



SIX BEST PRACTICES TO PROMOTE INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

5-MINUTE READ



SIX BEST PRACTICES TO PROMOTE INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

TAKING YOUR PROJECTS FROM PLANNING TO PRODUCTION ISN'T ALWAYS EASY. HERE ARE SIX TRIED AND TESTED BEST PRACTICES TO HELP YOU REACH YOUR GOALS.

1 CHOOSE AN EXECUTIVE SPONSOR

As recommended earlier, members of the Information Governance Council should be a mix of diverse functions all bringing different requirements to the process.

One of the most important best practices we recommend is the appointment of an executive sponsor.

The lack of a clearly defined executive sponsor is one of the top reasons why earlier attempts at forming an effective Information Governance Programme are often unsuccessful.

In some organisations, the Chief Data Officer is responsible for information lifecycle management as well as sponsorship of the Information Governance Council. This senior executive position provides the level of advocacy that will help ensure that the company stays focused and committed, not only to data analytics or data warehousing, but also to the processes that manage and house various types of information (Risk and Information Management, cloud, email, apps management, big data and social media).

Other logical candidates include Chief Compliance Officer, Chief Information Governance Officer, Chief Information Officer or someone from their senior staff.

You should select council members carefully. It should be made up of members of various departments and functional areas, but not the most senior executives. In the past, attempts to implement Information Governance Programmes may have stalled - or failed - because they've had senior management with no line of business input sitting on the council.

It may make sense to rotate council members on a periodic basis, for example every 18 - 24 months, to inject energy and maintain or even increase momentum.

"WHEN WE STARTED, WE THOUGHT WE NEEDED A STEERING COMMITTEE AND OUR CONSULTANTS CONFIRMED THIS. BUT WE DIDN'T SPEND ENOUGH TIME DEFINING THE PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND AUTHORITY OF THIS COMMITTEE. IN THE END, WE HAD THE WRONG PEOPLE AND WE WASTED VALUABLE TIME. WORST OF ALL, WE LOST CREDIBILITY."

Records Manager, Fortune 500 Insurance and Financial Services

2 MAKE THE MEETINGS ACTIONABLE

Your Information Governance Council should meet at least quarterly. It's important that you get the most out of each meeting by having a clear agenda and ensuring that the concerns of each functional area are addressed.

TOPICS SHOULD INCLUDE:

- > a report on key performance indicator metrics (such as number of boxes or bytes of information destroyed, updates on discovery, and its implications on information)
- > consideration of new technology
- > change management matters
- > budget issues.

You may find it necessary to assign working teams to communicate and put decisions into action. Those teams should report their progress to the Council on a regular basis. Ideally, the Council would develop, publish, and act on a three-to-five year strategy for achieving Information Governance objectives.

A STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS

We encountered one institution that began by reviewing the workflow of a single department. They took an inventory of information created and received and built a process that streamlined the management of the information through its lifecycle, and set goals and metrics for success.

3 START SMALL AND SET CLEAR OBJECTIVES

It's tempting to move on large-scale initiatives and make a splash. However, we've found that the most successful approach to Information Governance works by starting small, establishing a foundation for a chosen process, then demonstrating and gaining a victory.

WHEN DECIDING WHERE TO START, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER:

- > risk
- > the process owner's openness to change
- > ease of implementation.

By starting small and meeting your objectives, you can demonstrate value. It's critical to quantify the value of each programme initiative. Whether the initiative is a general clean up or a data mining analysis, you need to have the metrics for success in place at the line of business level.

Information Governance is a top-down and bottom-up programme that requires senior sponsorship and business area authority to succeed.

In the end, they only identified a handful of records as being eligible for destruction. The true win was that they'd tested a process and methodology and generated quantifiable results.

The Council was then able to expand the review methodology to other lines of business, duplicating the process and creating better, more consistent controls across the enterprise.

4

INTERACT WITH LINES OF BUSINESS

It's becoming increasingly clear that consistent and compliant information management begins with employees in an organisation's lines of business. To be successful, it's essential that they receive the support they need from the Information Governance functions. This includes:

- > onsite access to clearly written policy (RIM, information security, discovery)
- > periodic training
- > ongoing communication
- > remediation assistance, when required
- > guidance for defensible destruction of information
- > guidance for holding information for litigation
- > change management tools.

INFORMATION CAN BE VALUABLE BEYOND ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE

In addition to managing information, to remain compliant with regulatory or operational requirements and to contain costs, your organisation's lines of business should determine the potential use - or value - of the information they create and receive beyond its original purpose.

To make this easier, representatives of the RIM and Information Management team (and others, such as marketing or data analytics, if required) should reach out to lines of business.

You need a complete understanding of the information that the functional area manages. This may already exist as information or a data map or file plan.

KEY FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN DECIDING WHAT TO DO WITH INFORMATION ONCE IT IS NO LONGER REQUIRED TO MEET RETENTION RULES ARE:

- > use in determining customer trends and requirements, either in general or by individual
- > demographics
- > indicators for product expansion
- > identification of bad actors and more.

It's important to keep in mind that other areas of your organisation may have use of information that is currently siloed in a line of business. If you decide to retain information longer than required by your records retention schedule, your legal and privacy teams should approve this to reduce litigation risk or violation of privacy law.

5 USE TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT YOU AND SAVE TIME

Information should not be managed by employees at each stage of its lifecycle. For consistent and compliant information management practice, some level of automation should be considered. A Gartner report echoes this position:

“AS THE INFORMATION LANDSCAPE CONTINUES TO EXPAND IN SCALE AND PACE OF CHANGE, MANUAL APPROACHES TO MONITORING DATA AND ITS USES AGAINST INFORMATION GOVERNANCE POLICIES CANNOT KEEP PACE...”²

Data analytics technology and auto-classification tools can be used to support the identification and classification of information. By applying lifecycle rules, these technologies can be used to extract value and insight from information.

Wherever possible, the monitoring of self-assessment controls and detection of non-compliance should be automated. This is happening today in various functional areas such as monitoring of broker/dealer communications or blocking emails that contain personally identifiable information. It will become increasingly necessary in the future, and your Information Governance Council should help make this happen.



6 PROVIDE A MECHANISM FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

While an Information Governance Council should oversee the information lifecycle management policy for your organisation, the policy will only be successful if it's adopted and embraced by your business at large.

CREATE REAL VALUE FOR LINES OF BUSINESS TO NURTURE FUTURE ADVOCATES

A strong Information Governance Framework should establish a self-assessment programme that allows business managers to diagnose their own performance against given controls. Regardless of their location, they'll have a comprehensive and consistent process to identify and address potential weaknesses in the design or execution of internal processes that mitigate key operational risks and costs.

Through their assessments, line of business managers will be able to identify problem areas and drive what needs to be done to resolve or mitigate the potential impact on business objectives and operational risk losses. Key functional areas such as RIM support this process, both before the assessment by providing policy and implementation support, and after by assisting in the creation and execution of a remediation plan.

SET UP A RISK FRAMEWORK

Ideally you should create a set of controls with which to measure risk across the enterprise. Not all of these controls may be applicable to all lines of business. However, the set of Records and Information Management risk controls must be mandatory regardless of the role performed such as human resources or marketing, and regardless of location.

To meet regulatory compliance and legal requirements, you should ensure that all risks associated with the information lifecycle are managed within the context of policies, procedures, industry standards, and best practices.

For more guidance and insight download [Risk Control: An Advisory and Action Guide](#)



Need more information,
help or advice?