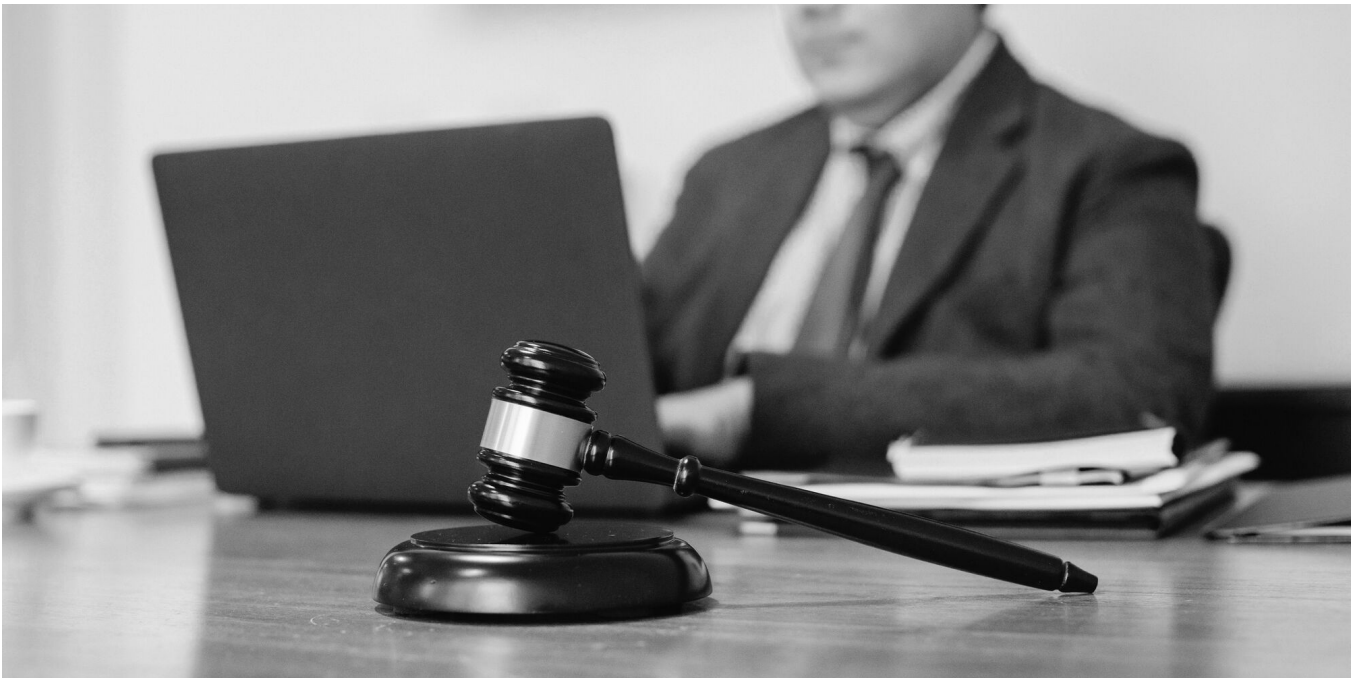# 5 Top Reasons to Create Your Information Governance System Now

08. May 2017, by Rogier Teo

Many IT managers, compliance officers, CISO's and general councils have been talking about the need for Information Governance systems for a long time, but are still reluctant to address it properly. This is understandable, because implementing a thorough Information Governance System can be complex and overwhelming. However, sticking your head in the sand and hoping for the best is not the answer, since the risks for neglecting Information Governance can be significant. It's critical to your business' success that the rapidly growing data volumes and regulations are managed appropriately.

Here are the top 5 reasons why you should invest in a proper Information Governance System.

1. Prepare for the Future

On 25 May 2018 the new EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will come to force. If you are an EU business, or are doing business with EU countries and store personal data, you

should prepare yourself for the ride. If you haven't started yet, you're already late and should do so ASAP.

Depending on how the regulations are interpreted, customers will be entitled to require you to move their personal data to your competitors or have all their data deleted from your systems (including backup tapes). This will all have to be done at no cost for the customers or users.

If you don't have the appropriate systems in place, you will be facing tedious and very expensive exercises. Now is the time to start getting ready for these shifts, as some straightforward investments in Information Governance will avoid countless headaches and costs in the future.

2. Efficiency

Imagine how much time and money could be saved if all the employees of your company could find the right documents and other content instantly, just because the information is exactly where it's supposed to be. Proper Information Governance will help you bring order to your data.

The volume is growing exponentially, and even if storage is getting cheaper, there is no reason for keeping all the useless junk. It impacts your IT infrastructure's performance and requires unnecessary resources. So why not just get rid of it? Proper Information Governance makes this easy.

3. Cleaning out the Closet

A litigation or investigation can come knocking on your door anytime, and once it has started and a legal hold has been put in place, you're no longer allowed to get rid of any documents or data. (The Enron guys can tell you what happens if you violate that rule.) That is why you should make an effort to defensibly delete data that you don't have to keep. Either because it's just not relevant, like newsletters and other SPAM, or it has exceeded its retention period. This way you can make sure that sensitive data is not lingering around longer than it needs to be.

4. Protect Your Data

Security from external and internal threats is an essential component of Information

Governance. With the right tools, you can monitor your company's baseline IT activity and be alerted when there is any activity that is out of the ordinary. For example, a proper system can prevent data theft by automatically scanning the content of emails and other electronic communication and thereby ensuring that only the right information leaves your company.

5. Be Prepared for Investigations and Litigations

Good Information Governance is the start of any response to e-discovery, litigation or other investigation. If you do not have proper Information Governance in place, you will find yourself scrambling, under conditions of high stress and hostility, to find and present the proper data. If you don't produce the documents fast enough, you can even be sanctioned. Implementing a proper system now will make the experience of any investigation or litigation much smoother, less stressful, and less costly from the start.

Approaching Information Governance the Right Way

If you want your Information Governance System to be effective you need to get the whole management involved, because it affects all aspects of your business. Make sure that all the stakeholders are aboard. This includes HR, IT, legal and compliance. This will also help you, because a purely technical solution won't do the job. The employees will have to be trained properly and made aware of the risks for the business, if they don't follow the basic rules.

Using the right tools that are priced appropriately for your company will also support its success; too often managers try to use a sledgehammer to break a nut. Even worse, solution providers try to sell the sledgehammer even when it's overkill. This will blow your budget and shoot acceptance down to zero.

Fortunately, you can take baby steps while building the system and, depending on how big your company is, break things down into smaller chunks. Trying to implement everything at once can potentially lead to failure.

Swiss FTS has been helping large and small companies throughout the nation to get their Information Governance Systems up to the highest standards. We have experience with almost every type and size of organization, and therefore can benchmark your current systems against your competitors, making sure you're ahead of the game.

Rogier Teo

Rogier Teo is a Founding Partner at Swiss FTS, and since starting the company in 2010 he has overseen the growth of the company from a few people working in a single room to a diverse multinational team with offices in Zurich, Lausanne, and Singapore.

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