Information Systems Examination Board (ISEB) of the **British Computer Society (BCS)** and leads to the Certificate in Information Security Management Principles (CiISMP) qualification.

Jim Sheridan, IS Manager, BA takes up the story:

"It was felt that most of the training courses available in the market were too technically focused and this wasn't really appropriate for all our staff. We wanted a course that looked more holistically at management principles rather than focusing purely on technology. We have such a broad range of skills and different levels of understanding; we needed a course that would appeal to everyone. We selected the ISEB accredited training course delivered by URM because we felt it provided an excellent foundation in Information Security."

Why ISEB Can Build A Foundation For Security

The ISEB accredited course and qualification supports a wide range of subject areas that make up Information Security management. The syllabus is technology neutral as the qualification tests knowledge of principles not knowledge of specific technologies or products.

Steve Causer, Product Manager, BCS comments:

"This qualification is designed to provide the foundation of knowledge necessary for individuals who have Information Security responsibilities as part of their day-to-day role or who are thinking of moving into an Information Security or related function. It also provides those who are in the role with the opportunity to refresh and enhance their skills and this was particularly important to BA as it has a mix of IS personnel with different levels of knowledge."

The Course Syllabus

In March 2005 twelve BA IS personnel went on the ISEB accredited Course with similar numbers attending the same course in September 2005. Further groups were then scheduled for early 2006. The course runs over five days with four and a half days of theory and practice and the ISEB exam taking place on the last afternoon. In total URM provided 40 hours of training each week to BA.

The course syllabus covers four main areas:

- Information Security Principles
- Information Risk
- Information Security Framework
- Information Security Controls

BA delegates who had undertaken the training felt that they came out with the following:

- Knowledge of concepts relating to Information Security management
- Understanding of current UK legislation and regulations
- Awareness of current national and international Information Security standards
- Understanding of current business and technical environment in which Information Security has to operate
- Knowledge of the categorisation, operation and effectiveness of controls of different types and characteristics.

Rob Hadfield, a delegate from the course comments:

"As a delegate I found the course provided a very good grounding on the subject in its broadest sense. In particular I found it provided a very helpful insight into risk identification and how to apply this within your organisation. I think the course is very good for those individuals who have limited experience in Information Security."

Jim Sheridan, IS Manager, BA adds:

"The course had high level support from BA's senior management team. Obviously safety and security is a key goal for our organisation and we want qualified professional people. You have Chartered Accountants, why shouldn't you have qualified Information Security Practitioners?"

I felt that URM's trainers provided real life experience and knowledge. Because they are working IS consultants as well as trainers, their depth of knowledge and accrued information as 'working experts' was phenomenal."

Future Development

The ISEB qualification has been running for seven years and has already proved to be highly successful. Over the next 12 months, the BCS is working with leading Information Security professionals from the public and private sector to develop further qualification modules which will build on the platform set by CiISMP. These advanced modules will allow delegates to gain more specialist and 'practitioner' type knowledge. BA views the ISEB CiISMP course and examination as a stepping-stone for its staff to achieve a base-line qualification in Information Security and is keen to undertake further training as the BCS launches new modules.

Martin Jones, Managing Director, URM concludes:

"We believe this course and qualification really heightens awareness of Information Security. So many organisations just don't get the balance right as far as Information Security is concerned and they waste a lot of time and money implementing controls, policies and procedures that may not be necessary. At URM we are trying to help individuals put together the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle so that they can see the whole picture – effective security at the right price."

GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT.

URM

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