

**HAVAS**  
PEOPLE | ENGAGE ATS™

## BACKGROUND

Havas People specialises in Education Marketing, Employer Marketing, Resourcing, Events, Performance Improvement and e-recruitment. The Agency forms part of Havas Worldwide which is one of the largest global agency networks with 233 offices in 75 countries. In 2009, Havas People launched Engage Applicant Tracking System (ATS), an online candidate management and recruitment system aimed at reducing time and costs involved in the entire recruitment process. Engage ATS has been adopted by a wide range of organisations from both the public and private sectors. As a tool that holds significant levels of potentially sensitive personal data, information security is of paramount importance.

In order to demonstrate its information security credentials and reassure clients and prospects, Havas People decided in 2013 to seek certification to ISO 27001, the International Standard for Information Security, against the scope of its Engage ATS business area. In addition, Havas People recognised the benefits of implementing customer focused processes and it was decided to also seek certification to ISO 9001, the International Quality Management Standard, at the same time. In March 2014, Havas People was successful in achieving dual certification to ISO 27001 and ISO 9001.

This case study examines some of the business drivers behind the decision to achieve dual certification, along with some of the Agency's experiences, including key success criteria and benefits derived.



## Business Drivers

Jonathon Malone, Director at Havas People, founder and driving force behind the Engage ATS product and business area, was the instigator behind the initiative to gain dual certification.

As Jonathon explains “Given the amount of personal data we process within our client management system, the need to obtain ISO 27001 certification was externally driven, with clients and prospects often referring and specifying to the Standard in tenders and contracts. It was a particularly high profile central government contract which acted as the project catalyst, requiring Engage ATS to achieve ISO 27001 certification by a specific date. Whilst ISO 27001 was ostensibly customer led, ISO 9001 was internally motivated and driven by our desire to further improve productivity and client oriented working practices.”

As Jonathon Malone conducted his early research into the requirements of ISO 27001, he identified that there was considerable overlap in management system requirements with ISO 9001 and an opportunity to improve areas such as issue and problem management.

## ■ KEY STAGES TO CERTIFICATION

### Selection of Team and Key Partners

**Internal Project Leads** - From the outset, two key resources were dedicated to the project, Wendy Peoples, Chief Financial Officer at Havas People and Lauren Cunningham, Operations Director for the Engage ATS business area. Whilst Lauren would take responsibility for implementing the management system within Engage ATS, Wendy focused on the implications of the wider Havas People organisation.

**Consultancy Partner** - Having shortlisted and met with three consultancies, Ultima Risk Management (URM) was selected on the grounds of best fit. Jonathon Malone describes the decision as an instinctive one where “URM demonstrated the best understanding of both Standards and possessed a substantive track record of successfully taking organisations through ISO 9001 and ISO 27001 certifications. We also believed that URM’s flexible approach would work best within Havas People’s highly dynamic and busy environment.”

### Scope

Consideration was given to seeking certification for the whole of Havas People’s London Office, but due to the tight and challenging certification timelines demanded by a central government client, a pragmatic decision was made to limit the scope to the Engage ATS business area. Also, given the nature of sensitive information being held, this was considered to be the most appropriate part of the business to be certified.

### Risk Assessment

Having acclimatised to the terminology and concepts, Jonathon Malone described the process as “Hugely valuable in enabling the organisation to gain an independent assessment of the major information security risks it was facing.” The prioritisation of risks was particularly useful and helped Havas People focus attention on key areas, with the concept of risk treatment options being particularly enlightening i.e. being able to accept certain risks when the costs/disruption involved outweighed any potential costs should the risk arise. Another risk treatment option adopted was to outsource the management of some risks to other parties, including Havas Worldwide, its parent company.

### Internal Communication and Awareness Training

The Project Team spent a lot of time at the outset of the project communicating to all staff within Havas People London, not just what was involved in certifying to the Standards but, more importantly, why certification was being sought and how the organisation and individuals would benefit. Following this, a range of tools, including the company intranet and classroom training, were used to roll out policies and processes. Lauren Cunningham, Operations Director within Engage ATS, believes “The interactive workshop approach to training involving teams with mixed backgrounds was particularly effective in gaining buy in and commitment.” Looking to the future, Havas People will be using an on line training tool to provide security updates etc.

### Implementation of Organisation-Wide Controls

Whilst the scope of certification was limited to Engage ATS, Havas People was determined to ensure that benefits were derived across the organisation. Consequently, the Senior Management Team decided to implement a number of policies, processes and working practices across the wider team, including a clear desk policy and a complaints/issues log. Havas People also used the opportunity to develop a list of key suppliers and a register of contractual requirements.

### Monitoring and Measuring Performance

Management Reviews, led by Wendy Peoples, Chief Finance Officer, were invaluable in reviewing risks and monitoring the performance of the management system. The latter was achieved by adopting the GOSPA (Goals Objectives Strategies, Plans and Actions) approach. “Through the GOSPA,” Wendy explains “the Management Team was able to place a stake in the ground and assess what was going well and by reviewing the Issues Log was able to determine which processes needed to be improved.” Havas People found the internal audits, undertaken in the form of mock assessments and conducted by URM, invaluable in preparing for the rigours of the Stage 1 and 2 assessments.



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Jonathon Malone - Director

## KEY SUCCESS CRITERIA

### Dedicated Team

The combination of Havas People's Chief Finance Officer and Engage ATS' Operations Director provided a very effective partnership in addressing the specific requirements of the two Standards for the Engage ATS business area, whilst always focussing on gaining the maximum benefit for Havas People as a whole. A key success factor was the holding of weekly meetings in the 6-9 month period running up to the Stage 1 and 2 assessments, thereby ensuring momentum was never lost.

### Consultative Approach

When developing policies and procedures, a consultative approach was taken rather than just imposing controls. Lauren Cunningham describes the numerous discussions held with IT as being “Key in determining what was realistic in terms of service delivery, rather than simply imposing something which could not be achieved.”

### Open Culture

Jonathon Malone believed Havas People's open 'no blame' culture created the ideal environment for fully embedding elements of the management system. Having understood why the Agency had embarked on the certification journey, all staff (and particularly the Engage ATS Team) fully embraced the concept of continuous improvement. This is best illustrated by the Team's positive approach to reporting incidents and complaints, where they appreciated the need to adopt a proactive approach and prevent recurrences of issues or problems.

### Senior Management Commitment

Senior management commitment was never in doubt with Jonathon Malone, as Director, instigating the project and remaining actively involved, including attendance at the Stage 1 and 2 assessments. Senior management commitment was also demonstrated by the involvement of the CEO in Management Reviews and the selection of the Chief Finance Officer as the Project Lead. The collective and hands-on involvement from senior management provided the most tangible evidence to all staff how seriously information security and service quality was taken.

### URM

Jonathon Malone felt strongly that “Without URM, Havas People would not have achieved its certification goals. URM's consultant fitted well into the culture, was very patient, as well as being sympathetic and accommodating to internal operational pressures. Having fortnightly visits really helped us to maintain our focus. Initially, the visits involved workshops which addressed specific requirements of the Standards, whilst latterly brainstorming sessions were held with different teams looking at different options of satisfying elements of both Standards. Throughout the project, the approach taken was very consultative and every opportunity was taken to transfer knowledge.”

## BENEFITS DERIVED

When certification had been achieved, Havas People asked itself two fundamental questions:

- **Has it enabled us to grow our business?**
- **Has it improved our internal efficiencies and productivity?**

Jonathon Malone believed the answer to both questions was a resounding **yes**.

### Business Growth

As a result of achieving certification and specifically ISO 27001, Jonathon Malone states that “We have categorically won business on the back of achieving registration to ISO 27001 and there is an absolute direct correlation. One major and highly prestigious central government contract was actually contingent on achieving ISO 27001 registration by a certain date. Two new contracts, one private and one public sector, have also been awarded to Engage ATS and ISO registration was a key factor in the clients decision. In addition, there are other examples of being shortlisted for tenders which can be directly attributable to achieving certification. Without doubt, ISO 27001 registration is a key differentiator and significantly adds to our status in the marketplace.”

### Internal Efficiencies

Jonathon Malone is also adamant that of equal importance and value are the internal efficiencies and productivity that ISO 9001 and ISO 27001 have brought to the organisation. Typical of its market sector, Havas People is a highly dynamic, fast moving organisation and has observed that implementing the two Standards has led to a more considered and analytical approach being adopted. In the past, there was more focus on reacting and dealing with issues, but there is now far greater focus on identifying trends and root causes in order to minimise recurrences of issues.

A practical example of this is detailed analysis of the Issues Log. Wendy Peoples, Chief Finance Officer, adds “There were always strong processes in place, but implementing the combined management system has led to greater visibility and combined effort to address the underlying issues and prevent recurrences. As a result, service levels have increased.” Wendy Peoples also believes “The effort and time taken in tailoring the management system has resulted in it not being seen as onerous or a chore, but something of real value where we are now more confident that work is delivered to a repeatable and consistently high standard. Everyone is aware that this isn’t a one off exercise, but part of a continuous improvement process where through customer and staff feedback, key performance indicators, audit findings and technologies, Havas People will be able to further improve its services.”

From a security perspective, Jonathon Malone believes the Agency is managing and reducing risk in a more informed manner and, when security incidents occur, Havas People is in a stronger position to minimise the impact.

### Staff Morale

Following on from the initial briefing session, Engage ATS Team members were aware of the benefits that certification would bring and how they would benefit, both in terms of providing more sales opportunities and making support tasks easier i.e. reducing the number of issues to address. Lauren Cunningham, Operations Director within Engage ATS, describes the Team as being close knit and one that has taken great pride in achieving dual certification. Lauren believes the ISO 27001 Standard has further elevated the Team’s morale, with all members cognisant of the need to take personal responsibility in protecting the confidentiality and availability of information.

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Jonathon Malone - Director



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