



Records Management Tip

Records management advice prepared for GNWT records professionals by the Records Management Unit, PWS

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Getting Started Series

The Getting Started series looks at how to start setting up a records management program.

Planning the Records Management Program

Having a Plan

There are many components to a records management program. It is useful to put together a plan that will list everything that needs to be done, help you prioritize, and give you goals to achieve.

There are several different types of plans. Two types of plans are typically used in records management programs:

- **Strategic plans** take a broad look at an entire program. They identify the program's mission and goals, how it intends to achieve those goals, and how it will know if it achieved those goals. Alternatively, the plan may identify issues that are affecting the program and strategies for addressing those issues.
- **Project plans** are detailed plans for carrying out a specific project. They typically outline the different steps required to complete a project, identify milestones, and establish deadlines.

This Records Management Tip will focus on the Records Management Strategic Plan.

The Records Management Strategic Plan

The purpose of a Records Management Strategic Plan is to set out the long-term goals of your department's records management program. A typical strategic plan will contain the following components:

- **Mission Statement:** In one or two sentences, describe the purpose of the program. Your mission statement should include a statement about what your purpose is and what your program seeks to accomplish; a statement about what activities you intend to do to achieve your purpose; and a statement of the values that your program will uphold.
- **Vision Statement:** a vision statement is a description of how a successful records management program will look. Its purpose is to give yourself and others a mental image of what you want to achieve.
- **Strategic Analysis or Situational Assessment:** The analysis or assessment looks at the environment in which the records management program is situated. Find out how your stakeholders perceive your program. These include clients within your department as well as people outside the

department who are affected by your program. Identify internal strengths and weaknesses. Identify external opportunities and threats (a.k.a. SWOT analysis). Evaluate the effectiveness of your program in terms of how efficient and effective it is.

- **Strategies:** a strategy is the answer to how you intend to achieve your mission and address any problems. Your strategic plan may have several strategies, all designed to help you achieve the mission and vision of the records management program.
- **Goals and objectives** outline how you are going to accomplish the vision and strategies. Goals give you more detail on what needs to be accomplished in order to fulfill your mission, achieve your vision, and implement your strategies. Objectives are measurable targets that achieve your goals.

Action Plans

Action plans or work plans finish the job that you started with your strategic plan. Action plans identify each task that needs to be completed in order to achieve the goals of your strategic plan. You will need two types of action plans:

- A top-level action plan shows you how each goal will be achieved. You may want to include this as part of your strategic plan.
- Individual action plans for each service that your program delivers. These plans identify:
 - The goal that you are trying to achieve.
 - The strategy that you are following.
 - The objective that you are trying to reach.
 - The person or work group that is responsible for meeting the objective.
 - The timeframe in which the action is to be completed.

Where to go for help and more information

Strategic planning begins at home. Assemble a group of co-workers and managers who are interested in your records management program. Together, work through the mission of your program and what you want to achieve. Records Management, Public Works and Services, can give you an outside perspective on your program. PWS also offers training courses that discuss planning for records management programs.

Several websites may be of use:

- Industry Canada: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/instco-levc.nsf/en/h_qw00050e.html
- The Free Management Library: http://www.managementhelp.org/plan_dec/str_plan/str_plan.htm
- The Alliance for Non-Profit Management: http://www.allianceonline.org/FAQ/strategic_planning