

white paper:

Six ways that a pilot program helps your digital transformation succeed



Implementing digital business processes and electronic records can be a daunting prospect.

Whether you are scanning paper documents or implementing digital workflows, the price of failure can be very high. Failures in this area also tend to be of the high profile variety.

So how do you avoid the pitfalls?

In the past few years, we have seen a growing trend towards the use of pilot programs for digitization.

Pilot programs have proven to be a very effective way to minimize the risk of failures and maximize the benefits delivered by digitization initiatives.

This white paper outlines the six common ways that your colleagues are using pilot programs to ensure success when going digital:

- 1. Proving the business case**
- 2. Stress-testing your RIM program fundamentals**
- 3. Evaluating the technologies**
- 4. Fine-tuning the process**
- 5. Evaluating other critical resources**
- 6. Change management**



1: Proving the business case

If you have signed on for digital transformation, you would already know the commonly touted benefits of digital business processes and electronic information. Those same benefits have probably been part of your key messaging in securing funding.

A well-designed pilot program is your opportunity to turn those promises into tangible benefits from a financial, legal, risk management or operational perspective.

From the outset of your pilot, look for quantifiable gains and relatable success stories that you can use to secure a full roll-out of your digitization program.



Financial: One of the more immediate impacts of moving to digital records is the reduction of physical space used to store paper files and other physical media. Be ready to quantify that reduction, not only in terms of square feet but also hard dollars. How much money will improved space utilization save the department in terms of office space leasing, maintenance and taxes over the next year? The next five years? Better yet, use the experience of this one department to develop projections for how much digitization can save the entire organization once it is rolled out to all departments and teams.



Operational: One of the more common goals of digitization is to improve the efficiency of distributing, retrieving and using records on a daily basis. A pilot implementation is an early opportunity to observe those benefits in action. Look for success stories at the end-user level, as well as the impacts of improved records management for the organization's overall business objectives. How does faster information access improve key performance indicators such as time to market, cost of sale or customer satisfaction?



Compliance: How does the new solution help the organization meet its statutory, regulatory and audit requirements? While those benefits may appear less tangible and more long-term in nature, there will be opportunities for them to show themselves. If your pilot group prepares submissions for regulators or other external authorities, look for reductions in preparation time or readily apparent increases in the availability of responsive information. Is your pilot group subject to an annual audit, either internally or externally? If so, what if any feedback is available from auditors on relevant information management controls or production of evidence?

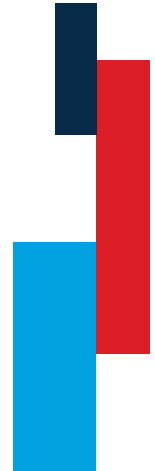
2: Stress-testing your RIM program fundamentals

No matter how mature your records management program is, a pilot implementation will help you assess and adjust key program elements such as records classification schema, retention schedules and indexing systems. These opportunities apply whether you are implementing newer digital tools or adapting an existing RIM system that was built with paper filing in mind.

In either scenario, a pilot provides a real world test of how well records management tools respond to current business processes and twenty-first century information capture.

Here are some of the things to look for:

- Can records classification structures be readily mapped to participants' business functions and activities?
- Are key document and data types captured and used in the pilot clearly identifiable in the existing classification scheme?
- Do indexing metadata, file naming conventions and other information retrieval elements meet daily needs for locating and accessing records?
- Are records retention periods long enough to meet identified requirements in an increasingly data-driven business environment?
- Conversely, are retention periods reasonable enough to minimize the risks associated with retaining records too long? This is especially important in the digital realm, as the creation and proliferation of documents and data becomes easier than it ever was before.



If the answer to any of these questions is less than a resounding yes, then corrective measures can be applied before a full roll-out.

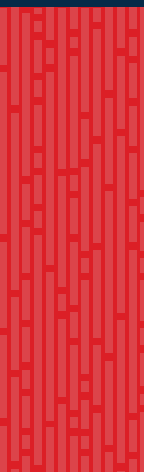
3: Evaluating the technologies

Technologies are a key feature of every digital transformation. These include everything from scanning and capture hardware and software, to digital repositories and ECM systems.

One of the main objectives of any digital evolution pilot is to assess how well these different components support real world capture, retention and use of records by real world people.

A well-designed pilot program should be able to answer the following:

- Are scanners and other hardware devices able to capture all the required records, regardless of size and other physical features?
- Are authentication features sufficient to meet the expectations of auditors, regulators, and other external authorities?
- Can the electronic repository accommodate all required file formats and allow users to open files in their native formats?
- Are metadata and full-text search available to locate and retrieve information in the news systems?
- Can system and document backups be brought online reliably and in a sufficiently timely manner during disaster recovery business continuity testing?



4: Fine-tuning the process

It is also essential to evaluate the people and process components of the initiative. These processes include initial scanning or other capture of records into the digital solution, metadata tagging, indexing of electronic documents and eventual disposition of source documents after the digitization. The pilot provides an opportunity to observe, review and test manual work processes and identify opportunities to streamline or otherwise fix those processes. For example:

- **Are any steps consistently slowing down the process? Can they be reengineered or broken out into multiple smaller steps?**
- **Do any procedures or tasks have a higher than acceptable rate of error?**
- **Are any tasks too burdensome for the staff performing them?**
- **Are the tasks appropriate to the knowledge level of the workers?**
- **Do any controls appear redundant or unnecessary?**

5: Evaluating other critical resources

In addition to the technical components and the human-driven processes, there are a host of other resources you should be looking at during a pilot program.

A pilot program helps you validate your initial resource estimates and allocations against a small subset of records or data. With real world data in hand, you can then extrapolate that to provide more accurate estimates of a full roll-out.

Here are some of the resources which can be examined during your pilot:

- technical developers for software configuration and customization, hardware setup and other system implementation tasks
- clerical staffing to support upfront processes such as document imaging, metadata entry and disposition of source documents
- network bandwidth to accommodate the increased demands of electronic document distribution and retrieval
- server storage space, including archive and backup
- departmental subject matter experts to provide input on business functions, record collections and usage patterns
- storage space and destruction services for source documents once they have been digitally captured



6: Change management

By piloting your digital transformation with real-world business processes, risks and cost scenarios, you are able to prove the benefit to the organization of a full roll-out. But what about the benefits for the teams and individuals involved? Another benefit of the pilot is that it begins the change management process and socializes the digital transformation to key stakeholders. Participants are given a sandbox-type environment to acclimatize to new processes, interfaces and work styles, while allowing the implementation team to resolve challenges and adjust approaches with relatively less fanfare. As the kinks are ironed out and participants begin to experience the program benefits, those management and staff can act as powerful allies and champions in a wider roll-out of the pilot.

TAB can help.

With the right planning, a pilot program can deliver enormous benefit and minimize a lot of risks. TAB offers a wide range of technologies and services to help you execute an effective digitization pilot, including planning, staffing, scanning, electronic document storage and change management.

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