Transform your EDRMS outcomes

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.

BY **MICHELLE LINTON** AND **KEVIN DWYER**

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.

Story snapshot

- Patterns and characteristics: a key focus.
- Finds *all* relevant information, not just the *most* relevant.
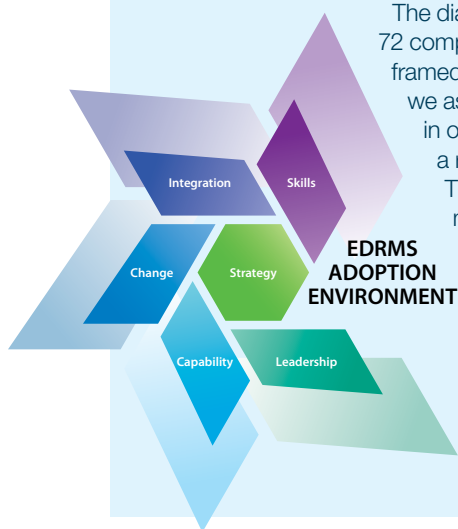- International environments require a specific approach.

Developing a framework in which to design and develop the approach to this transformation and reduce 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.

The Transformation Model of Practice

The Transformation Model comprises six critical components and 18 elements which describe the detail of each component. We have tested the model using a set of diagnostic questions[3] with our research group and organisations 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[4] by end users. Typical of the outcomes we have seen are the examples drawn from our research results illustrated in the Figure 1 & 2.

EDRMS ADOPTION ENVIRONMENT

Integration — Skills — Change — Strategy — Capability — Leadership

Figure 1: Successful project >80% adoption

Figure 2: Failed project <10% adoption

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].

The research gave 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 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 the culture of the organisation.

We can take the Strategic Planning component as an easy example. Unequivocally and not unexpectedly, strength in strategic planning is of benefit regardless of organisation size,
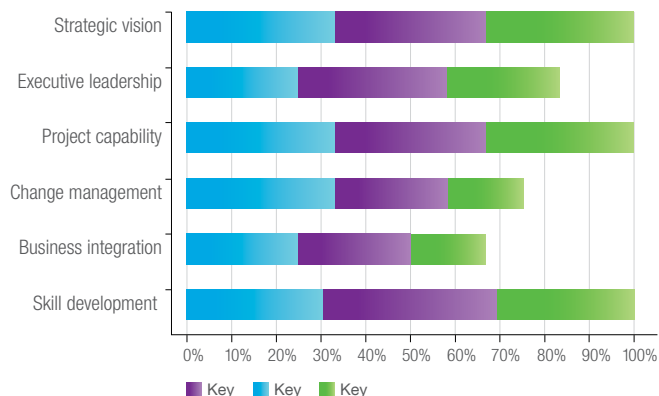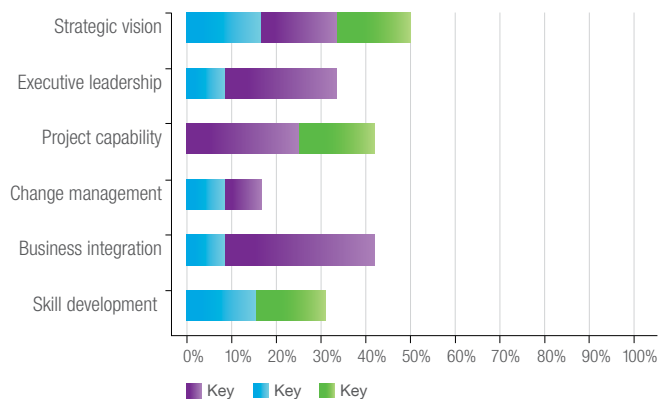
particularly in driving Executive Leadership. However a small organisation with less than 100 end users is likely to be weak in the strategic planning component and still achieve the strength of leadership that will carry the project to success. But our research shows it is critical for an organisation of over 500 end users to demonstrate strength in Strategic Planning.

Although we have much more analysis to do and will conduct 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 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

PRACTICE/DRIVERS IN MODEL	OUTCOMES
Strategic Planning: demonstrating return on investment from the EDRMS	• Increases probability of 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

Table 1: Goal – Prioritisation of the EDRMS project by Executive

What are your options? At present many records managers (RM) are flummoxed. They ask for support, explain the importance, and still don't get it from the Executive. At first you may think that you'd need to work on improvements in the area of Executive Leadership, but the diagnostic analysis shows how the outcomes are achieved by operating in other components.

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 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-obvious 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. 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 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

About the authors

MICHELLE LINTON,
Managing Director, Linked Training
Michelle is a Learning & Development professional with 24 years' experience in the planning, design and delivery of training programs. Michelle has developed and delivered innovative, outcome focused EDRMS training for over 30 government and private organisations since 2005. Michelle's pragmatic approach to learning strategies leading to application adoption has been enthusiastically welcomed by the industry, and she is a regular speaker at RIM events and contributor to industry magazines. Linked Training is the training partner in the REX project which was awarded the J.Eddis Linton Award for Excellence – Most outstanding group in 2010.
• She can be contacted at Michelle@LinkedTraining.com.au

KEVIN DWYER,
Director, Change Factory
Kevin is a Change Management professional with more than 30 years' experience in the planning, design and delivery of change management programs. Since 2001, and the establishment of Change Factory, he has been involved in many Change Management projects ranging from re-engineering of customs processes to reduce risk to creating and revising performance management systems to improve customer service outcomes at five-star resorts. His first EDRMS project was as the Change Management partner for the REX project which was awarded the J.Eddis Linton Award for Excellence – Most outstanding group in 2010.
• He can be contacted at Kevin.Dwyer@changefactory.com.au

to final outcomes. Half-baked approaches lead to increased 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 (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. **iQ**

• To contribute to this research, and fully understand the model please visit **www.EDRMSadoption.com.au**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1 http://www.rimpa.com.au/assets/2011/10/EDRMS-Experience_the_Difference-A_study_of_success_factors_in_change_and_training.pdf
2 November 2011
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 program.

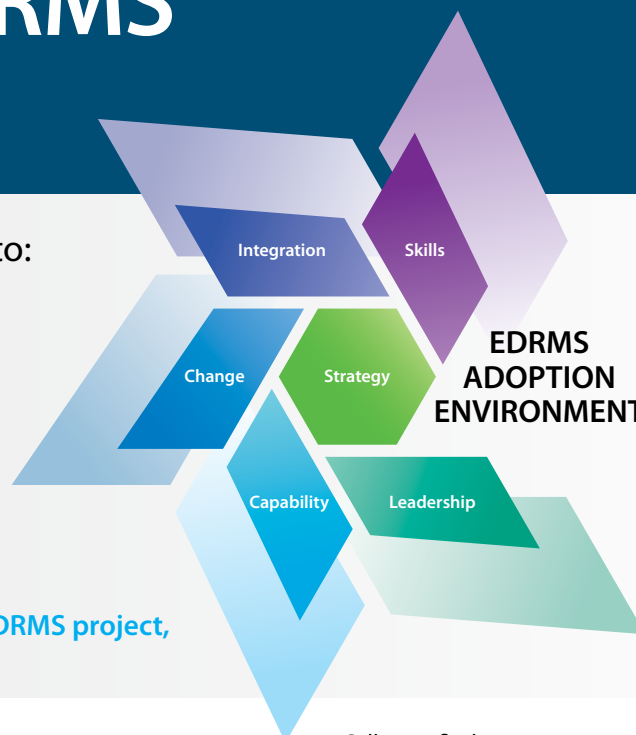| COMPONENT	ELEMENTS
Strategic vision The level to which goals are defined and set, and business benefits analysed, and risks managed.	• Clarity of purpose • Evaluation of opportunities • Return on Investment
Executive leadership The commitment of executives and managers to prioritising the EDRMS program 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

Appendix 1: Description of model components and elements

Chair
David Pryde MRIM
Email davidhp@xtra.co.nz

CEO
Kate Walker FRIM
Email kate.walker@rimpa.com.au
Mobile 0409 250 795

**Membership & Customer
Services Manager**
Maree Cooper
Email maree.cooper@rimpa.com.au

Finance Officer
David Webb
Email david.webb@rimpa.com.au

Marketing & Convention Officer
Kristen Keley MRIM
Email kristen.keley@rimpa.com.au

**Branch Manager, & Sales
& Sponsorship Coodinator**
Wendy Morris
Email wendy.morris@rimpa.com.au

ADDRESS FOR ALL
PO Box 276
St Helens TAS 7216

The principles of strategic planning

Conduct an environmental scan to collect data to answer questions about perceptions, needs, wants, and staff climate from all stakeholders and allow them to identify their 'future state'. The environmental scan is a key on-going process for internal and external honesty and openness to changing conditions. It identifies strengths, weaknesses, trends and conditions drawing from internal and external information.

4. Identifying the gaps: setting goals and objectives
The measurement between current performance and future state is known as the 'gap', and it allows you to identify areas that need improvement or enhancement. This gap analysis is usually organisation-wide in terms of strategic planning however limited, more granular assessments can aim at business direction, business processes, quality assurance, information technology, and finance or performance.

Goals are simply a clearer statement of the visions, specifying the milestones to be achieved if the vision is to become a reality.

Objectives are clearer statements of the specific activities and tasks needed to achieve the goals, with resources, key performance outcomes and measurements for success clearly specified.

5. Communication and buy-in
Strategic planning is a tremendous communication and marketing opportunity, but many don't use communications to their full potential. A communication plan must have 360-degree capability which will carry your messages but also allow stakeholders to 'buy into' the strategic planning process through their feedback.

By communicating regularly, advising people what is happening and openly discussing issues you will reduce or eliminate rumor; reduce fear of the unknown; get an honest staff climate from feedback or submissions; inspire stakeholders to follow the vision; and help prevent unwanted surprises.

Tools are a good thing in the right hands – and a marvel in the hands of an expert. Only training and experience can turn the right hands into an expert. I would like to finish with two quotes from our era that really say it all.

*"The Stone Age was marked by man's clever use of crude tools;
the information age, to date, has been marked by man's crude use of clever tools"*
– Unknown Author

"If you give people tools, [and they use] their natural ability and their curiosity, they will develop things in ways that will surprise you very much beyond what you might have expected."
– Bill Gates

David Pryde