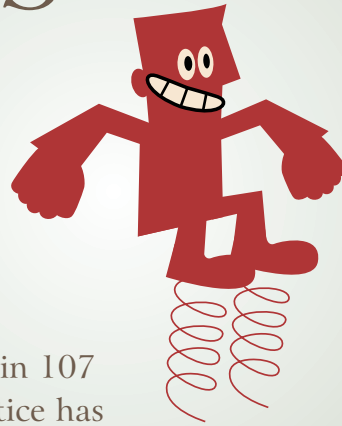# Transform your EDRMS outcomes
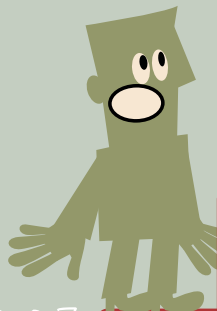
Michelle Linton and Kevin Dwyer

As the result of research conducted in 2011 in 107 different organisations, a new model of practice has been developed which offers significant insights into what makes a successful EDRMS project.

80%

60%

40%

0%

In every records manager's heart there is a vision. It is of an audience within their organisation that embraces using the EDRMS. It is of managers happily opening their doors to discuss how to manage records better. It is of receiving a pat on the back from the CEO for securing the information of the organisation, and making everyone's work life easier.

For many managers the vision is just a light at the end of a long, dark tunnel of challenge, but for some managers there is actually some reality in the vision. They have, and continue to, transform notions of information and records management from a world of archiving fitting with the previous century and to be avoided, to one immersed in today's digital world where records and information management is everyone's responsibility and which is desirable.

Developing a framework in which to design and develop an approach to this transformation and reducing the failure rate of EDRMS projects has been our quest over the last three years. We started with the REX Project with Ausgrid (formerly EnergyAustralia) and believed we had the seeds of an approach even before RIM Professionals Australasia rewarded the project with the J Eddis Linton Award (Most Outstanding Group) for excellence and innovation in records management in 2010.

Quantitative research supported by RIM Professionals Australasia, conducted in 2011 with 107 organisations, confirmed some of our thoughts and revealed new paradigms which we presented at the 2011 inForum[1] conference and published, in part, in iQ magazine[2].

[1] http://www.rimpa.com.au/assets/2011/10/EDRMS-Experience_the_Difference A_study_of_success_factors_in_change_and_training.pdf
[2] note which magazine edition

The research gave both us and the records and information community significant insights into successful and unsuccessful EDRMS projects and the beginnings of a model for transformation, but not enough to translate into a model of practice.

We selected 20 of the original 107 organisations to represent a cross-section of the industry, and included equally those who achieved success in their project, and those who were deemed to have failed. They participated in further qualitative and quantitative analysis to find out the detail of the structure and execution of their project that underpinned their results. The end result of our research is the Transformation Model of Practice.

The Transformation Model of Practice
The Transformation Model of Practice comprises six critical components and 18 elements which describe the detail of each component. We tested the model using a set of diagnostic questions[3] with our research group and with organisations

Figure 1: EDRMS adoption environment

external to that group against the level of adoption achieved within their organisations, and made this diagnostic available to the industry to self-measure the current strength of adoption projects. The model is not limited to EDRMS implementations. It is equally a model of practice for taking strategic action to build EDRMS adoption post initial implementation.

The diagnostics comprises 72 comprehensive questions framed as statements, to which we ask for a true/false response, in order to gain as factual a response as possible. The responses prove the majority of elements must be in place for a transformation to high levels of EDRMS adoption by end users. Typical of the outcomes we have seen are the examples drawn from our research results illustrated in the Figure 2 & 3.
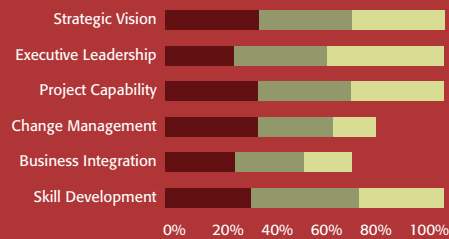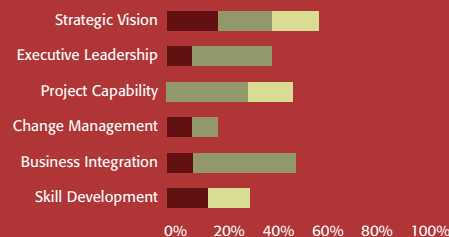
Figure 2: Successful project >80% adoption

Figure 3: Failed project <10% adoption

The Transformation Model of Practice is a non-linear model, and it is crucial to understand that as a key principle. There are not six steps to this model which, if taken in sequential order equal success. It is a model of practice, which applied to an organisation's particular environment, creates successful individual adoption of the EDRMS and good records and information management practices. The components each team focuses on improving, to maximise adoption within their environment, is dependent on the motivators and blockers to transformation in the organisation and its culture.

We can take the Strategic Vision component as an easy example. Unequivocally and not unexpectedly, strength in strategic planning is of benefit regardless of organisation size, particularly in driving Executive Leadership. However a small organisation with less than 100 end users is likely to be weak in the Strategic Vision component and still achieve the strength of leadership that will carry the

project to success. But our research shows that an organisation of over 500 end users, it is critical to demonstrate strength in Strategic Vision.

Although we have much more analysis to conduct as well as further research, there are some interesting qualitative observations we can make now.

The flow-on impact of good practice
As stated, the components of the Transformation Model of Practice are inter-related, not sequential. Implementing good practice in one component and/or element will have a flow-on positive impact on another component. This knowledge empowers the records team to build a strategic approach to increased adoption.

Let's say you undertake the diagnostic and the results indicate Executive Leadership within your organisation is weak. You may be generally strong in Project Capability and Skill Development, as many organisations are, but the lack of willing engagement by Leaders is a root cause of low adoption. You need to achieve these outcomes:
• Active sponsors who believe the EDRMS benefits the business
• Nomination from the Executive of managers to engage with the project team
• Participation by business units in meetings about the project

What are your options? At present many records managers (RM) are flummoxed. They ask for support, explain the

Unequivocally and not unexpectedly, strength in strategic planning is of benefit regardless of organisation size, particularly in driving Executive Leadership.

importance, and still don't get it from the Executive. At first you may think that you'd need to improve Executive Leadership, but the diagnostic analysis shows how the outcomes are achieved by operating in other components. > > > > >

[3] www.EDRMSadoption.com.au
[4] A high level of adoption is defined by the authors as being greater than 75% of end users targeted in the organisation project or programme.

>>>>> Look closely at the drivers from the Transformation Model of Practice in Table 1, and examine the outcomes of harnessing these to drive prioritisation by the Executive. Select the practice that provides the outcome that is a priority for you, and is most practical to apply in your

At the project team level, analysis of several variables reveals that project teams tend not to follow through on the actions required to cement in place the activities which we know drive adoption levels.

organisation. For maximum impact add all to your strategic plan and take the steps to implementing them over a defined time period.

Note: If one of the three desired outcomes is not listed as being positively or negatively impacted, then you can assume that current research data indicates the drivers in the left hand column have no impact on that specific outcome.

The at-risk demographic
The research provides us with the following demographic information: industry type, size of organisation, required number of end users and number of operating locations. Early analysis of these demographics has revealed a general industry risk and a project team behavioural risk to achieving high individual adoption rates of the EDRMS.

To us, it is self-evident that larger implementations are likely to need a more structured approach to implementing an EDRMS, but what is the point at which the number of targeted end users becomes a major project risk factor. The research to date has revealed this to be greater than 500. Although a structured approach with a high level of planning may be in place, the evidence points to, for example, a strong trend to a much higher level of disagreement on the objectives of the project, which is not evident in projects with a targeted number of end users below 500.

These projects are less stable overall than smaller projects.

Perhaps surprisingly, an increased number of locations do not appear to lead to general weakness within the Transformation Model Practice. This does not mean that these projects are not inherently more challenging to run and deliver results; just that it does not inhibit creating the best possible model of practice on which to run them.

Finish what you start
At the project team level, analysis of several variables reveals that project teams tend not to follow through on the actions required to cement in place the activities which we know drive adoption levels. For example, of the teams (54%) which provided templates for business units to undertake their own
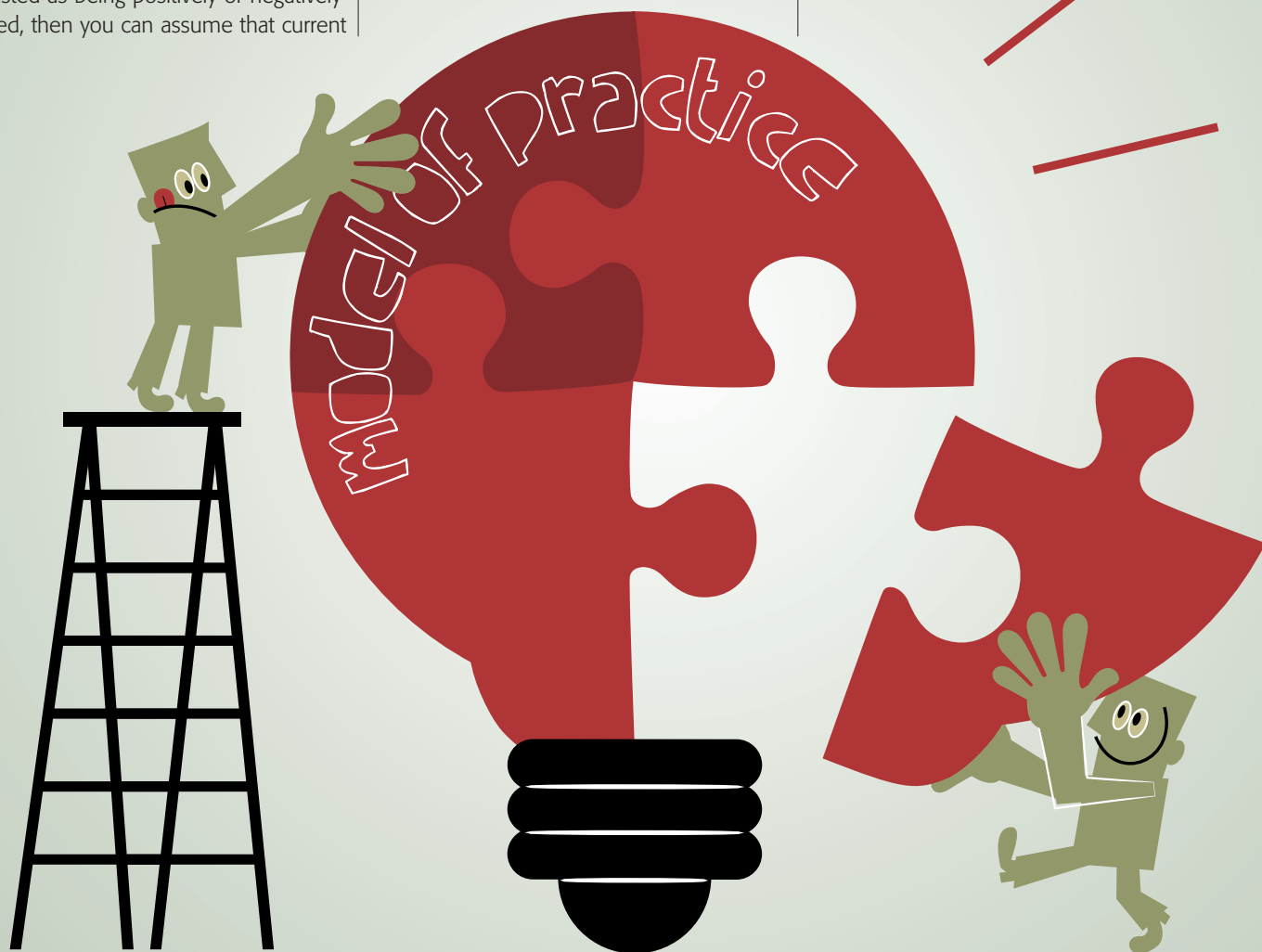
Table 1: Goal – Prioritisation of the EDRMS project by Executive

Practice/Drivers in Model	Outcomes
Strategic Vision: demonstrating return on investment from the EDRMS	• Increases probability of an active sponsor • Major positive impact on nomination of managers • Positive impact on participation by business
Executive Leadership: providing governance through a RM policy	• Increases probability of active sponsor • Slight positive impact on nomination of managers, but no policy has a major negative impact
Change Management: undertaking a documented stakeholder management plan	• Increases probability of active sponsor • Strong positive impact on nomination of managers, but no plan has a major negative impact • Major positive impact on participation by business
Change Management: undertaking undocumented stakeholder management activities	• Major positive impact on participation by business
Skill Development: experience in demonstrating how an EDRMS can improve business process	• Increases probability of active sponsor • Major positive impact on nomination of managers, and limited experience has a major negative impact • Major positive impact on participation by business

Appendix 1: Description of model components and elements

Component	Elements
Strategic Vision The level to which goals are defined and set, and business benefits analysed, and risks managed.	Clarity of purpose Evaluation of opportunities Return on Investment
Executive Leadership The commitment of executives and managers to prioritising the EDRMS programme over other initiatives competing for time and resources	Appropriate budget Governance Prioritisation
Project Capability The skills and knowledge available to the team and the degree of collaboration within the team and with outside stakeholders.	Team cohesion Analytical planning Effective execution
Change Management The planning and practices to engage with all stakeholders within the EDRMS project.	Communications Stakeholder management Performance management
Business Integration The level at which the RM team works with the business units to integrate the EDRMS into processes and drive business benefits.	File planning Process mapping Process re-engineering
Skill Development The breadth and availability of resources and the capability of the RM team to support the end users.	Training Coaching Support

file planning, 38% do not equip their people with the skills and knowledge to use the templates. It is excellent that there are an increasing number of organisations recognising that a successful devolved model of records management is necessary for EDRMS uptake, but it is time that 100% recognised the need to follow through actions to final outcomes. Half-baked approaches lead to increase frustration and disillusionment within a records team, and from the business units, and may be more damaging than taking no action at all.

In the months leading up to inForum 2013 we will continue the research to validate the Transformation Model of Practice. With increased data we will uncover the relationships between the elements of the model and the industry demographics

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(such as size and diversity), so that a weighting can be applied to each element. This will better inform the industry on what is critical for an EDRMS Transformation Model of Practice in each type of environment. To contribute to this research, and fully understand the model please visit <www.EDRMSadoption.com.au>.

The Authors

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