

Having Confidence, Seeking Common Ground Are Keys to Launching IG

Save to myBoK

by Mary Butler

In the closing keynote of the 2016 [Managing Electronic Records Conference](#) Wednesday in Chicago, speaker Randolph Kahn, Esq., acknowledged that after two days of presentations about information governance (IG), attendees would likely go home feeling overwhelmed. This is doubly so for attendees currently involved in IG projects in their own organizations. However, Kahn's presentation, "Building a Practical Plan for 2020: Measure Twice Cut Once," offered a confidence boost of sorts for records management professionals across all industries.

Believe in Your Plan

Many people who are launching IG programs are concerned first and foremost that they won't be able to convince their organization's employees to change how they use and store information they already work with. However, an audience member pointed out that employees are already making decisions countless times per day. For example, every time they get an email, they make a decision about whether to save, read, or delete it. Giving them guidelines about when and how long to keep an e-mail might be an incremental step, but it's a small step toward better IG. Or, if a company has a shared drive or uses Sharepoint, start setting rules for how long information can stay in each of these places.

Kahn mentioned that a pharmaceutical client of his, an employee keen on starting an IG program, developed an IG plan but didn't tell her CIO because she was afraid they wouldn't be supportive. When the CIO eventually learned of the plan she asked, "If you believe there's value, why didn't you come to me? If you truly believe and had a conviction, why did you hide in your business unit?"

Kahn told attendees that when they get home from the conference, to "Decide what you want to do. If you have a vision, go with the vision. Don't baby-size it because you're insecure. Measure multiple times and cut once."

Take the Pulse of Your Organization

Before embarking on an IG program, the project leaders would do well to take their colleagues' "pulse" to find out how much support—or "love"—there is for IG throughout an organization.

"With no love comes the realization that plans will need to be rightsized. If you don't have love, it's like hitting your head against the wall and looking for a dose of reality. You'll have to pare back plans and visions," Kahn said.

But if IG proponents do find allies in their ranks, in places like the legal department or IT, Kahn advises forcing "yourself on them in the most pathetic, sickening, albeit professional kind of way."

It can be hard to find IG partners, but if you can find them, you need to stick close to them, Kahn says. One goal that everyone in an organization typically has in common is a desire to make the company money. In pitching IG, it's a good idea to appeal to that.

To build an IG program, one must "Think strategically and tactically, as opposed to pie in the sky ideas. If you don't get love from something you think is terrific, re-evaluate. The person paying for it might not agree. Their agenda wins. If they don't think it's worthy of funding, go back and think through why it doesn't help you think strategically."

Mary Butler is the associate editor at The Journal of AHIMA.

Original source:

Butler, Mary. "Having Confidence, Seeking Common Ground Are Keys to Launching IG" ([Journal of AHIMA website](#)), May 25, 2016.

Driving the Power of Knowledge

Copyright 2022 by The American Health Information Management Association. All Rights Reserved.