

Role and responsibilities of an Executive Sponsor

1 Introduction

The *Information and records management standard* requires a designated Executive Sponsor. That person has strategic and managerial responsibility for overseeing information and records management.

An Executive Sponsor should:

- be a person reporting to the administrative head of the organisation – the Chief Executive
- have organisation-wide influence, particularly within the upper tiers of the organisation
- have appropriate strategic and managerial skills
- be able to liaise closely with information and accountability stakeholders
- understand how to promote and encourage information and records management in the organisation.

In a larger organisation, an Executive Sponsor does not need to have specialist information and records management skills. An Executive Sponsor is not usually involved in the day-to-day operations.

In a small organisation, the same person may manage information and records management and also take on the Executive Sponsor role, or the Chief Executive may take on the Executive Sponsor role.

Ultimately, the administrative head remains responsible for ensuring that information and records management is implemented and that the organisation complies with the Public Records Act 2005.

2 Key responsibilities of the Executive Sponsor

The Executive Sponsor champions the importance of information and records management among the organisation's leadership. The aim is for everyone in an organisation to see information and records management as an integral part of a business operating effectively.

The Executive Sponsor is responsible for:

- ensuring that the strategy and policy adopted by the organisation supports information and records management
- being involved in strategic and operational planning to align information and records management with the corporate objectives and business activities of the organisation
- liaising with business units to ensure that information and records management is integrated into work processes, systems and services
- overseeing the budget for information and records management, and ensuring the resources needed to support information and records management are known and sought in funding decisions
- ensuring that staff with appropriate skills are available to implement information and records management strategies
- monitoring and reviewing information and records management to ensure that it is implemented, transparent, and meets business needs.

The Executive Sponsor's role extends beyond their organisation. They are responsible for cooperating and liaising with Archives New Zealand about monitoring and reporting on compliance. They should network with Executive Sponsors in other organisations to cooperate and align best practice processes.

3 How the Executive Sponsor can fulfil this role

When an organisation aligns its information and records management to its business objectives, it can add value to its organisation's products and services. Information and records management is an investment that an organisation can reuse and exploit. The Executive Sponsor should implement effective information and records management strategies and policies by:

- encouraging the organisation to value information and records management
- aligning information and records management to business objectives
- facilitating strategic partnerships
- increasing efficiency and lowering costs.

When an information and records management strategy is planned and developed, this is the perfect time to align them to the organisation's business and ensure that they support business operations.

The Executive Sponsor can promote the value of the organisation's assessment of its information and records management needs. They can oversee the incorporation of information and records management requirements into business processes and systems design. This will support business operations and service delivery.

The Executive Sponsor's position in the organisation means they can influence changes to the organisation's attitudes to information and records management. They can help to develop a strong culture focused on managing information appropriately. They can act as a broker between business groups and the information and records management staff to ensure that business imperatives, effective information and records management work together.

The Executive Sponsor can change attitudes by leading by example. They can ensure that they understand and use organisational systems, and encourage their own staff to do likewise.

The Executive Sponsor can use their strategic skills to ensure information and records management strategies are efficient and maximise the funds allocated to them. They can encourage effective information and records management practices to:

- generate savings across the organisation
- prevent information being kept longer than necessary
- prevent critical information being lost.

An organisation can experience very real costs from lost opportunities, lost collaborations, poor decision making, and strategic mistakes. These losses are sometimes due to a lack of information. Improved information flows can improve the quality of decision making, provide the basis to maintain products and services effectively, and drive collaboration and innovation. They can also improve transparency around government operations and increase the organisation's public profile. This can help to increase business.