

# Information Governance Road Map Mile Marker 1—Travel Planning

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By Mary Reeves, RHIA

*Editor's Note: This article is the second in a series that provides a road map for implementing an information governance (IG) program in any organization. Each month a set of concepts will be discussed that tie to the IG Road Map Infographic developed by AHIMA. Any organization can take these implementation concepts and travel along the Road to Governance.*

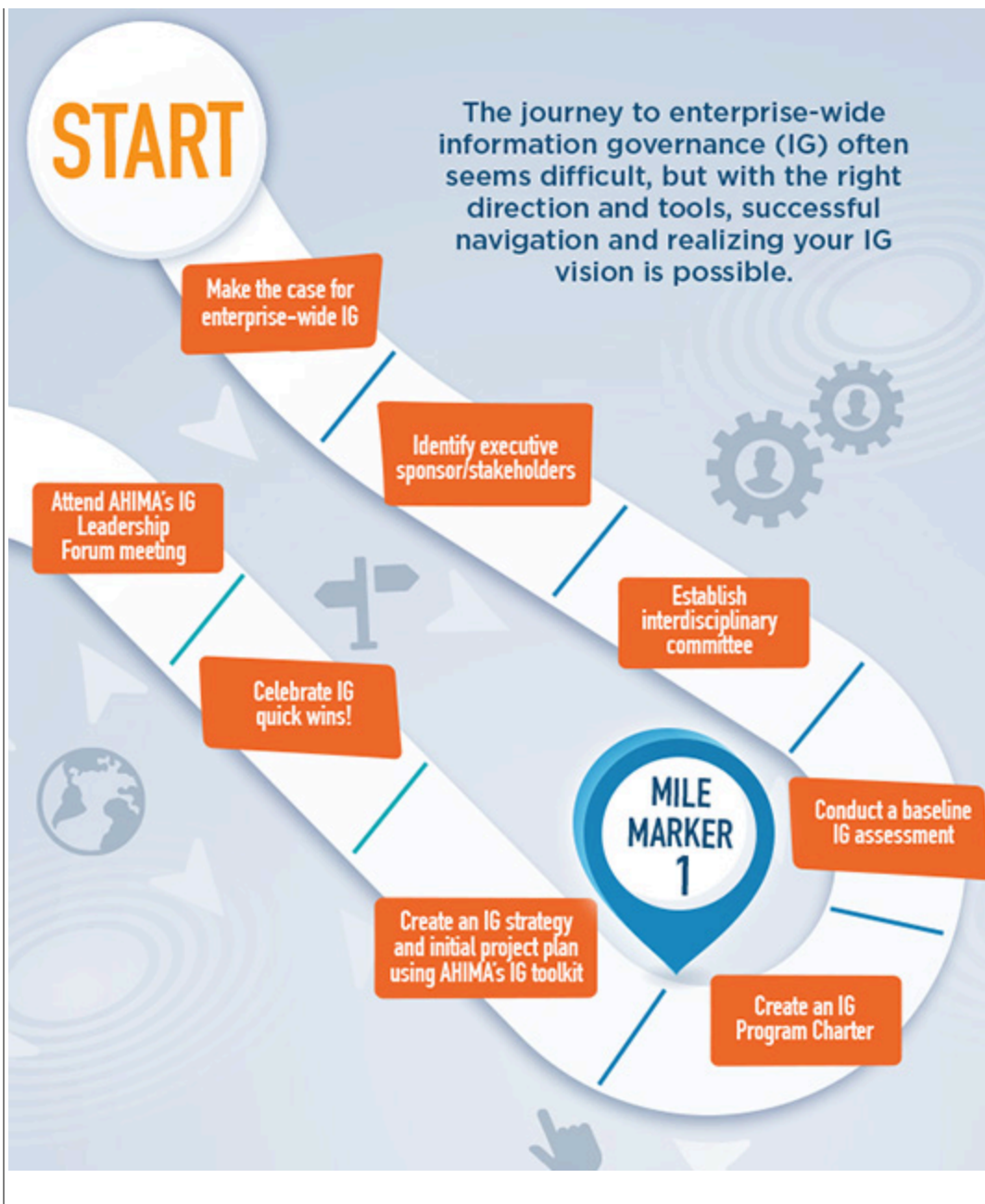
The road to information governance (IG) will support other organizational initiatives including reductions in cost of care, increased quality of information, increased quality of care, and support of population health activities.

Last month's article focused on getting started down this road and advised IG travelers on initial planning required for the trip, including:

- Making a business case for the information governance program
- Identifying an accountable member of senior leadership to sponsor the program
- Identifying stakeholders and establishing an interdisciplinary committee
- Creating an information governance charter

There are a few more essential planning steps before embarking on a road trip. When deciding where to travel, one must search the Internet and review vacation travel guides or travel blogs. This research and education ensures an enjoyable time with (hopefully!) no surprises. Similarly, the IG journey requires comprehensive education and travel planning prior to start-up.

## Information Governance Road Map



## Planning the Trip

Accountability is the cornerstone of the 10 information governance principles, and accountability is a trait that should be at the heart of senior leaders tasked with leading an IG program. The senior leader inspires support of IG initiatives and articulates the message that information is a valued resource that will be prioritized, recognized, formalized, and aligned with the organization's strategic plan. Rigorous education and training for those who wish to lead IG is necessary to ensure a successful journey on the road to establishing an effective IG program. Many training options are available, including IG webinars, face-to-face meetings, books, and Journal of AHIMA IG articles.

As the senior leader develops a vision for the IG journey, he or she must be capable of the following:

- Budgeting—ensuring an adequate financial commitment is made
- Planning—setting direction and tracking accomplishments of measurable business objectives
- Decision making—making or approving crucial decisions and resolving issues
- Managing expectations—managing expectations of the information governance program and keeping upper management informed
- Anticipating obstacles—overcoming objections and providing political insight

- Approving program milestones—signing off when milestones and program objectives are met<sup>1</sup>

## Keep Travel Blogs

AHIMA's Information Governance Adoption Model (IGAM)<sup>TM</sup> provides critical guidance that can keep users on the path toward IG. This model is the only IG maturity model for healthcare. The model:

- Defines five levels of accomplishments with 10 IG competencies rooted in the Information Governance Principles for HealthCare<sup>TM</sup>
- Defines over 75 characteristics of healthcare information governance practices at advancing levels of maturity
- Is rooted in information governance best practices, standards, and requirements
- Provides performance-driven maturity markers for each competency
- Creates a path to IGAM Level 5

## Packing for the Trip

On the information governance journey, an in-depth assessment of the organization's information governance policies, procedures, and practices for all types of information regardless of format or media is necessary. An assessment tool allows an organization to evaluate their information governance readiness according to a recognized set of principles and maturity levels. It will evaluate the current state's strengths, identify the weaknesses, and help create a pathway of progressive expectations to guide the organization through implementation of an enterprise information governance program.

The information governance maturity assessment can be used to guide incremental improvement over a period of one to five years. The assessment can be performed by an internally appointed team, by process owners, or with external support. For health systems, the assessment may be performed at or by each organization with findings summarized to highlight variation across the system. Findings should be discussed by the interdisciplinary information governance council/committee to develop consensus about functions that are most in need of improvement based on their potential to improve operational performance and reduce cost—or because they represent a compliance risk.<sup>2</sup>

## Create a Trip Itinerary

The project plan for IG implementation requires assessment, analysis, and, finally, timing. Successful projects happen through effective management and project planning. Information governance is an overarching enterprise-wide initiative, one that requires some degree of project management for success. The IG program can start as a group of initial projects, or one project at a time that builds up to an IG program over time.

The project plan for an information governance initiative includes: initiation and planning; project execution; tasks; project monitoring; and project closure. Each IG project has a start and end date, a designated person responsible for each task, milestones, and status tracking. See the AHIMA Information Governance Toolkit 1.0 for a sample project plan at [www.ahima.org/infogov](http://www.ahima.org/infogov).

## Which Road to Take?

Once the necessary planning for the trip has been completed an organization will be ready to embark on the journey. There is only one final decision to make: Which road will be taken to information governance? Read the last verse of Robert Frost's iconic poem, "The Road Not Taken," and decide:

*I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by.  
And that has made all the difference.*

## Acknowledgment

AHIMA thanks ARMA International for use of the following in adapting and creating materials for healthcare industry use in IG adoption: Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles® and the Information Governance Maturity Model. [www.arma.org/principles](http://www.arma.org/principles). ARMA International 2013.

## Notes

[1] Smallwood, Robert F. *Information Governance: Concepts, Strategies, and Best Practices*. John Wiley and Sons: Hoboken, NJ, 2014.

[2] Kloss, Linda. *Implementing Health Information Governance: Lessons from the Field*. AHIMA Press: Chicago, IL, 2015.

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