

Data protection in SMEs: three quarters of British companies are well positioned

Munich, 22 June 2021 - Small and medium-sized enterprises seem to be strongly positioned in the data protection sector. This is according to a recent survey of 600 German, French and British executives conducted by technology company Usercentrics and the non-profit association Siinda, in cooperation with the market research institute Innofact. The survey results place the British firms at the top of the ranking, with 76.5 percent of British executives agreeing that their company has up-to-date data protections, followed by the Germans with 68 percent, while only 61 percent of French managers consider their data protection to be up to date.

Status quo: data protection officers as a privacy necessity

Three years after the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), an increase in awareness is evident in British boardrooms. 79.5 percent employ a data protection officer - 60.5 percent internally, and 19 percent outsource the job.

The SMEs cited in the study are just as well positioned in terms of privacy tools implemented as they are in terms of staff. Two-thirds (63 percent) use a consent management platform (CMP), which obtains and manages the consent of website visitors for analysis or advertising purposes. This being a crucial part of the business strategy, as these companies access particularly sensitive data: seven out of ten SMEs collect and use customer data. The British companies are in the middle here, while three-quarters of the French companies use a CMP, but only four out of ten German SMEs do.

Opportunity or risk: managers skeptical and not sufficiently informed

Three years after the introduction of the GDPR, many executives still have an ambivalent attitude towards the topic of data protection. For example, one in three respondents perceives data protection as beneficial and important for business (35 percent). At the same time, however, 30 percent see their business model threatened by increasingly strict data protection regulations.

The study also reveals exciting insights into current market developments: the trend is clearly moving towards first-party data. 68 percent of the respondents state that they primarily want to rely on the use of first-party data, i.e. independently aggregated user data. The ongoing industry move away from third-party cookies is in the sights of 60.5 percent of respondents. However, only very few are actually concerned about this development. In Great Britain, however, there still seems to be a lot of need for clarification regarding this topic. Around 40 percent of respondents say they are not aware of both the first-party data trend and the third-party cookie developments.

Stephanie Vérilhac, EU Director at Siinda, outlined: “This groundbreaking study of 600 business executives gives very valuable insights about how data protection is perceived and dealt with by European SMBs. Privacy is undoubtedly an important boardroom and senior executive issue thanks to the GDPR, but concrete operational issues such as first-party and third-party data management, or regional differences are emerging. Digitalization of SMBs in Europe has accelerated in the past year, and coherent data management and data protection are key to fostering this trend ahead.”

Jürgen Weichert, CRO at Usercentrics, comments on the study as follows: "Privacy is the new normal. While we still had to do a lot of education in the early days of the GDPR, a different picture is now emerging. The topic of data protection seems to have become part of the daily business of many small and medium-sized enterprises. At the same time, however, it is becoming apparent that there are many regional differences. For example, it seems that the French are much more cautious about data protection than their German or UK counterparts, which is probably due to the rigorous enforcement by the French data protection authority CNIL.”

About the survey: Commissioned by Usercentrics and Siinda, the market research institute Innofact surveyed 600 executives (257 women and 343 men) from Germany (200), France (200) and the UK (200), ages 25-69 in April 2021. Companies ranged in size from 5-250 employees.

About Usercentrics

The Munich-based tech company Usercentrics is the market leader in the area of Consent Management Platform (CMP). Usercentrics' SaaS solution enables companies to collect, manage, and document user consent on all digital channels such as websites or apps - while optimizing for higher opt-in rates. In this way, compliance with current and future international data protection regulations such as the GDPR, and CCPA can be ensured and aligned with marketing and data strategy. Since being founded at the end of 2017 by Mischa Rürup, the company has grown quickly and has signed numerous well-known enterprise clients such as Commerzbank, Munich RE, T-Mobile, and Telefonica. For more information: www.usercentrics.com.

About Siinda

Siinda is the leading European based non-profit association bringing together companies in the search, digital advertising, media, mobile, and “on-demand” industry sectors. We are a resource forum for any company serving the SMB, B2B or Enterprise markets. At Siinda you can exchange ideas, learn the latest trends, access critical market research, keep up with technology while connecting, and sharing with members across the globe. At Siinda we foster the development of positive, ongoing partnerships that enable businesses to prosper and grow. We also provide a platform where seed level start-ups can mix with industry leaders. Our worldwide network of



members fosters the exchange of ideas and the encouragement of partnerships. More information at www.siinda.org