

Effective information and records management

1 Introduction

Information and records are at the core of business and are key strategic assets.

Information and records management is the discipline that allows information and record assets to be governed, protected, and prioritised. It helps to build business capability and increases the strategic value of information and records.

Effective information and records management enables good business practices in the present and helps to prepare organisations for good business practices in the future. With effective information and records management organisations ensure they have meaningful, reliable and usable information and records available when their business needs it. It also provides mechanisms for ensuring accountability and managing risk.

Information and records management is complex. The volume of information and records generated is challenging. Trying to use the same tools and processes to manage all parts of an organisation's information and records is usually not an effective approach. Information managers need to collaborate with business groups and their Executive Sponsor to define how to create, manage, use and reuse business information and records.

2 Defining effective information and records management

To be effective, information and records management needs to be designed, focused on strategic objectives, integrated with relevant systems, and focused on long-term outcomes.

Designed	Strategies must be considered before a system or solution is implemented. They must complement the relevant business process and be tailored to the specific issues and risks the business faces.
Focused on strategic objectives	Information and records management must enable effective and efficient conduct of business by the organisation. However, effective information and records management should also be valuable for the broader business sector and the wider community. Implementing effective information and records management practices offers a business the opportunity to consider benefits more strategically, instead of focusing on meeting the needs of a single process or urgent demand.
Integrated with relevant systems	In organisations, strategies should be designed and implemented for all system environments that store business information and records that are high value, high risk, or both.
Focused on long-term outcomes	Strategies provide organisations with information and records that make the organisation's current operations more effective. Those strategies also need to set out what the organisation is going to need from its business information and records over the long term.

3 Responsibilities of Executive Sponsors

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 support 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.

More information about executive sponsors may be found in "[Executive Sponsor - Role and responsibilities](#)" in the Archives New Zealand Records Toolkit.

4 Responsibilities of information managers

Information and records management impacts all areas of business, so information managers must get involved at numerous transition points, and where risk is high. These include: system and process design, information and records sharing and risk, and managing information and records for accountability and value.

4.1 System and process design

To create a robust system and process design, an information manager must:

- facilitate the specification of processes for creating, structuring and managing information and records according to business needs
- help to develop, integrate, upgrade, decommission systems, and migrate to new systems, including outsourced or cloud services
- implement training and support for users to understand, leverage and use business information and records.

4.2 Information and records sharing and risk

To manage any risks involved in sharing information and records, an information manager must:

- identify and address barriers to information and records sharing and reuse, within and between organisations, and with the public
- support information and records security staff by identifying and implementing information and records security requirements
- identify information and records risks and contribute to enterprise risk assessments.

4.3 Managing information and records for accountability and value

To improve accountability and understand value, an information manager must:

- facilitate the identification of core information and records required to support business processes
- identify strategies for change management, legacy data management and long-term digital continuity
- identify the necessary attributes of information and records integrity to support the organisation's accountability requirements.