ADVANCING FROM RIM TO IG – BEYOND YOUR PROJECT PLAN

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An organization's advancement to information governance (IG) from records and information management (RIM) is a far-reaching endeavor. This transformation relies upon collaboration among multiple disciplines across your organization. Realizing this level of cooperation is no simple task, begging the questions:

> ➢ With whom in your organization is this alliance relevant?
>
> ➢ What is the unifying premise?
>
> ➢ How are these coalitions accomplished?
>
> ➢ What can frustrate the creation and viability of these critical relationships?

We'll use these questions to examine this crucial IG advancement aspect, but first – context. While numerous definitions of IG exist, I offer (and endorse) The Sedona Conference® version:

> *Information governance is the comprehensive, interdisciplinary framework of policies, procedures and controls used by mature organizations to maximize the value of an organization's information while minimizing associated risks by incorporating the requirements of e-discovery, RIM and privacy / security into the process of making decisions about information.*

Plainly stated, aligning an organization's information-centric disciplines within an IG platform can support cohesive, information-oriented decision-making. Further, while related, IG is distinct from and broader than RIM.

So, how do you build a comprehensive IG framework? What priorities must comprise your interdisciplinary construct checklist?

INTERDISCIPLINARY IMPERATIVES

An understanding of your organization's culture type informs your IG implementation. IG Program *Tone at the Top* is strong and energetic.

Now comes cross-functional coalescence – developing a comprehensive, interdisciplinary alliance.

So, which disciplines must come together?

In your organization, they could include:

Privacy

Legal Hold Program

Information Technology

Information Security

Ethics and Compliance

Records Management

Contract Administration

Enterprise Risk Management

Business Continuity

Building an IG Program **IS NOT** *empire-building*. It **IS NOT** intended to trigger *turf battles*. Instead, IG encourages an environment for shared business benefit.

The disciplines must engage for mutual purpose. Without information, not one of them can perform their jobs. Framing these disciplines within an IG construct will facilitate collaboration for optimizing the value of information and minimizing information-related risk.

What will unify these disciplines?

Easy – the information.

Information is the fulcrum upon which all business tilts. It is imperative that the previously-detailed disciplines, or those in your organization similar to them, align to focus on the realities associated with this crucial business asset:

- Information serves as evidence of business transactions
- It facilitates business process, operations, and other business activities
- Information supports regulatory compliance

As an organization's business presence and saturation grows, so goes its risk. Information provides a foundation upon which your organization's near-term objectives, its pace of change, and its long-range goals are decided.

This alignment **IS NOT** a take-over. It is cooperation *vis-a-vis* information. With IG, every information-centric discipline – consequently – all employees share responsibility for your organization's information.

How is this interdisciplinary alliance realized?

An IG framework does not occur spontaneously.

It must be built, collaboratively, as an integrated program. So, what should you think about? What must be considered?

What must you incorporate as you establish this interdisciplinary platform?

- ✓ Your organization's influencers – both internal and external
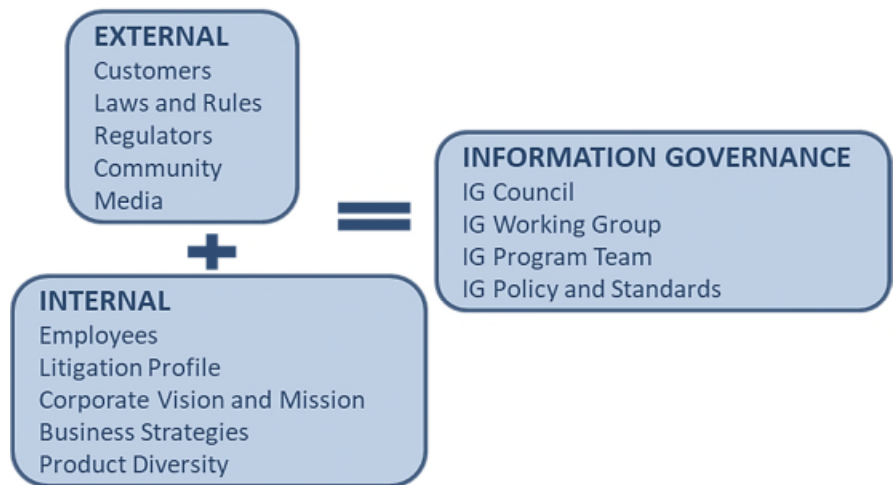- ✓ Principles to inform your IG Program

✓ IG Program roles and responsibilities

✓ IG Council Charter

✓ Communication means and methods

Influencers

Internal and external influencers shape the objectives, course, and focus of an organization **AND** its information. Accordingly, building an IG Program in response to and in concert with external and internal influencers supports internal policy and external regulation while enhancing the engagement and support of your organization's numerous and relevant disciplines.

EXTERNAL
Customers
Laws and Rules
Regulators
Community
Media

+

INTERNAL
Employees
Litigation Profile
Corporate Vision and Mission
Business Strategies
Product Diversity

=

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE
IG Council
IG Working Group
IG Program Team
IG Policy and Standards

Which of these elements influence your organization?

Principles

Principles inspire action. They establish a basis for existence. Decide which / that all of the following principles will inform the construct of your organization's IG Program:

- **Alignment:** Work in concert with the foundational tenets and business objectives of your organization.

- **Standardization:** Provide IG processes that can be applied consistently across all information-related disciplines.

- **Simplification:** Advance the IG Program by updating existing information-related policy and process. Use existing committees and roles to avoid duplication.

- **Accessibility:** Provide information creators and users a forum to escalate and address information-related risks.

- **Sustainability:** Maximize the value of the IG Program over time.

- **Transparency:** Clarify accountabilities and responsibilities.

- **Quality Control:** Allow for continuous improvement.

Roles and responsibilities

Executives, directors, managers and all other employees are accountable to your organization, to the customers / clients they serve, and to each other to govern information. Their IG roles and responsibilities are prescribed by the Program and include:

- **IG Program Staff**
  - ◆ The mainstay of the IG Program, they oversee IG Program advancement.

- **IG Program Executive Sponsor**
  - ◆ Appointed by the Board of Directors or the CEO, the sponsor is the IG Program champion.

- **IG Council / Committee**
  - ◆ Interdisciplinary subject matter experts who support IG policymaking and oversee IG projects.

- **IG Working Group(s)**
  - ◆ The IG Council's interdisciplinary implementation mechanism(s).

- **Employees**
  - ◆ Responsible for IG Program compliance.

Some roles are consultative; some oversee and some implement. Explicitly defined roles will assure that IG Program tasks are accomplished and requirements and processes are followed.

IG Council Charter

This document supports the IG Council's collaboration with and guidance of those having IG roles. The Charter must detail the following Council attributes:

- Purpose
- Responsibilities
- Membership
- Roles
- Membership Qualifications

Communication

Partnership and collaboration are critical as IG advances from RIM – communication is the mechanism. Communication channels must be formalized to involve the IG Program

Staff, the IG Program's Council and Working Group(s), and your organizations' employees and executives.

Communication must be continuous and systemic, optimizing interaction, interdependency and cooperation, and may include:

- Mandatory IG education and training, to include during on-boarding
- Quarterly IG newsletters
- Periodic IG Awareness Campaigns
- An annual attestation to an IG-related question(s) on your organization's Ethics or Compliance Certification

The success of the IG Program will be strengthened as communication is optimized. The IG Program Staff, its Council and Working Group(s) are both supporters and benefactors of these communication means and methods.

What can challenge these INTERDISCIPLINARY IMPERATIVES?

A cohesive, interdisciplinary platform will enable your organization's successful advancement from IG to RIM – BUT – don't lose sight of the prerequisites, culture and *Tone at the Top*.

Culture matters a great deal to successful IG Program outcomes. Compel and leverage executive support for your IG Program advancement.

The volume of information, particularly electronically-stored information (ESI), is growing rapidly. IG will enable the management of your organization's information, as the technical challenges and the unprecedented legal issues of the digital age increase. **Your interdisciplinary IG program will unite for business good.**

References:

Advancing from RIM to IG – Beyond your Project Plan

Chapter I – The Culture Dynamic

Chapter II – Tone at the Top

Cohasset Associates | ARMA International 2016 | 2017 Information Governance Benchmarking Survey White Paper: Transforming Information Management

Coming Next:

Chapter IV – Gaps, Threats and Risks will detail the attributes necessary to support a current-state assessment of the maturity of your organization's existing RIM program.

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About Karen S. Knight, CCEP

Ms. Knight is a Principal Consultant with *Cohasset Associates*. Her experience as a Chief Compliance Officer for over 20 years informs her consulting engagements. Ms. Knight's design of compliant and sustainable Information Governance Programs includes governance policies and standards, legal hold processes, retention schedules, training and education, and technology enablers. Mitigating the regulatory and legal risks of governing information, Ms. Knight integrates and aligns records management and information governance disciplines, addressing privacy, information security, ethics and compliance, contract and procurement, and data breach prevention. She is a white paper author and frequent speaker and workshop leader on these and many other information-related topics.   Ms. Knight can be reached at karen.knight@cohasset.com.

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