



Module 5: Organisational Skills (Part 2)

PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION ONLINE PROGRAMME
DAWN WILLIAMS

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MODULE 5 TIME AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

In this module we are going to look at two organisational skills that are essential for an administrative professional:

Time management - research has shown that people who possess good time management skills are the highest achievers. It is not so much that we do not have enough time but more how we organise the time we have.

Records management - proper records management is the responsibility of everybody in the workplace. All employees should be aware of the importance of records management and be able to apply the principles of record keeping effectively.

MODULE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, you should be able to:

- Identify time management techniques and processes
- Identify external and internal time wasters
- Plan and prioritise each day's activities in a more efficient, productive manner
- Overcome procrastination
- Organize your workspace and workflow to make better use of time
- Delegate more efficiently
- Identify current problems with records management and how to prevent them
- Identify different formats of records and how to maintain them
- Analyse, classify and manage the life cycle of a record
- Establish alphabetic, numeric, and subject filing systems
- Develop procedures for records management using SANS 15489 as a guide
- Apply different methods to ensure the security of records and archives

CONCEPT OF TIME AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management is the act or process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, to increase effectiveness, efficiency, or productivity. Time management involves the following:

- Effective Planning
- Setting goals and objectives
- Setting deadlines
- Delegation of responsibilities
- Prioritizing activities as per their importance
- Spending the right time on the right activity

BENEFITS OF TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management plays a range of roles to an administrator. The following are some of the benefits of good time management skills:

REDUCED STRESS

Reduction of stress is one of the greatest time management benefits. By managing your time effectively and following an organized and prioritized schedule, you are bound to lead a life with relatively less stress and worries. Time management allows you to complete tasks on time, lowering levels of frustration. When your schedule is not intact, your head is a jumbled mess with what you must do, what you should do, and what you would like to do. As a result, you end up not doing anything. Planning your time schedule in advance helps you complete your work without adding stress and frustration.

PEACEFUL MIND

Managing your time helps you to achieve things on time and gives you feelings of relaxation. With a proper planned schedule, you will have enough time to relax. With proper time management, you do not have to worry about completing things since you have set up the schedule in such a way that everything will be done in an organized manner. This will prevent you from rushing and overworking. When everything is done on time, you have a sense of achievement, adding more to your peace and relaxation.

IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY

Another advantage of managing your time is an increase in your productivity. With a proper and effective time management plan, you have more time to complete more tasks, probably beyond your imagination. Instead of running here and there for completing tasks and ending up with none, you can use your time management plan for producing quality results. The extra time will not only let you achieve important tasks, it will also give you free time to work towards accomplishing more goals. Increased productivity can be a ladder for getting a promotion at work, earning more money, and meeting your goals faster.

CONFIDENCE

Proper time management gives confidence to carry on. This is partly because you have taken back control of your life. Checking things off your to-do-list will cause your confidence to grow as you realize that you can finish what you start. As your accomplishments grow so will your confidence.

CONTROL

Proper time management allows you to take some measure of control over your work. By pre-planning activities, the order of completing tasks can be determined. Knowing exactly what you need to achieve each day and having a plan to ensure that these things get done, will help you be more in control of your destiny.

TIME MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

The first step to improving productivity at work is by assessing your current time management skills. Tracking how you spend your time can help recapture that lost time for achieving your goals.

DO A 'TIME AUDIT'

As you go about your tasks during the day, write down what you are doing and how much time you spend doing it. Do this for about 3 days and then sit down and have a look at where your time has gone. You might find that there is the same person who interrupts you every day for a chat or a process that you can initiate to avoid people asking you for certain information e.g. a form. If you are honest and write down everything, you will soon pick up a trend of where and how you are wasting your time. Once you have analysed your list, you can start changing the way you do things.

AS A COLLEAGUE

Ask someone that sits close to you to watch you during the workday and let you know if you have developed unnecessary habits that take up your time e.g. stopping at a certain day to go to the canteen, chatting to a colleague every time you go to the ladies etc. Be open to what they tell you and identify areas where you can improve!

SELF-ASSESSMENT

A questionnaire can be a useful tool to do a self-assessment on your current time management techniques. There are many self-assessment tools designed to be used by professionals, management, and staff to assess how well they manage their time and deal with the following:

- Time wasters e.g. drop in visitors, procrastination, indecision
- Other people's priorities
- Firefighting (crisis and priority management)
- Being organized
- Delegation

You can determine your present time management skill by completing the Time Management Self-Assessment Questionnaire developed by John W. Olmstead (2010) that is attached to the module.

Once you have completed the questionnaire, you can use the answers to identify areas of poor time management and put a plan in place to improve those areas.

EXTERNAL TIME WASTERS IN ORGANISATIONS

The following are some of the time wasters that are caused by others.

Visitors - when visitors arrive unannounced, whether they are staff or members of the public, to see you for a chat, it can be difficult to chase them away.

Telephone calls - phone calls from friends who want to chat or other callers who are asking you questions that someone else should answer.

Waiting - spending time waiting for people i.e. people arriving late for a meeting, leaders who delay you as they are busy with other things, or staff who arrive late for appointments or work, can be frustrating. There is time when you depend on other people for input before you can complete a task and time is wasted if they delay getting the information to you. You can spend too much time in queues for example at the bank, the post office or at the station or taxi rank.

Meetings - you find yourself sitting in many unnecessary and unproductive meetings that take 3 hours instead of 30 minutes.

Crises - when you have planned your work properly and you know how you will manage it, it can suddenly be disrupted by a crisis. This will throw your schedule out.

Transport - driving or using public transport in urban areas during peak hours can be a nightmare. You can be held up in a traffic jam that can make you miss an important meeting.

INTERNAL TIME WASTERS IN ORGANISATIONS

Disorganisation - you are so disorganised that you always lose important documents and you seldom find what you need on your desk. You hardly finish your tasks. Your desk often looks like a hurricane has hit it, and at the end of the workday you carry part of your paper mess home with the hope that you can organize it there. You do not keep a proper diary or to-do list and have no idea of what is most important to do first.

Procrastination - you leave your tasks till the very last minute and when you must do it you find that you are under so much pressure that you cannot meet the deadlines.

Inability to say “No” - you feel that you cannot say “no” to requests because that is letting people down, something that is not in your value system. You cannot say “no” because no one else can do this task as well as you, or there is no one else to do it.

Lack of interest - You are not doing your work because you are not interested in it, or you are afraid of failing if you try. You may not have enough information about it, or you simply do not want to do it.

Burn Out - you are exhausted and are unable to concentrate, you are very emotional and feel you have been working and living under so much pressure. When the stress becomes too much for you this is called burn out.

Social networking - spending time on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Whats App can waste your time that could have been used productively.

PRIORITISING YOUR TIME

Time management is about more than just managing our time; it is about managing ourselves, in relation to time. It is about setting priorities and taking charge. It means changing habits or activities that cause us to waste time. It means being willing to experiment with different methods and ideas to enable you to find the best way to make maximum use of time.

80/20 PRINCIPLES

Also known as the Pareto Principle, this rule suggests that 20 percent of your activities will account for 80 percent of your results.

The “*Pareto Principle*” was named after the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto, back in 1895. He noticed that people in society seemed to divide naturally into what he called the “*vital few*,” or the top 20 percent in terms of money and influence, and the “*trivial many*,” or the bottom 80 percent.

Later, he discovered that virtually all economic activity was subject to this principle, in that 80 percent of the wealth of Italy during that time was controlled by 20 percent of the population.

We can take Pareto’s 80 20 rule and apply it to almost any situation. Understanding the principle is essential to learning how to prioritize your tasks, days, weeks, and months.

HOW DOES THE PARETO PRINCIPLE WORK?

The Pareto Principle is a concept that suggests two out of ten items, on any general to-do list, will turn out to be worth more than the other eight items put together.

The sad fact is that most people procrastinate on the top 10 or 20 percent of items that are the most valuable and important, the “*vital few*,” and busy themselves instead with the least important 80 percent, the “*trivial many*,” that contribute little to their success.

HOW TO APPLY THE 80/20 RULE TO GOAL SETTING

To effectively apply the 80/20 rule to setting SMART goals to boost your overall productivity take a piece of paper and write down ten goals. Then ask yourself: *If you could only accomplish one of the goals on that list today, which one goal would have the greatest positive impact on your life?*

Then pick the second most important goal. This way, you will have determined the most important 20 percent of your goals that will help you more than anything else. Continue to work at those goals that you have chosen as the most valuable all the time.

You often see people who appear to be busy all day long but seem to accomplish little. The reason for this is that they are busy working on tasks that are of low value while they are procrastinating on the one or two activities that could make a real difference to their companies and to their careers.

The most valuable tasks you can do each day are often the hardest and most complex, but the payoff and rewards for completing them can be tremendous. Before you begin work, ask yourself, *“Is this task in the top 20 percent of my activities or in the bottom 80 percent?”*

The rule for this is: resist the temptation to clear up small things first

If you choose to start your day working on low-value tasks, you will soon develop the habit of always starting and working on low-value tasks.

If you often feel closed in by conflicting demands or overwhelmed by the number of tasks facing you, look for the 20% that will make the difference. As one of the 20% of successful, creative individuals, you will be producing valuable results and can reap the appropriate rewards. This puts you in control of your life, both for business and personal activities.

THE URGENT/IMPORTANT MATRIX

Time management is about setting priorities and taking charge. It means changing habits or activities that cause us to waste time. It means being willing to experiment with different methods and ideas to enable us to find the best way to make maximum use of time. Putting in the right things, in the right order, with the right amount of time allocated is important.

THE TIME MANAGEMENT MATRIX

A useful tool that can be used to prioritise work activities is the Time Management Matrix designed by Steven Covey (1994). The Urgent/Important Matrix is a powerful way of thinking about priorities. Using it will help you to overcome the natural tendency to focus on urgent activities, so that you can have enough time to focus on what is important.

URGENT AND IMPORTANT Crisis Problems Deadlines	IMPORANT, BUT NOT URGENT Opportunities Progress Planning and Preparation Continuous learning High value
URGENT, BUT NOT IMPORTANT Maintenance Routine tasks	NOT URGENT AND NOT IMPORTANT Trivia Mindless games Reading, watching TV

For you to understand the above quadrant you need to understand the meaning of important and urgent.

- Important activities have an outcome that leads to the **achievement of your goals**.
- Urgent activities demand immediate attention and are often associated with the achievement of someone else’s goals.

QUADRANT 1: URGENT AND IMPORTANT

Tasks that need to be done urgently. If they do not get done there will be a consequence e.g. critical emergency, crisis, last minute deadlines, lack of attention to things before they turn critical.

QUADRANT 2: NOT URGENT BUT IMPORTANT

Tasks that you should be focusing on. They are important to you e.g. planning, preparation, learning, goals that you have set, key performance areas, things that you will be appraised on. If you do not give them attention, they will become urgent and important. If you look after tasks while they are important, they should not become urgent. Example: keeping up to date and learning is important. MS Office is constantly adding new functionalities to the software. If you keep up to date and know how to use your software, you could be saving time to produce documents or spreadsheets rather than trying to learn how to do it under stress.

QUADRANT 3: NOT URGENT AND NOT IMPORTANT

Tasks that are interruptions and distractions throughout the day that take your attention away from what is important. It could be tasks that colleagues have asked you to do that is important for them and not for you. It could be email notifications popping up on your screen while you are working, meetings, interruptions.

QUADRANT 4: NOT URGENT AND NOT IMPORTANT

Tasks in this quadrant are tasks that are time wasting activities – they do not help you achieve goals, neither do they address important matters at hand e.g. playing games, paging through magazines, time wasters, surfing the internet without purpose

The most effective people spend their entire day in Quadrant 2 and ineffective people spend most of their day in Quadrants 1 and 3. Lazy people seem to spend their time in Quadrant 4 – playing Candy Crush, Solitaire etc.

The only way to have more time in Quadrant 2 is to stop doing things in Quadrants 3 and 4 (you cannot ignore the urgent important matters in Quadrant 1).

Exercise

Draw up a list of all the tasks you need to do. Once you have done that separate them into the quadrants as above giving them a number 1 (is it urgent), number 2 (is it important) or number 3 (is it something that is not important or for someone else). Carry out your tasks in that order – concentrate on getting rid of the 1's, then work on the 2's and if you have enough time, you can work on the number 3's.

You will find that eventually your number 1 tasks will get less as you will be concentrating on most of them when they are important rather than urgent. You will also find that the number 3 tasks are often things that even if you do not do them, they fall away.

Hopefully, you have nothing in Quadrant 4! People who are doing things in Quadrant 4 are often those people who are spending too much time doing tasks in Quadrant 1 – always under stress and pressure to get things done. They go from being in a stressful environment to doing nothing but wasting time on unnecessary things instead of working at their goals.

BEING ASSERTIVE

At times, requests from others may be important and need immediate attention. These requests often conflict with your values and take time away from working toward your goals. Even if it is something you would like to do but simply do not have the time for, it can be very difficult to say no. One approach in dealing with these types of interruptions is to use a positive “no”.

- Say no, followed by an honest explanation.
“I am uncomfortable doing that because...”
- Say no and then briefly clarify your reasoning without making excuses. This helps the listener to better understand your position.
“I can’t right now because I have another project that is due by 5 pm today.”
- Say no, and then give an alternative.
“I don’t have time today, but I could schedule it in for tomorrow morning.”
- Empathetically repeat the request in your own words, and then say no.
“I understand that you need to have this paperwork filed immediately, but I will not be able to file it for you.”
- Say yes, give your reasoning for not doing it, and provide an alternative solution.
“Yes, I would love to help you by filing this paperwork, but I do not have time until tomorrow morning.”
- **Provide an assertive refusal and repeat it no matter what the person says.** This approach may be most appropriate with aggressive or manipulative people and can be an effective strategy to control your emotions.
“I understand how you feel, but I will not [or cannot]...” Remember to stay focused and not become sidetracked into responding to other issues.

PLANNING WISELY

The hallmark of successful time management is being consistently productive each day. Many people use a daily plan to motivate themselves. Having a daily plan and committing to it can help you stay focused on the priorities of that day. You are more likely to get things accomplished if you write down your plans for the day.

CREATING A PRODUCTIVITY JOURNAL

Planning is nothing more than taking a piece of paper and a pen and writing down the tasks and associated steps that you need to take throughout the day to ensure that your goal is completed.

To start, get yourself a spiral notebook and label it as your Personal Productivity Journal or your Professional Productivity Journal. (We recommend keeping a separate journal for work and for your personal life, so you can focus on them at separate times, maintaining your optimal work/life balance.) Label each page with the day and the date and what needs to be done that day. Next, prioritize each task in order of importance. Highlight the top three items and focus on those first. Cross off items as you complete them. Items that are not completed should be carried over to the next page.

MAXIMIZING THE POWER OF YOUR PRODUCTIVITY JOURNAL

Personal development expert Brian Tracy believes that when you write down your action list the night before, your subconscious mind focuses on that plan while you sleep. By planning the night before, you will also start fresh and focused on the most important tasks for the day. Of course, you will want to review your list in the morning, but you will have a head start on your day.

Always have your productivity journal with you during the day to avoid becoming sidetracked. Crossing off completed tasks will give your subconscious mind a tremendous amount of satisfaction. This will also help to maintain your motivation to complete the remaining items on your action list.

If you find yourself moving uncompleted tasks over into the following day, and the day after that, then you need to ask yourself why that task is on your list in the first place and what value it has in your life. If you postpone a task three times, it does not belong on your action list.

THE GLASS JAR, ROCKS, PEBBLES, SAND AND WATER

There is a story about time management that uses a glass jar, rocks, stones, pebbles, sand, and water to illustrate how to plan your day. The glass jar represents the time you have each day, and each item that goes into it represents an activity with a priority relative to its size.

Rocks - the general idea is to fill your glass jar first with rocks – these are your most important tasks. Plan each day around your most important tasks that will propel you toward achieving your goals. These represent your highest priority projects and deadlines with the greatest value, often important, but not urgent tasks that move you toward your goals.

Pebbles - next, fill in the space between the rocks with pebbles. These represent tasks that are urgent, and important, but contribute less to important goals. Without proper planning, these tasks are often unexpected, and if not managed, can quickly fill your day. Working to reduce these tasks will give you more time to work toward your goals.

Sand - now add sand to fill your jar. In other words, schedule urgent, but not important tasks, only after important tasks. These activities are usually routine or maintenance tasks that do not directly contribute to your goals.

Water - finally, pour water into your jar. These trivial time-wasters are neither important nor urgent and take you away from working toward high return activities and your goals.

If you commit to this approach to planning your days, you will see as time goes on that you are able to achieve more in less time. Instead of finishing things in a mad rush to meet deadlines, each day will be organized and become more productive and profitable. You will also notice yourself spending less time on activities that are of little to no value. And because you have a clear vision for dealing with competing priorities, the level of stress in your life will diminish, which will allow you to become even more focused and productive.

CHUNK, BLOCK AND TACKLE

Large projects can sometimes be so overwhelming it is difficult to even plan to start them. This time management technique is ideal for taking on these jobs. Simply break down the project into manageable chunks, block off time to work on the project, and then tackle it with a single-minded focus.

Chunk - break large projects into specific tasks that can be completed in less than 15 minutes.

Block - rather than scheduling the entire project all at once, block out set times to complete specific chunks as early in the day as possible. This should allow you to ignore most interruptions and focus on just this task.

Tackle - now tackle the specific task, focusing only on this task rather than the project. Once completed, you will feel a sense of accomplishment from making progress on the project.

READY, FIRE, AIM

We have all heard the saying, “Ready, Aim, Fire!” In time management planning, it is better to think “Ready, Fire, Aim!” instead. This is because most people aim for the target, and then they keep aiming at the target, but they never seem to fire. They get so caught up with the planning that they fail to act. This is just another form of procrastination. Better to take a shot and see how close you were to the target.

Ready! Do not over-plan each of your actions. By the time you fire, the target may have moved.

Fire! Remember the 80/20 rule and just act. Even if you do not hit the bull’s eye, you will probably still hit the target.

Aim! Make new plans based on new information. Readjust your aim based on where you hit the target.

TACKLING PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination means delaying a task (or several tasks) that should be a priority. The ability to overcome procrastination and tackle the important actions that have the biggest positive impact in your life is a hallmark of the most successful people.

There are many reasons why we procrastinate:

- No clear deadline
- Inadequate resources available (time, money, information, etc.)
- Do not know where to begin
- Task feels overwhelming
- No passion for doing the work
- Fear of failure or success

NINE WAYS TO OVERCOME PROCRASTINATION

Your ability to select your most important task at any given moment, and then to start on that task and get it done effectively and efficiently, will probably have greatest impact on your success than any other quality or skill you can develop! If you learn the habit of setting clear priorities and getting important tasks quickly finished, most of your time management issues will simply fade away.

Here are some ways to get moving on those tough tasks.

Delete it - what are the consequences of not doing the task at all? Consider the 80/20 rule; maybe it does not need to be done in the first place.

Delegate - If the task is important, ask yourself if it is really something that you are responsible for doing in the first place. Know your job description and ask if the task is part of your responsibilities. Can the task be given to someone else?

Do it now - postponing an important task that needs to be done only creates feelings of anxiety and stress. Do it as early in the day as you can.

Ask for advice - asking for help from a trusted mentor, supervisor, coach, or expert can give you some great insight on where to start and the steps for completing a project.

Chop it up - break large projects into milestones, and then into actionable steps. As Bob Proctor says, "Break it down into the ridiculous." Huge things do not look as big when you break it down as small as you can.

Obey the 15-minute rule - to reduce the temptation of procrastination, each actionable step on a project should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Have clear deadlines - assign yourself a deadline for projects and milestones and write it down in your day planner or calendar. Make your deadlines known to other people who will hold you accountable.

Give yourself a reward - celebrate the completion of project milestones and reward yourself for getting projects done on time. It will provide positive reinforcement and motivate you toward your goals.

Remove distractions - you need to establish a positive working environment that is conducive to getting your work done. Remove any distractions.

EAT THAT FROG!

“If the first thing you do each morning is to eat a live frog, you can go through the day with the satisfaction of knowing that that is probably the worst thing that is going to happen to you all day long!”

Your frog is the task that will have the greatest impact on achieving your goals, and the task that you are most likely to procrastinate starting.

“If you have to eat two frogs, eat the ugliest one first!”

If you have two important tasks before you, start with the biggest, hardest, and most important task first. Discipline yourself to begin immediately and then to keep going until the task is complete before moving on to something else. Resist the temptation to start with the easier task. Continually remind yourself that one of the most important decisions you make each day is your choice of what you will do immediately and what you will do later or postpone indefinitely.

The key to reaching high levels of performance and productivity is for you to develop the lifelong habit of tackling your major task first thing each morning. Do not spend excessive time planning what you will do. You must develop the routine of “eating your frog” before you do anything else and without taking too much time to think about it.

Successful, effective people are those who launch directly into their major tasks and then discipline themselves to work steadily and single-mindedly until those tasks are complete.

In the business world, you are paid and promoted for achieving specific, measurable results. You are paid for making a valuable contribution that is expected of you. But many employees confuse activity with accomplishment, and this causes one of the biggest problems in organizations today, which is failure to execute.

ORGANISING YOUR WORKSPACE

To effectively manage your time and be productive each day, you must create an appropriate environment. By eliminating clutter, setting up an effective filing system, gathering essential tools, and managing workflow, you will be well on your way to creating an effective workspace.

DE-CLUTTER

Removing clutter is a time-consuming task, but a cluttered workspace significantly impairs your ability to find things, and you will get the time back that you invest – and more! To retrieve materials quickly, you will need an effective filing system that includes three basic kinds of files:

- Working files
- Materials used frequently and needed nearby.
- Reference files
- Information needed only occasionally.
- Archival files

Materials seldom retrieved but that must be kept. For ease of retrieval, organize files in the simplest way possible. For example, you could label files with a one- or two-word tag and arrange the files alphabetically.

Once clutter has been eliminated and other materials have been filed, the effective work space includes only what is essential: a set of three trays to control the workflow on your desk, standard office supplies, a computer, and a telephone. Everything else, except for what you are working on now, can and should be filed where it can be retrieved as needed.

MANAGING WORKFLOW

How do you process the mountain of material that collects in your paper and electronic in-baskets? The answer is one piece of paper, one electronic message at a time. Many time management experts agree that the most effective people act on an item the first time it is touched.

Although difficult at first, the practice can become a habit, and is made easier with the four Ds:

- **DO:** If a task can be completed in two minutes or less, do it immediately.
- **DELETE:** If the material is trash or junk, delete it. Or, if it is something that you might use later on, file it, and move on.
- **DEFER:** If the task is one that cannot be completed quickly and is not a high priority item, simply defer it.
- **DELEGATE:** If a task is not yours to do, then delegate it.

Remember, to take the S.T.I.N.G. out of feeling overwhelmed about a task, follow these steps:

- **Select** one task to do at a time.
- **Time** yourself using a clock for no more than one hour.
- **Ignore** everything else during that time.
- **No** breaks or interruptions should be permitted.
- **Give** yourself a reward when the time is up.

DEALING WITH E-MAIL

Electronic communication can be managed just as easily and as quickly as paper with the four D's – do it, delete it, delegate it, or defer it. Other key ideas that will help you maximize your e-mail time:

- Like other routine tasks (such as returning phone calls, handling paper mail, and checking voice mail), e-mail is best handled in batches at regularly scheduled times of the day.
- Ask your e-mail contacts to use specific subject lines, and make sure to use them yourself. This will help you to determine whether your incoming mail is business or personal, urgent, or trivial.
- Once you know the subject of the message, open and read urgent e-mails, and respond accordingly. Non-urgent e-mails, like jokes, can be read later. Delete advertising-related e-mail that you have no interest in, or which you consider spam.
- Use your e-mail system to its fullest potential. Create folders for different topics or projects, or by senders. Most e-mail systems also allow you to create folders and add keywords or categories to messages, which makes information retrieval much easier.
- Many e-mail programs allow you to create rules that automatically move messages to the appropriate folder. This can help you follow your e-mail plan.
- Finally, do not forget to delete e-mail from your trash can and junk folder on a regular basis.

USING CALENDARS

To manage the things that you must do, it is important to organize your reminders into a small number of calendars and lists that can be reviewed regularly. A calendar (paper or electronic) is the obvious place to record meetings, appointments, and due dates.

People with multiple responsibilities, an annual calendar organized by areas of responsibility (e.g., budget, personnel, schedule, planning, and miscellaneous) may be especially valuable. For each of these areas, one can list the major responsibilities month by month and thereby see at a glance what tasks must be completed in a given month of the year.

Do not forget the Productivity Journal that we discussed earlier. This can be a valuable tool for organizing tasks, identifying patterns, improving workflow, and recording work completed.

DELEGATING MADE EASY

If you work on your own, there is only so much you can get done, no matter how hard you work. At some time, everyone needs help and support, and there is no shame in asking for help. One of the most common ways of overcoming this limitation is to learn how to delegate your work to other people. If you do this well, you can quickly build a strong and successful team of people.

At first sight, delegation can feel like more hassle than it is worth. By delegating effectively, you can hugely expand the amount of work that you can deliver. When you arrange the workload so that you are working on the tasks that have the highest priority for you, and other people are working on meaningful and challenging assignments, you have a recipe for success.

Delegate effectively, choose the right tasks to delegate, identify the right people to delegate to, and delegate in the right way. There is a lot to this, but you will achieve so much more once you are delegating effectively!

WHEN TO DELEGATE

Delegation allows you to make the best use of your time and skills, and it helps other people in the team grow and develop to reach their full potential in the organization. Delegation is a win-win situation for all involved, but only when done correctly. Keep these criteria in mind when deciding if a task should be delegated:

- The task should provide an opportunity for growth of another person's skills.
- Weigh the effort to train another person against how often the task will reoccur.
- Delegating certain critical tasks may jeopardize the success of your project.

WHO SHOULD YOU DELEGATE TO?

Once you have decided to delegate a task, think about the possible candidates for accepting the task. Things to think about include:

- What experience, knowledge, skills, and attitude does the person already have?
- What training or assistance might they need?
- Do you have the time and resources to provide any training needed?
- What is the individual's preferred work style? Do they do well on their own or do they require more support and motivation? How independent are they?
- What does he or she want from his or her job?
- What are his or her long-term goals and interest, and how do these align with the work proposed?
- What is the current workload of this person? Does the person have time to take on more work?
- Will you delegating this task require reshuffling of other responsibilities and workloads?

When you first start to delegate to someone, you may notice that it takes longer than you do to complete tasks. This is because you are an expert in the field and the person you have delegated to is still learning. Be patient: if you have chosen the right person to delegate to, and you are delegating correctly, you will find that he or she quickly becomes competent and reliable. Try to delegate to the lowest possible organizational level. The people who are closest to the work are best suited for the task because they have the most intimate knowledge of the detail of everyday work. This also increases workplace efficiency and helps to develop people.

HOW SHOULD YOU DELEGATE

Delegation does not have to be all or nothing. There are several different levels of delegation, each with different levels of delegate independence and supervision.

The Levels of Independence

1. Delegate waits to be told what to do
2. Delegate asks what to do
3. Delegate recommends what should be done, and then acts
4. Delegate acts, and then reports results immediately
5. Delegate initiates action and then reports periodically

People often move throughout these levels during the delegation process. Your goal should be to get the delegate to levels 3-5, depending on the task being performed. Make sure you match the amount of responsibility with the amount of authority. Understand that you can delegate some responsibility, but you cannot delegate away ultimate accountability. The buck stops with you!

KEEPING CONTROL

Once you have worked through the above steps in the previous section, make sure you brief your team member appropriately. Take time to explain why they were chosen for the job, what is expected from them during the project, the goals you have for the project, all timelines and deadlines, and the resources on which they can draw. Work together to develop a schedule for progress updates, milestones, and other key project points.

You will want to make sure that the team member knows that you want to know if any problems occur, and that you are available for any questions or guidance needed as the work progresses.

We all know that as managers, we should not micro-manage. This does not mean we must abdicate control altogether. In delegating effectively, we must find the difficult balance between giving enough space for people to use their abilities, while still monitoring and supporting closely enough to ensure that the job is done correctly and effectively. One way to encourage growth is to ask for recommended solutions when delegates come to you with a problem, and then help them explore those solutions and reach a decision.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FULL ACCEPTANCE

Set aside enough time to thoroughly review any delegated work that was delivered to you. If possible, only accept good quality, fully complete work. If you accept work that you are not satisfied with, your team member does not learn to do the job properly. Worse than this, you accept a new project that you will probably need to complete yourself. Not only does this overload you, it means that you do not have the time to do your own job properly.

When good work is returned to you, make sure to both recognize and reward the effort. As a leader, you should get in the practice of complimenting members of your team every time you are impressed by what they have done. This effort on your part will go a long way toward building team members' self-confidence and efficiency now and in the future.

MODULE 5: RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records management is much more than just putting a piece of paper in a filing cabinet or sending a document to a folder on your PC. In an organisation it is important that proper record management policies and procedures are put in place and updated regularly. The policies and procedures should form part of the induction programme for new employees. The consequences of not having a proper records management system could cost an organisation in time and money.

To understand the importance of records management and the consequences of a non-existent or inadequate records management (both paper and electronic), it is important to look at the work place and the changes that have gradually taken place since technology has evolved.

If we look at some of the catastrophes that have happened worldwide in the last couple of years and the consequences of an incorrect records management system, we will get a good idea of the consequences.

Disasters like Hurricane Katrina which was one of the single most catastrophic natural disasters in US history left an entire population displaced without any proof of who they were or where they lived. Papers which were stored in courthouses, museums and businesses were soaked with contaminated flood water and were useless. Electronic devices that were not stored were also destroyed!

The collapsing of the World Trade Centre in 2001. Most businesses lost important records both paper and electronic which were vital to starting up their organisations again. Insufficient backups of records both paper and electronic were not stored offsite and could not be replaced.

There have also been cases of records stored in basements of large organisations burning down (NEDBANK 2009). Records stored in boxes that have been relocated to unknown areas during office moves and many other instances where important records are lost due to insufficient records management.

In all these cases, important information could go astray, get into the wrong hands or simply not be available for litigation which could result in a huge expense for the company or an individual.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Emerging technology over the years has led to communications being done electronically, one of the biggest areas being email. Initially email was regarded as communication between ‘friends’ to keep in touch and was not really regarded as business communication. As time went on however, the ease and speed of sending a message was encouraging and email became more widely used in the business world.

Little thought was given to the fact that an email could be an important record and should be treated with the same ‘respect’ as that of a paper document. In a survey done by Mimecast SA in December 2008, it was found that ... South African businesses still regard email as an operational function – a bit like ordering stationery – rather than a business critical one ...’. Many employees are left to store and delete their own email and most companies cannot retrieve an email that was sent 3 years ago. Considering the amount of data that can be stored on an optical disk (CD or DVD) or even a magnetic backup tape, and the cost thereof, there is no reason why an individual or a company cannot archive their email.

Another problem is that many employees now have laptops and often do emails from home or other venues. Who then is responsible for the backup of this mail and how long should it be kept for?

Another area which poses a problem is that many people, when sending mails, write the first thing that comes to mind and send it before reading it to ensure that the receiver will understand the message correctly or use it to send confidential information (both private and work) to colleagues never giving thought to the fact that it could be used as evidence against them. Gone are the days when we verbally expressed feelings and emotions and information, and it would be ‘my word against yours’. Nowadays – it is – I have the email (with a date and a time) to prove it!

In June 2008, an article was published on the Bear Stearns investment bank. The last two sentences read: “It took only a few days, a rising sense of panic – and a critical e-mail – to spell the end of the 85-year old investment bank” and another paragraph, “... the government’s case relies in part on e-mails that allegedly show the managers had private doubts even as they were publicly expressing confidence ...” (News article: Crime and delusion on Wall Street by Colin Barr, 19 June 2008. http://money.cnn.com/2008/06/19/news/newsmakers/bear_cioffi.fortune/?postversion=2008061914)

Care should be taken to ensure that all records – both paper and electronic should be treated with “respect”, and looked after accordingly. When composing written communication, care should be taken that messages are clear and concise and are received by the people that it is intended to reach

CURRENT PROBLEMS WITH RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- As a result of technology, there has been a global records inundation!! It is far easier to send an electronic communication and copy it to 50 people than it was in years gone by when you had to put ink to paper and buy stamps!
- Documents are being sent electronically and are being duplicated, stored on different media and over multiple locations with multiple owners.
- Everybody is deleting records including the originators and the person who received the information. No-one takes responsibility for the storing of a record.
- There is a loss of control over the versions of documents and retention policies and an increase in non-compliance with business rules which in turn make complications for records

managers. There is also a lack of knowledge regarding the SA Laws e.g. the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (ECT Act) of 2002 and the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA).

- There is a lack of knowledge of the fundamentals of records management.

People have not kept up to date with the changes in technology and systems and companies do not have updated, published policies and procedures with regards to records management. If they do, their staff are not aware of them. The records management policies and procedures should be introduced as part of the induction programme in organisations. The SANS 15489 which was adopted from the ISO 15489 in 2001 outlines the general guidelines of proper records management.

FUNDAMENTALS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

WHAT IS A RECORD?

A record consists of information created, received, and maintained as evidence of business activities. The records should correctly reflect what was communicated on or decided, or what action was taken. The records should be able to support the needs of the business to which it relates and must be able to be used for accountability purposes.

Documents that are required by statute or regulation (financial records), have financial obligations (contracts) or legal claims (litigation case files) and communicates organisational requirements (policies / procedures) would be considered a record.

Correspondence systems

- Physical paper in our files e.g. letters, memos, minutes, contracts, marketing materials and reports etc.
- Electronic messages such as email content and their attachments, instant messages e.g. Hotmail, Skype, SMS, fax, voice, graphics, animation, sound, scanned images etc.
- Content on a web site, documents that reside on PDA's (Personal Digital Assistants), flash drives, desktops, servers and document management systems
- Information captured on various databases

Non-correspondence systems

- Maps, plans, drawings, photographs
- Microforms

Microfilm is the oldest type of microform which stores images of document pages side by side on 16, 35, 70 or 100 mm film. Each reel of film has a standard size of 100 feet and can hold up to 2500 letter size

images or up to 30000 smaller size images. When a document that is stored on microfilm needs to be read, the film images are enlarged and projected on a visual display screen.

Microfiche is a sheet of film containing miniature images arranged in rows and columns on a card. The number of images that can be arranged on one fiche depends on the reduction ratio being used. The standard size of a fiche is 6 by 4 inches, with the fiche coded for retrieval purposes. It can hold up to 98 images in 7 rows, with 4 images in each row.

Ultrafiche is like a microfiche except that the page images are reduced more than 90 times.

This storage form is still utilised by various industries. The National Archives in Pretoria stores historical documents on microforms to protect them. Car companies like Volvo keep all the parts of the cars on microfiche and newspapers store the archived editions on microfiche.

- Audio visual – sound and video cassettes
- Business applications – financial management systems, human resource management systems, supply chain management systems and customer relationship management systems

If there is a lawsuit, all of these – including the copies that individuals have retained and any items deleted from the system, may be identified as discoverable. This means that all the above could be used against an organisation in a lawsuit.

ANALYSING AND CLASSIFYING RECORDS – RECORD ACTIVITY OR USE

- **Active records** are records that are accessed on a day-to-day basis and are used for the efficient running of the organisation.
- **Inactive records** are records that are no longer referred to on a regular basis. These can be destroyed or stored according to the importance of the record and the retention period.

ANALYSING AND CLASSIFYING RECORDS – IMPORTANCE OF RECORDS

When Analysing your records it is important to inspect the document and classify it as one of the following:

- **Vital record** – a vital record is essential for the effective, continuous operation of the company. These documents would be required to re-establish or continue an organisation in the event of a disaster happening. These documents are usually irreplaceable e.g. leases, legal documents patents, property deeds, trademarks. If these documents have not been stored correctly and are lost, the company will be unable to start up the company again in the event of a disaster. Think of the various businesses that had branches in the Twin Towers. All the records, both paper and electronic, would have been destroyed. If vital records were not stored off-site or at other branches of the company, where possible, it

would be unlikely that the company would be able to continue the business elsewhere without considerable time, cost, and effort.

- **Important records** – these records contribute to the smooth running of the company and can be replaced or duplicated if lost or destroyed from other places inside or outside of the organisation, but it would take considerable time and money to replace them e.g. case files, customer orders, financial records (could get them from your accountant) and tax records (SARS).
- **Useful records** – these are documents that can be easily replaced. If they are mislaid, they will not disrupt the routine operations of the company e.g. business reports, complaint letters, customer requests.
- **Nonessential records** – these records are not necessary for the restoration of the business and have no predictable value e.g. subscriptions, survey results, telephone messages.

Once records have been identified, it is necessary to consider the natures of potential disasters – the likelihood of them happening and the consequences of what would happen should they occur. All kinds of disasters should be considered. People often have the attitude – ‘it will not happen to me’ and have had to eat their words at some stage or another. We may not be at risk of a Tsunami hitting us, but we can have severe rains and buildings can be flooded out. If records are stored in cardboard boxes directly on the floor or stored in the basement, the records could be extensively damaged!

Think of your own personal records e.g. Identity document, birth certificates, mortgage papers, car papers, wills etc. Try and group them into the above classifications. In the event of your house burning down, your handbag stolen, or your house burgled, how quickly would you be able to replace any of those documents? Do you have certified copies of documents, do you have duplicates etc. Have you considered any of these as records?

VITAL RECORDS AND DISASTER RECOVERY PROGRAMME

It is essential that in each company there must be a vital records and a disaster recovery programme. The programme must contain the necessary information to recreate an organisation’s legal and financial position and to preserve its rights and those of its employees, customers and stakeholders. The policy and procedure must list all the vital records of the organisation and where they are kept. This list must be updated on an ongoing basis to ensure that there will be no confusion in the case of an emergency.

There must be strong support from management with regards to the vital records and disaster recovery programme. They should communicate the value of an organisations information asset to all staff and they must be kept up-to-date with any changes to the programme.

Procedures – the procedures must reflect ALL types of records i.e. paper and digital, from the hard drive on the network. It must identify how copies of vital information are to be created, transported

to alternative sites, and maintained i.e. its format, its movement and protection during transport and the environment within which it must be stored. The procedures must be audited regularly and updated where necessary.

Physical preparedness – this part of the programme would focus on the location where business operations would resume in the event of a disaster. It would outline how safely and quickly both the staff and the information can get to the new location. Copies of both the paper and digital records could be transported to the backup site on an ongoing basis so that in the event of a disaster, it would take minimal time to get back up and running.

The environment in which vital records are being maintained is crucial to ensure that the disaster recovery efforts are successful.

THE RECORDS LIFE CYCLE

CREATION OF RECORDS

Records are created daily and can be stored in various mediums.

Conventional formats: correspondence, business forms, business reports, card systems (index and posted (this form hold additional information e.g. doctor's rooms – gets updated each time the patient visits)), engineering documents, maps, charts, drawings, catalogs and manuals

Non-conventional formats: microforms, audio-visual media, electronic media

UTILISATION OF RECORDS

Records are used by various people during the active stage of its life.

RETENTION OF RECORDS

This is the period during which a record is maintained.

Retention schedule – this schedule lists the records and estimates the period of time each type of record is to be held in active storage for day-to-day operations and in inactive storage for occasional reference, and if and when records may be purged (deleted from disk) or destroyed (burnt, shredded). Nowadays there are many software vendors who would be able to customise or sell a records management system to you but in the meantime, you can keep a retention schedule of your records on an excel spread sheet. It would take a lot of discipline to keep it up to date but will be well worth the effort!

The records retentions schedule should address the following topics:

- The period during which records have operational, legal, fiscal, or historical value

- The time records is considered active and must be maintained in the primary (active) filing area
- The point in time when records can reasonably be transferred to a secondary storage facility
- The method of records disposal or disposition i.e. purging, shredding, incinerating
- The procedures for operating and ensuring compliance with the retention and disposition programmes
- The relationship between records retention and other aspects of the records management program such as microfilm, filing, data processing and historical archives
- Retention of records and information, regardless of the format of that record g. microfilm, magnetic media, email or the storage location e.g. offsite storage, file servers and electronic documents.

appraisal and value - when retaining your record, you would appraise the record and give it a value –

- **Primary value** – these would be the records that are active in nature and are needed for the current operations. The records are used for administrative and accounting purposes, to ensure logical, responsible and consistent actions, for the protection of the legal and financial rights and obligations of the body or origin and to ensure proper control of These records illustrate whether and how an organisation was able to fulfil its functions and the degree of success.
- **Secondary value** – these records are semi-active or inactive and may have a historical or archival importance to the company. It is the long term practical and cultural value records have for the public and researchers at large.
- The **practical value** lies in the use of records in family history studies, proof of property and other rights and as evidence in court. From the cultural value, records can be used for research into amongst others, political, social, and economic matters. In other words, records can be used to describe or reconstruct an event or situation in the past.
- **Administrative value** – these are records that are needed for the business to conduct current business operations.
- **Legal value** – provisions or agreement that relate to the legal rights and obligations of the company.
- **Fiscal value** – these records relate to the financial transactions of an organisation.
- **Research value** – this is technical information that results from primary or secondary research and will have a research value to the industry.
- **Information value** – these documents need to be kept over a period of years e.g. copyrights and patents.
- **Evidence value** – these records trace the development of an organisation e.g. organisational charts, policies, and procedures.

RETENTION OF RECORDS – BENEFITS OF A RETENTION AND DISPOSITION PROGRAMME

Benefits of a retention and disposition programme

- Reduced space requirements
- Improved operational efficiency
- Equipment and supply cost savings
- Consistency in records disposition
- Compliance with legal retention requirements
- Protection during litigation or government investigation

Think about the filing cabinet in your office. Do you have a list of the important records in your filing cabinet? If you came into work today and the cabinet was gone – would you be able to replace all the documents?

Do you “clean” out your filing cabinet every now and then and discard what you think you don’t need into file 13 (the dustbin) or do you have a list of the documents indicating how long you should keep each one and when and how they should be disposed of? Do you work according to a schedule?

When you place a record into your filing cabinet – do you mark it down on a list and give it a retention or disposal date?

Consider setting up a database on MS Excel or MS Access where you can enter the name of a record when you are about to file it and a date when it should be reviewed to consider whether it should be active or inactive (perhaps moved to the archives) and when it should be destroyed and how. It is always important to get written approval from the owner of a record before it is destroyed! It will be time consuming to set up, but it would give you a better handle of the records in your office.

The same considerations should be given to electronic records. If you move over to storing your records electronically, it should run in parallel with your paper records. Once you have decided to store records electronically, you should not add anything to your paper records. Your electronic system should be a ‘copy’ of your paper system with regards to files and folders. Your paper system should be kept up to date according to your retention and disposition schedules and in time will phase out.

TRANSFER OF RECORDS

Perpetual transfer method – records can be transferred at any time that the event has been completed or case closed

Periodic transfer method – records are transferred at a specific date each year (annual filing)

DISPOSAL OF RECORDS

Once the life cycle of the record has reached an end, it is necessary to dispose of them. Care must be taken to destroy the record in its entirety so that it cannot get into the wrong hands!

Often when we look around us, we can see many instances where people might not have given a thought to disposing of records correctly. A good example is when old documents are given to nursery schools etc. to use as drawing paper! The child draws on the blank side and takes the picture home to give to mommy and daddy and all they do is look on the other side of the drawing and they can get information that could be confidential!!! Ensure when using old documents and printouts as scrap paper, that you check what is on the other side before leaving it lying around or passing it on to the nursery school!

Records must be either:

- purged i.e. deleted from the system (electronic records)
- shredded, pulverised or incinerated (paper records, microform, and magnetic records)

FILE INTEGRITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

VERIFYING RECORD AUTHENTICITY

- The document must be the work of the stated author or source. The name of the author must be a part of the document or attached to the document to assure the authenticity of the document.
- No alteration of the contents of the document should have occurred without permission of the author and or copyright holder
- The document was issued or released by an authorised individual or organisation.
- A certificate of authenticity might accompany the document with the signature of an authorised official.
- **Use of online processes** – organisations must ensure that online business processes do not compromise the integrity and appropriate use of documents that contain sensitive E.g. a time stamp embedded in an electronic document provides an auditable time record
- **Controlled access to records** – access to and use of records must be controlled by authorised and trained personnel and continuously monitored to maintain authenticity of records. Records should only be seen by the intended audience and used for specific E.g. medical records (hospital), financial records (accounting), educational records (university).

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Need for controlled access – strict controls are needed. Special permission rights must be given to individual e.g. view, modify, store. When people get transferred to other departments or leave, access must be changed accordingly.

Maintaining confidentiality – confidentiality must be adhered to and staff should be made aware of the confidential nature of their work and they must be aware that drastic measures will be taken if not adhered to.

SECURITY OF RECORDS

User identification and passwords – never tell anyone your password, never write down your password, and change your password often using a combination of letters and numbers. If you do not have a password on your computer that locks access when you are away from your desk, you should seriously consider doing so. If you are away on a conference or off ill, nobody should be able to access your records on your computer or transfer records from your system to theirs.

Digital signatures and seals – proves that the document has never been altered since it was signed. Microsoft 2003 upwards has the facility to put digital signatures and seals on documents. (We will discuss the requirements for digital signatures and seals in Module 2 when we discuss the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (ECT Act) of 2002.)

Encryption and decryption of messages – translation of data into a secret code that is unintelligible without a deciphering device. (The message that is sent is changed into mathematical code that can only be unlocked (decrypted) when the receiver enters a key.)

Biometric identification system i.e. fingerprints, palm prints, iris scans, speech patterns, retina scans and face recognition. Many organisations in SA are starting to use biometric systems. Nedbank now require clients to place their index finger on biometric fingerprint system to enter the bank, staff at Home Affairs are required to logon to their machines when entering records using a fingerprint identification system and when applying for a visa for some countries you are required to give fingerprint identification using biometric controls.

Magnetic card-based systems – A magnetic stripe card is a type of card capable of storing data by modifying the magnetism of tiny iron-based magnetic particles on a band of magnetic material on the card. The magnetic stripe, sometimes called swipe card or magstripe, is read by swiping past a magnetic reading head.

Need for trusted custodian - the custodian must ensure physical records security, preservation of organisational memory, protection of documents, protection of storage media e.g. bank deposit boxes.

USER PROCEDURES TO SECURE RECORDS

Policies and procedures that are created according to the standards.

DOCUMENT SECURITY FEATURES

Security papers (use watermarks), e.g. money

Security pantograph – this is an instrument used for copying, enlarging, or reducing line drawings that are used as a security device on a printed record or form. Hidden words, company logos or designs, even forensic information appears when the document is photocopied or scanned, preventing unauthorized duplications – and authentication has never been simpler.

Micro printing – an area on the document can be imprinted with microscopic words that appear to the casual reader as a solid line. On the originals, the words can be read under magnification. On copies, the micro printing is unreadable. E.g. money – has micro printing on it to stop counterfeit money being made

Thermo chromic ink – the use of heat sensitive ink will cause a change in color of text or will cause text to disappear when heat is applied to the ink. Example – mood ring changes color according to temperature of your body.

Bleed through numbering – when a specially inked ribbon comes into contact with paper, the numbers appearing on the right side of the document, such as on a check, bleed through and appear red on the reverse side.

ESTABLISHING ALPHABETIC, NUMERIC AND SUBJECT FILING

ARMA International (Association of Record Managers and Administrators) was established in 1955. Its approximately 11,000 members include records managers, archivists, corporate librarians, imaging specialists, legal professionals, IT managers, consultants, and educators, all of whom work in a wide variety of industries, including government, legal, healthcare, financial services, and petroleum in the United States, Canada, and 30-plus other countries.

ARMA International publishes The Information Management Journal, the only professional journal specifically for professionals who manage records and information daily. The award-winning Journal is published bi-monthly and features top-drawer articles on the hottest topics in records and information management today, as well as marketplace news and analysis. The association also develops and publishes standards and guidelines related to records management. It was a key contributor to the international records management standard, ISO-15489. ARMA International are also responsible for the guideline for establishing alphabetic, numeric, and subject filing systems. These guidelines can be purchased from the ARMA Bookstore at www.arma.org.

According to the guidelines, the following are the criteria for the selection of filing systems:

SUBJECT FILING

When a range of topics is wide such as correspondence, clippings, catalogues, research data, product development plans and inventory lists you would consider subject filing. This can sometimes be the most difficult as you would need to determine what the subject would be to find the documents.

Often it is necessary to consult the originator of the document to find out what the subject should be.

ALPHABETIC FILING

When records are retrieved by personal, organisation or government agency names such as names of people, organisations, firms, project, publications, products, or things, they are usually filed in alphabetical order.

- No code number of significance is applied to the records and no index needs to be maintained.
- This system is used for a small number of files which are generally not too confidential.

NUMERIC FILING

- This filing system usually contains an exceptionally large volume of records
- Records have unique numbers affixed to them e.g. invoices
- Records have been assigned code numbers that have some significance e.g. a number on an insurance policy may indicate branch and year of issue
- This filing system is used for confidential records e.g. hospital, doctors' rooms etc.
- An index needs to be maintained.

INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR RECORDS MANAGEMENT

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR STANDARDISATION (ISO) – WWW.ISO.ORG

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

The standardisation of records management policies and procedures ensures that appropriate attention and protection is given to all records, and that the evidence and information they contain can be retrieved more efficiently and effectively, using standard practices and procedures.

ISO 15489 was developed in response to consensus among participating ISO member countries to standardise international best practice in records management using the Australian Standards AS 4390, Records Management as its starting point.

The South African Bureau of Standards adopted the ISO 15489 (without changes) in 2004 and it became the SANS 15489.

SOUTH AFRICAN BUREAU OF STANDARDS (SABS) – WWW.SABS.CO.ZA

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As the national standardisation authority, the SABS is responsible for maintaining South Africa's database of more than 6,500 national standards, as well as developing new standards and revising, amending or withdrawing existing standards as required.

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SUMMARY OF ISO / SANS 15489-1 PARTS 1-3

INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS RECORDS MANAGEMENT – GENERAL

Parts 1-3 of the standard describe the scope of the standard to be used by both public and private organisations to ensure adequate record keeping. Narrative references are made to ISO5127 (Information and Documentation), ISO9001 (Quality Management System) and ISO14001 (Environmental Management Systems). It also contains the usual terms and definition of the standard.

PART 4 – BENEFITS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records contain information that is a valuable resource and an important business asset. A systematic approach to the management of records is essential for organisations and society to protect and preserve records as evidence of actions. A record management system results in a source of information about business activities that can support subsequent activities and business decisions, as well as ensuring accountability to present and future stakeholders.

Proper records management enables an organisation to conduct their business in an orderly, efficient, and accountable manner and delivers service in a consistent manner. It provides consistency, continuity, and productivity in management and the organisation. Most of all it provides continuity in the event of a disaster.

In the case of litigation, reliable records can be produced and can save the organisation a lot of time and money.

Other benefits:

- Enables more informed decision making, by making documentation readily available
- Facilitates effective performance of activities throughout an organisation
- Protects the rights of the organisation, its employees and its customers
- Protects records from inappropriate and unauthorised access
- Meets statutory and regulatory requirements including archival, audit and oversight activities
- Allows quicker retrieval of document and information from files
- Improves office efficiency and productivity
- Provides better documentation more efficiently
- Supports and documents historical and other research
- Frees up office space for other purposes by moving inactive records to storage facilities
- Reducing lost or misfiled documents

PART 5 – REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

All organisations need to identify the regulatory (laws) environment that affects their activities and requirements to document their activities. The policies and procedures for organisations should reflect the application of the regulatory environment to their business processes. An organisation should provide adequate evidence of its compliance with the regulatory environment in the records of its activities.

The nature of the organisation and the sector to which it belongs will determine which of the regulatory elements (individually or a combination) are most applicable to that organisation's records management requirements. If you are unsure of what regulations are applicable to your industry, the legal department should be able to help you out.

Records management legal requirements can also be found in the following documents:

- Constitution 1996
- ECT Act (Electronic Communications and Transactions Act)
- PFMA (Public Finance Management Act)
- King III
- PAIA (Promotion of Access to Information Act)
- National Archives (SA)
- ISO15489

Acts can be viewed at www.acts.co.za.

PART 6 – POLICIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Records management policies must be defined and documented, and the objective of the policy must be the creation and management of authentic, reliable, and usable records. The policy must be adopted and endorsed by the highest level and communicated to everybody in the organisation. It should be part of the induction programme for new staff joining the organisation and should always be available for staff to read e.g. on the intranet or in the staff handbook. Once a policy has been set up, it must be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is still up to date.

Records management responsibilities and authorities should be defined and assigned and communicated throughout the organisation so that where a specific need to create and capture records is identified, it should be clear who is responsible for taking the necessary action. These responsibilities should be assigned to all employees of the organisation, including records managers, allied information professionals, executives, business unit managers, systems administrators and others who create records as part of their work, and should be reflected in job descriptions and similar statements. Specific leadership responsibility and accountability for records management should be assigned to a person with appropriate authority within the organisation. Designations of the responsible individuals may be assigned by law e.g. King III.

PART 7 – RECORDS MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Records are created, received, and used in the conduct of business activities. To support the continuing conduct of business, comply with the regulatory environment, and provide necessary accountability, organisations should create and maintain authentic, reliable, and useable records, and protect the integrity of those records if required. To do this, organisations should institute and carry out a comprehensive records management programme. Principles of records management programmes:

1. Determine what records should be created in each business process and what information needs to be included in the records

2. Decide in what form and structure records should be created and captured and the technologies to be used
3. Determine what metadata should be created with the record and through records processes and how that metadata will be persistently linked and managed
4. Determine the requirement for retrieving, using, and transmitting records between business processes and other users and how long they need to be kept satisfying those requirements
5. Decide how to organise records to support requirements for use
6. Assesses the risks that would be entailed by failure to have authoritative records of activity
7. Preserve records and making them accessible over time, to meet business requirements and community expectations
8. Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, applicable standards and organisational policy
9. Ensure that records are maintained in a safe and secure environment
10. Ensure that records are retained only for as long as needed or required
11. Identify and evaluate opportunities for improving the effectiveness, efficiency or quality of its processes, decisions, and actions that could result from better records creation or management

ISO15489 states that a record should be:

Authentic – the record is what it says it is. It must be created or sent by the person that it says it has as well as the time and date created and sent.

Reliable – the contents can be trusted as a full and accurate description of the transaction or activity. They should be created at the time of the transaction to which they relate or as soon afterwards by individuals who have direct knowledge of the facts.

Have integrity – a record must be protected against alteration. The records policy should state under which circumstances changes can be made to the record and who is able to make them. Any authorised changes must be indicated and traceable.

Have useability – a useable record is one that can be located, retrieved, presented, and interpreted.

PART 8 – DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A RECORDS SYSTEM

A records system should be responsive to changing business needs but any changes in the system should not have an impact on the characteristics of the records in the system. Similarly, when records are transferred from one records system to another, the transfer should be carried out in a way that does not adversely affect the characteristics of a record.

A records system should be reliable, have integrity, be compliant, comprehensive, and systematic.

Implementation strategies for compliant records systems

1. Design a records system
2. Document the records system
3. Train record practitioners and other personnel
4. Convert records to new records systems, formats, and controls
5. Set standards and measure compliance and performance against them
6. Determine retention periods and making decisions about records which have continuing value, in keeping with the regulatory environment

Design and implementation methodology

To design and implement sustainable record systems, a design and implementation methodology is essential. The tasks below may be undertaken in different stages, partially or gradually, in accordance with organizational needs, formal compliance requirements and changes to the organizational and records management environment.

Preliminary investigation. Collect information from documentary sources and through interviews; identify and document the role and purpose of the organization, its structure, its legal, regulatory, business, and political environment, critical factors, and critical weaknesses associated with records management.

Analysis of business activity. Collect information from documentary sources and through interviews; identify and document each business function, activity and transaction and establish a hierarchy of them, that is, a business classification system, and identify and document the flow of business processes and the transactions which comprise them.

Identification of requirements for records. Collect information from documentary sources and through interviews; identify the requirements for evidence of and information about each business function, activity and transaction which should be satisfied through records. The requirements can be derived from an analysis of the organization's regulatory environment and the risk of not creating and maintaining the records.

Determine how each requirement may be satisfied through records management processes and articulate and document the requirements for records. Choose the appropriate records structure which best satisfies each business function, activity, or transaction.

Assessment of existing systems. Identify and analyse existing records systems and other information systems to measure their performance against the requirements for records.

Identification of strategies for satisfying records requirements. Identify strategies for satisfying records requirements, which may include adopting policies, standards, procedures, and practices, designing new systems and implementing systems in a way which satisfies a requirement for

records. Strategies may be applied to each records requirement separately or in combination. Strategies should be selected on the basis of the degree of risk involved through failure to satisfy a requirement, either within the business function which the records system is intended to support, the existing systems environment or the corporate culture in which the strategy should succeed.

Design of a records system. Design a records system which incorporates the strategies, processes and practices described in ISO 15489; ensure that the records system supports, and does not hinder business processes; assess and, if necessary, redesign business processes and operational business and communication systems to incorporate records management.

Implementation of a records system. Implementing a records system should be undertaken systematically using project planning and methodologies appropriate to the situation and with a view to integrating the operation of records systems with business processes and related systems.

Post-implementation review. Gather information about the performance of the records system as an integral and ongoing process. This may be undertaken by interviewing members of management and key employees, using questionnaires, observing the system in operation, examining procedures manuals, training materials and other documentation, and carrying out random checks on the quality of records and control measures. Review and assess the performance of the system, initiate, and monitor corrective action and establish a regime of continuous monitoring and regular evaluation.

Converting records to new records systems, formats, and controls

When discontinuing an existing records system, no further records should be added to the system, but the records must be accessible. Records should be removed from the system in accordance with set retention and disposition guidelines and conversion and migration strategies. In time, the 'old' system will phase out. The process of change must be documented to maintain the authenticity, reliability, useability and integrity of the records.

PART 9 – (A) PROCESS AND CONTROLS – INTRODUCTION

This is the largest section of ISO15489. It provides a broad description of each of the processes necessary for an effective records system. It gives an outline of what should be in a records system procedure manual.

PART 9 – (B) DETERMINING DOCUMENTS TO BE CAPTURED

Determining which documents should be captured in a records system is based on an analysis of the regulatory requirement, business and accountability requirements and the risk of not capturing the records. The requirement is likely to be differ according to the type of organisation and the legal and social context in which it operates. Documents are created and received in a variety of media using technology that is constantly changing. The primary characteristic of documents is their dynamic nature.

Multiple creators may create them, exist in multiple versions, and exit in formative stages for varying periods of time. Business or personal actions should be captured as records and linked with metadata which characterise their specific business context when they commit an organisation or individual to action, render an organisation or individual accountable, or document an action, a decision or decision making process.

PART 9 – (C) DETERMINING HOW LONG TO RETAIN RECORDS

Records retention should be managed to meet current and future business needs, comply with legal requirements, and meet the current and future needs of internal and external stakeholders.

Records identified for continuing retention are likely to be those which:

- provide evidence and information about the organisation’s policies and actions
- provide evidence and information about the organization’s interaction

with the client community it serves

- document the rights and obligations of individuals and organizations,
- contribute to the building of an organization’s memory for scientific,

cultural or historical purposes

- contain evidence and information about activities of interest to internal and external stakeholder

PART 9 – (D) RECORDS CAPTURE

The purpose of capturing records is to:

- establish a relationship between the record, the creator and the business context that originated it
- place the record and its relationship within a records system
- link it to other records.

Techniques to ensure capture of records may include:

- classification and indexing
- arrangement in a logical structure and sequence, whether a physical file or an electronic directory
- registration which provides evidence of the existence of records in a records system
- systems which profile or template the actions undertaken in doing business

PART 9 – (E) REGISTRATION

The primary purpose of registration is to provide evidence that a record has been created or captured in a records system, and an additional benefit is that it facilitates retrieval. It involves recording brief descriptive information or metadata about the record and assigning the record an identifier, unique within the system. Registration formalizes the capture of the record into the records system.

Records may be registered at more than one level or aggregation within a records system. In the electronic environment, records systems may be designed to register records through automatic processes, transparent to the user of the business system from which it is captured and without the intervention of a records manager.

PART 9 – (F) CLASSIFICATION

Classification of business activities acts as a powerful tool to assist the conduct of business and in many of the processes involved in the management of records including:

- providing linkages between individual records which accumulate to provide a continuous record of activity
- ensuring records are named in a consistent manner over time
- assisting in the retrieval of all records relating to a function or activity
- determining security protection and access appropriate for sets of records
- allocating user permissions for access to, or action on, groups of records
- distributing responsibility for management of sets of records
- distributing records for action
- determining appropriate retention periods and disposition actions for records

Classification systems reflect the business of the organization from which they derive and are normally based on an analysis of the organization's business activities. The systems can be used to support a variety of records management processes. Organizations need to determine the degree of classification control they require for their business purposes.

Indexing can be done manually or be automatically generated. It may occur at various levels of aggregation within a records system.

Guidance on indexing can be found in ISO 5963, Documentation — Methods for examining documents, determining their subjects, and selecting indexing terms.

Shorthand methods of referencing records by means other than the title is commonly used. The allocation of numbers or codes is usually undertaken for an aggregation of records. The purpose of coding is associated with a location function, where the number or code indicates the —addressll of

the record, so that the record may be retrieved by specifying the residence within the records system.

PART 9 – (G) STORAGE AND HANDLING

- Records should be stored on media that ensure their useability, reliability, authenticity, and preservation for as long as they are needed
- Issues relating to the maintenance, handling and storage of records arise throughout their existence, not only when they become inactive
- Records require storage conditions and handling processes that consider their specific physical and chemical properties
- Storage conditions and handling processes should be designed to protect records from unauthorized access, loss, or destruction, and from theft and disaster
- Organizations should have policies and guidelines for converting or migrating records from one records system to another

For more detailed information on storage and handling of records, please see Part 5 of the Records Management Policy Manual of the National Archives
(http://www.national.archives.gov.za/rms/v1_2_records_management_policy_manual.pdf)

PART 9 – (H) ACCESS

- Organizations should have formal guidelines regulating who is permitted access to records and in what circumstances
- The regulatory environment, in which the organization operates, establishes broad principles on access rights, conditions or restrictions that should be incorporated into the operation of records systems
- The need to place restrictions on accessibility can change with the passing of time
- Ensuring appropriate access controls is done by assigning access status to both records and individuals
- The monitoring and mapping of user permissions and functional job responsibilities is a continuing process which occurs in all records systems, regardless of format

PART 9 – (I) TRACKING

Tracking of the movement and use of records within a records system is required to:

1. identify outstanding action required
2. enable retrieval of a record
3. prevent loss of records

4. monitor usage for systems maintenance and security, and maintain an auditable trail of records transactions (i.e. capture or registration, classification, indexing, storage, access and use, migration, and disposition)
5. maintain capacity to identify the operational origins of individual records where systems have been amalgamated or migrated.

Action tracking:

- Action tracking may be implemented in a records system for processes where time limits for actions are imposed
- allocates steps to be taken in response to decisions or transactions documented in a record
- assigns responsibility for action to a designated person
- records dates by which the predefined action is to be taken and dates when those actions occur

Location tracking:

- The movement of records should be documented to ensure that items can always be located when required
- The system should track the issue, transfer between persons, and return of records to their —homell location or storage, as well as their disposition or transfer to any other authorized external organization including an archives authority

PART 9 – (J) IMPLEMENTING DISPOSITION

Disposition action may encompass:

- immediate physical destruction, including overwriting and deletion
- retention for a further period within the business unit
- transfer to an appropriate storage area or medium under organizational control
- transfer to another organization that has assumed responsibility for the business activity through restructure sale or privatization
- transfer to a storage area managed on behalf of the organization by an independent provider
- transfer to an organizational archive
- transfer to an external archive's authority

The following principles should govern the physical destruction of records:

- Destruction should always be authorized
- Records pertaining to pending or actual litigation or investigation should not be destroyed
- Records destruction should be carried out in a way that preserves the confidentiality of any information they contain.

- All copies of records that are authorized for destruction, including security copies, preservation copies and backup copies, should be destroyed.

PART 9 – (K) DOCUMENTING RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

- Documentation should address legal, organizational, and technical requirements
- Relevant legislation, standards and policies should be recorded, to determine requirements for practice, review, audit, and testing of records management processes
- Decisions on which records should be captured and how long records should be maintained should be clearly documented and retained
- Details of business activities and the records that result from each business activity, and their retention periods and disposition actions must be recorded clearly and unambiguously
- Events that activate or enable disposition actions should be clearly identified
- Instructions for the transfer of records to alternative forms of storage (e.g. off-line or off-site storage) should be included

PART 10 – MONITORING AND AUDITING

- Compliance monitoring should be regularly undertaken
- Reviews should examine organizational performance and user satisfaction with the system.
- The regulatory environment may require that external bodies undertake monitoring and auditing.
- Modifications to the records systems and records management processes should be made if these are found to be unsuitable or ineffective.
- Systems compliance and monitoring should be documented, and reports should be maintained.

PART 11 – TRAINING

- An organization seeking to conform to this part of ISO 15489 should establish an ongoing programme of records training.
- Programmes for training in requirements for records management and specific practices should encompass the roles and responsibilities of, and be addressed to, all members of management, employees, contractors, volunteers and any other individuals responsible for the whole or part of a business activity of an organization in making records during their work and in capturing those records into records systems.
- The training programmes can be designed and set up in cooperation with external organizations.

How can training take place?

- In the classroom
- Orientation programme
- On the job
- Briefing sessions and seminars
- Leaflets
- Computer based presentations
- Training courses
- Website / intranet