

Your client's security questionnaire

A large client sends you a security questionnaire and gives you two weeks to answer. This is not an isolated form to fill in: large clients increasingly push their own regulatory obligations, including those imposed by NIS2, down their supply chain. Your SME may not fall directly under that regulation, but your client might, and it needs to show it has assessed you before it keeps working with you.

What they usually ask

Most questionnaires converge on the same blocks, whatever the format or wording.

- Access control: who can reach which systems, and how access is revoked when someone leaves.
- Multi factor authentication on email, VPN and critical applications.
- Backups: frequency, encryption and real restore tests.
- Patching: how long a critical update takes to reach production.
- Incident response: who decides, who gets notified and within what timeframe.
- Subcontractors: whether you pass data or access to third parties, and how you control

that.

- Personal data handling under GDPR.
- Certifications, such as ISO 27001, if you hold one.

When the answer is not yet

Do not invent a control that does not exist, and do not leave the box blank either. An honest answer has three parts: the current control, the compensating measure while the permanent one is built, and the date it will close. A questionnaire answered this way, documented and dated, builds more trust than one improvised at the last minute with unverified controls. Whoever reviews these questionnaires on the client side reads between the lines and prefers a credible plan to an empty promise.

Turn the questionnaire into a plan

Keep every answer with its date. The next questionnaire will find several questions already resolved, and the ones still open will form, almost by accident, a priority list built from what a real client actually asked about, ranked by what worries them most. Turn that list into a plan with an owner and a deadline for each item, instead of treating every questionnaire as an exam you sit from scratch.

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