

# Information Governance Roadmap: Mile Marker 1—Engaging IG Leadership and Celebrating Quick Wins

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By Ann Meehan, RHIA

*Editor's Note: This article is the third 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.*

Congratulations to all the healthcare organizations that have formal information governance (IG) programs well underway, and who are following the road map AHIMA has laid out. In the first article of this series in the March 2016 issue, the author made a case for IG in healthcare, with an emphasis on forming a multidisciplinary committee and developing a charter. Likewise in the April installment, the author promoted the idea of assessing an organization's current IG status, discussed the training of key stakeholders, and reviewed how to develop an implementation plan. This month, the road to information governance speeds forward, with mile marker 2 in sight.

## Honk Your Horn!

Once an IG committee is in place, it can begin taking steps to formally address issues and challenges to maintaining trustworthy information. The IG committee can start with a pain point, such as an information/data breach, unfavorable audit results, or a patient complaint. Information disposition and retention costs may surface as an organization prepares for budgeting, and the question of "Do we really need to continue storing this information?" is posed. These are mere examples but present a wonderful opportunity to gain some quick wins and move toward aligning the IG committee with the organization's goals of quality patient care, cost avoidance, and risk mitigation.

As noted previously, it is important that the IG committee is not a working committee, which spends its allotted time working through details and actions. Rather, it should be the group where activities are reported on. Sub-groups and teams can be formed to work on the various projects and tasks necessary to improve the value of information. These sub-groups and teams then report to the IG committee and discuss the status of projects, identify any barriers, and identify any need for additional support or escalation.

As the IG program gains momentum through successful projects, it's important that these wins are openly and broadly communicated. First, members of the IG committee and any sub-groups should know when there are successes. This is critical for rewarding the team through praise and positive reinforcement which will keep the team motivated and engaged. Also, the C-suite should be made aware of the wins and benefits, both tangible and intangible, to the organization—which helps the C-suite see the value of IG. Lastly, wins should be advertised organization-wide. A 30-second "elevator speech" can quickly communicate to others what has been achieved.

## Redirecting, Make a Legal U-Turn

Likewise, don't be overly critical of the team or leadership when a project does not succeed. Failure is bound to occur and is an opportunity to learn and move forward. Blogger Natalie MacNeil, an entrepreneur, reviews the steps to addressing failure in a blog post.<sup>1</sup>

"Move forward. Do not dwell on what could have been. Reach out to your network to identify new opportunities. Social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Visual CV can connect you to other entrepreneurs and professionals while building your credibility and personal brand," MacNeil writes. "This is perhaps the most important rule of failing: Do not be

afraid to fail again. Even incredibly successful entrepreneurs like Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Oprah Winfrey, and Ralph Lauren have experienced failure.”

While this advice is directed to entrepreneurs, the same concepts can be applied to IG initiatives. Unsuccessful initiatives may be evidenced by unrealistic timelines. These are not really failures but may just need to be adjusted and communicated to key stakeholders. Additionally, scope creep is common when managing the types of projects that fall under an IG program. Keep a watchful eye on any additions to scope that may derail a project.

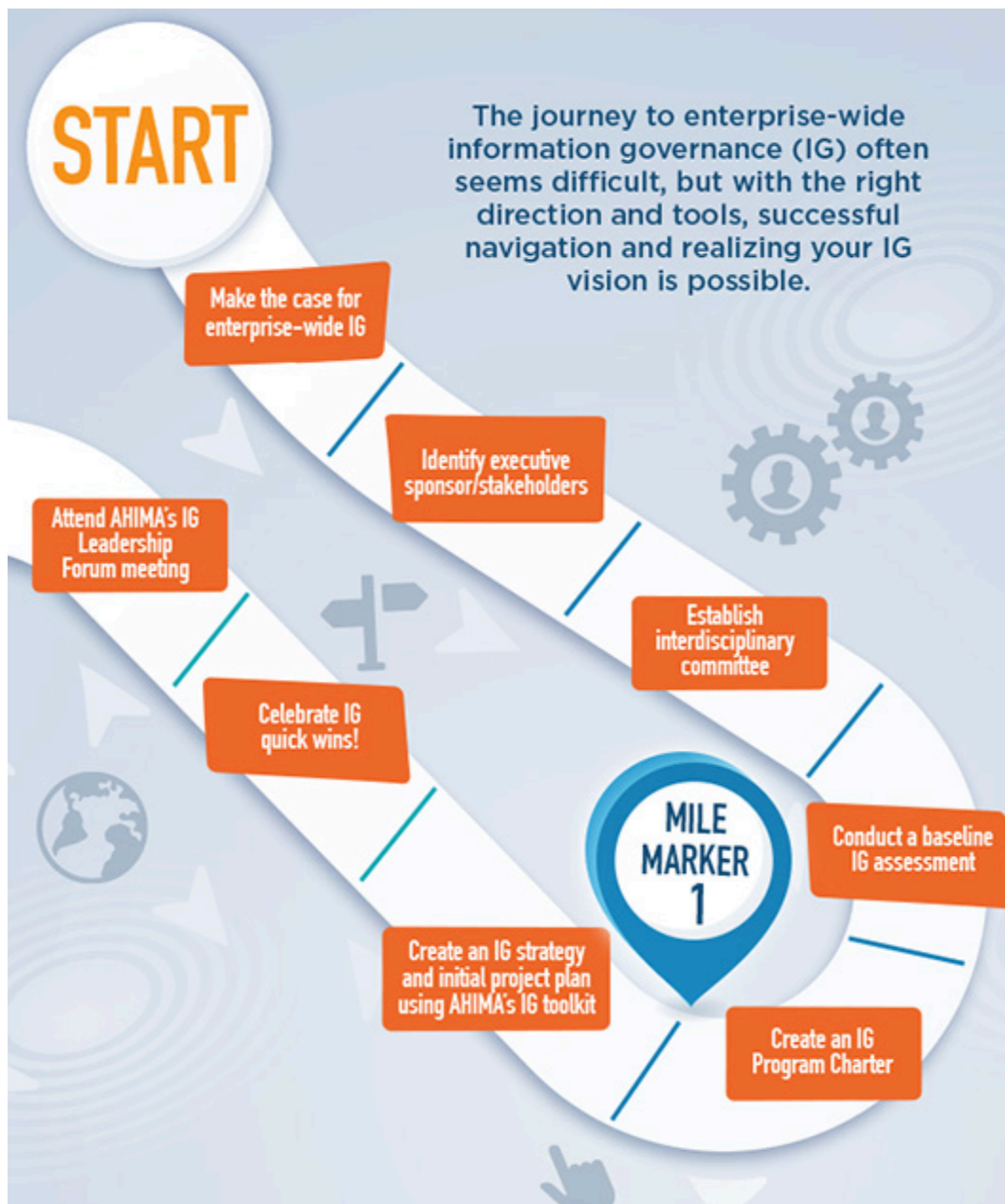
## Keep an Eye on the Map

As the journey continues, it's necessary to look at the map to keep current on the landscape. IG requires ongoing learning and keeping current with industry and regulatory changes that require trustworthy information. To keep IG skills up-to-date, HIM professionals should participate in face-to-face leadership summits, forums, and boot camps, as well as webinars that focus on IG concepts and implementation strategies. Take advantage of the many emerging sources of IG news, such as AHIMA and the Information Governance Initiative. Participate in IG blogs through [www.igiq.com](http://www.igiq.com) and AHIMA's Engage Community Information Governance and Standards. Readers can share their experiences with peers and look to those peers to provide insights and lessons learned.

William T. Oravec, managing partner and chief consultant with WTO Associates, based in New Haven, CT, recently attended AHIMA's Information Governance Boot Camp in Germantown, MD. “Stepping back to reassess our migration strategy in the new era of healthcare, focusing on population health, value-based contracting and accountable care seemed like obvious next steps after the cumulative efforts of EHR implementation/optimization and transition to ICD-10 entering 2016,” Oravec says. “Given the objectives of these information-driven healthcare initiatives, attending AHIMA's Information Governance Boot Camp appeared to be a vital prerequisite to fine-tuning our strategy and to ensure harmonization of these substantial, mission critical healthcare initiatives.”

Oravec added that Information Governance Boot Camp “graduates” need to continually maintain their edge as local subject matter experts.

## Information Governance Road Map



## Name a Designated Driver

There is a designated driver for each segment of the IG journey, and that individual is the IG leader. In most cases, no one is sitting in that leadership position today in healthcare organizations. Interestingly, other industries such as finance, technology, law firms, and insurance companies adopted information governance programs and established IG leaders years ago. It's time for healthcare to get on board.

The emerging leader in IG is the chief information governance officer (CIGO). The CIGO, which is a prominent position in the IG programs of other industries, is responsible for leading all things related to information governance for the enterprise. This individual is the face of IG across the organization. The CIGO leads the IG committee; ensures that IG-related activities and projects are moving forward; communicates wins to the committee, to the C-suite, and to the governing board; and ensures that the enterprise workforce is informed. The CIGO is also responsible for communicating and securing budgetary and human resource needs.

Depending on the size and complexity of the organization, the CIGO role may be a newly approved role, or it could be absorbed into a current role, such as the vice president of HIM also taking on the role of CIGO. The key is to ensure that the

CIGO can focus time and attention on the activities of IG and can differentiate IG from the many areas of focus falling under IG oversight.

## Moving Ahead at 70 MPH

Next month, the “Road to Governance” will continue along the journey with guidance in implementing IG project plans, performing gap analyses, and using tools for tracking and measuring success. Until then, enjoy the trip!

### Note

[1] MacNeil, Natalie. “[Failure Leads to Success](#).” She Takes on the World blog. April 17, 2009.

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