

THE BUSINESS LEADER'S GUIDE TO

# Breaking Through Information Gridlock

PART TWO





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# Introduction

Information is pouring into organizations at an accelerating rate. This includes data from websites, social media, mobile devices, enterprise applications, and other sources. Given that most companies today are becoming digital businesses with a heavy online presence, there's no sign that the gathering of information will slow down anytime soon. And unfortunately, this rush of data has afflicted many organizations with information gridlock.

Welcome to Part 2 of the Business Leader's Guide to Breaking Through Information Gridlock. If you haven't read Part 1 ([check it out here](#)), here's what you missed: Our team of expert consultants explained the importance of collaboration and how to help employees work better together with the right tools and processes; why it's necessary for organizations to improve their mobile infrastructure sooner rather than later; and how to glean useful information from information silos.

In part 2, we will detail three additional areas of information gridlock from three additional subject matter experts: unoptimized processes, turning trapped information into something your business can use, and the risks of losing institutional knowledge.

**The end result of information mobility is that users can have access to whatever relevant data they need at any time, from virtually any location, and in any form.**

As you read through all six solutions, you'll notice they all have a common thread: Information mobility, or the ability to transform information and repurpose it or search for it, in any format. The end result is that users have access to whatever relevant data they need at any time, from virtually any location, and in any form.

In many cases, it's a lack of information mobility that prevents organizations from seeing the true value of their data. And, in a recent survey conducted by IDC and commissioned by Ricoh, just 17 percent of those surveyed placed in the top tier of information mobility maturity—organizations that IDC calls information mobility "champions." That means 83 percent are missing out on major benefits, and likely, struggling with one or more forms of gridlock.

# Chapter 4

## HOW TO OPTIMIZE WORKFLOWS & IMPROVE PROCESSES

by Wendy Cole // Principal Consultant, Business Process Agility for Ricoh USA, Inc

### At-A-Glance

- » Optimizing processes to reduce risk.
- » Removing barriers to innovation.
- » Changing the game with ECM.

For years we've heard a lot about the need to replace manual processes with automation. But organizations have lots of work to do in this regard. Many workers are spending lots of time on unnecessary busy work that could be spent on more productive endeavors. In this section, we will examine the reasons why automating workflows can lead to strong business growth and detail ways to best tackle issues related to manual workflows.

IDC research, commissioned by Ricoh, notes that less than half (41 percent) of the organizations surveyed have automated most or all their workflows, and only 24 percent have seamlessly integrated workflows across department boundaries. That leaves a lot of business processes that are still handled manually.

The overload of busy work not only drains productivity but can hurt employee morale. No one wants to spend hours handling tedious tasks that could be eliminated with automated processes. There's also a heavy cost/financial element here. Many enterprise organizations are paying employees to perform manual tasks that could be done much faster, and often times more accurately, via automation. As manual processes are repeated again and again, errors invariably creep in, hampering productivity, efficiency, and value.

By automating your business processes, workflows can be further optimized, reducing errors and the amount of time workers have to spend handling these processes. And, if those same workers are freed up to concentrate

### THE IMPACT OF BROKEN PROCESSES

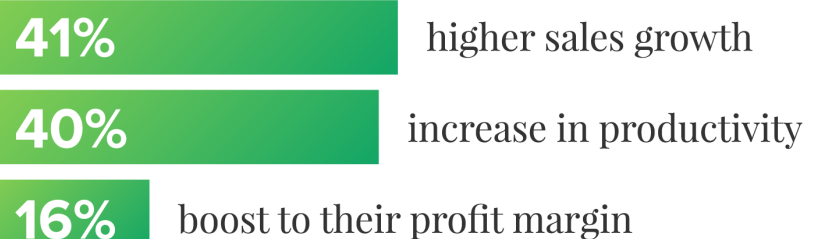
According to an IDC study, defective manual processes and process breakdowns have very real consequences:

**75%** percent of respondents experienced serious risks and/or compliance issues caused by these broken processes.

**30%** percent lost key employees as a result.

**1 in 5** workers believe that decision-makers consistently fail to collaborate with others.

on more productive areas, the result is increased innovation and the potential for new products or services that create additional revenue streams or reduce costs. And this emphasis on innovation is critical. According to IDC [global innovation research](#) commissioned by Ricoh, innovation leaders enjoy 41 percent higher sales growth, a 40 percent boost to productivity, and a 16 percent increase to their profit margins.



Source: IDC Research commissioned by Ricoh, 2015

That said, automation for the sake of doing things faster isn't always a good thing. Sometimes, that just results in doing bad things more quickly than you did before. You have to get to the heart of the problem—fruitful business process automation should be about improvement first and automation second. Fix what's broken before automating and attempting to speed up that process. That's how you achieve true results.





## *ECM Can Change the Game*

One potential means to automate processes is with an Enterprise Content Management (ECM) program. Since definitions of ECM can vary, I'll level-set by referring to the Association for Information and Image Management's (AIIM) definition: **ECM is the strategies, methods and tools used to capture, manage, store, preserve, and deliver content and documents related to organizational processes. It covers the management of information within the entire scope of an enterprise, whether that information is in the form of a paper document, electronic file, database print stream or email.** Personally, I place more emphasis on the strategies and methods and less on the tools. Tools are physical apparatus. Change is truly affected with tactical use of the tools you have available and the culture in which you operate.

**Many enterprise organizations are paying employees to perform manual tasks that could be done much faster via automation**

A robust ECM program looks not only at the technology in place across your organization, it examines your processes—both manual and automated—to find areas of inefficiency and productivity loss. It contains a change management and training component, so that workers are not only up-to-date on new processes and methods of working, it explains why those changes were made. As part of an organization-wide information governance strategy, ECM is not only an integral part of getting information where it needs to go, it has major business benefits as well. According to AIIM, an **effective ECM strategy** can improve productivity, efficiency and customer responsiveness while reducing costs. And that's at the heart of why it's necessary to automate processes.

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Manual workflows slow down the flow of information throughout an organization, creating bottlenecks and redundancies. By automating the right processes and giving workers the tools they need to access information fast and reliably, you enable them to not only make quicker decisions, but to make better decisions.

Ultimately, the key with ECM is to look at it as not a technology but a strategy. Because of this, ECM must be viewed as a long-term initiative rather than a quick fix. By launching an ECM strategy now and putting in place the necessary tools, organizations can take a huge step toward fixing the major issues involved with manual processes and fostering better information mobility.

# Chapter 5

## HOW TO SHIFT FROM TRAPPED INFORMATION TO USEFUL DATA

By Dylan Williams • Principal Consultant; Governance, Risk & Compliance for Ricoh USA, Inc

### At-A-Glance

- » The problems with paper.
- » Things holding your mobile workers back.
- » Keeping your information secure and searchable.

As far back as the early 1970s, people were writing about the coming “paperless office.” The fact is, even in today’s digital age, organizations still rely on huge volumes of paperwork to support all manner of business processes. This jeopardizes speed and accuracy and can lead to significantly higher costs for storage and access. In this section, we will discuss the problems that come with an overreliance on paper, and how a strong information management program can help enterprise organizations overcome data challenges, regardless of format or media.

### DID YOU KNOW?

*According to AIIM, while half of workers report that paper consumption is decreasing in their workplace, up to 20 percent say it is actually increasing.*

Even in today, people still feel a need to see information on paper. As a result, they often print documents such as forms, invoices, emails and other content. Unfortunately, paper is among the least efficient containers for information, and has a number of drawbacks, including:

#### SECURITY

While data breaches get the headlines, physical theft is still a very real threat for enterprise organizations—and it’s a lot easier to follow a paper trail when it’s not actually paper you’re trailing. Data protections for digital **may now be stronger** than for physical records.

#### COST

The more records you have, the larger the (climate-controlled, of course) space required to store them. Also, manual keying and decision-making from hardcopy documents represent some of the largest hidden operating costs for many organizations today.

#### SAFETY

There’s safety in numbers, and that means regular backups. But when there’s no cloud to back your paper documents up to, the risk of a natural disaster destroying years of information becomes very real.

In addition, information on paper is locked away, and requires physical handling, reading, transcribing, and transmission to make the information mobile again. In fact, according to **recent research** from AIIM, 80 percent of survey respondents said that paper content and processes are huge impediments for mobile workers. One way to solve for this is through better records management.





When it comes to records, **information management** involves a disciplined approach to removing both containers (paper, spreadsheets, emails and other structured data applications) and other information that has exceeded its useful life. By eliminating costly paper and data from failing servers and unsupported legacy applications, these freed-up resources can be redirected towards continuous innovation for the enterprise. A strong information management program considers the entire document lifecycle, rather than just its end—a necessary component of a strong information governance strategy.

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In order to build such a program, senior managers need to analyze the containers of information—paper and systems—that are the least efficient and most expensive relative to the value to the organization. They need to keep in mind factors such as risk levels, security threats and regulatory compliance requirements. And must ensure all elements of an organization are brought in on the program early, as risk and compliance issues impact these groups differently.

Information management is a key component of information mobility, and by being proactive, you can start addressing these key information challenges when data comes into your organization, rather than when it gets stuffed into a file cabinet somewhere.



# Chapter 6

## HOW TO SECURE INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

By Shelley Rodriguez • Region Vice President & Chairman of Corporate Generational Council for Ricoh USA, Inc

### At-A-Glance

- » The importance of institutional knowledge.
- » How the generational shift in the workplace is affecting you.
- » Best ways to retain and share key information.

Where does information reside at your organization? You might be inclined to say it's in the organization's data center, or on its servers or storage systems.

Certainly much of the information is kept in these places. But what about the information that resides in employees' heads? If these individuals leave, what happens to the knowledge they possess? Unless they've passed this information on to coworkers, or documented it somewhere, the organization will lose that knowledge along with the employee.

Nearly 40 percent of an organization's information and institutional knowledge resides in filing cabinets or "employees' heads," according to IDC. Often, this information lies with those individuals who have been with the organization for the longest. Unfortunately, this means that these are the individuals closest to retirement — and the demographic that feels the least comfortable with technology. In fact, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates more than **30 million jobs in the United States** will soon require replenishing because of older workers leaving the workforce. So while it's critical to address this problem as soon as possible, relying solely on technology isn't the way to go about it.

## A GENERATION APPROACHING RETIREMENT

After World War II, the U.S. population exploded as service members returned home to post-war prosperity. This Baby boom generation, born 1946–1964, is now on its way out of the workforce:

- » According to Gallup, only a third of the oldest members of this generation, age 67 and up, are *still in the workforce*.
- » However, 36 percent say they plan to wait *until age 70* or later to retire, up from 19 percent in 2011.
- » Older Baby boomers are *more likely to be engaged* in their work than younger members of the same generation.

Organizations have a number of means to tackle the problem of losing institutional knowledge, and finding ways to better share information with the people who need it. This should focus on face-to-face measures, which includes:





- » Documenting your key processes for current and future workers.
- » Creating a structured system that allows workers to easily share their tactical knowledge.
- » Engaging employees with these specialized skills to educate and train larger groups.
- » Creating a mentorship program that pairs older and newer employees.
  - This has a number of benefits beyond transferring this knowledge to others, as well—mentorship programs can **diffuse potential intergenerational conflicts** and also better prepare the next generation for leadership positions.
  - An additional benefit is the fresh perspective that the millennials being mentored can bring to current state processes and thoughts, encouraging and accelerating needed change.
- » Building a knowledge management system that can effectively identify, capture and transfer critical information across the entire enterprise.

Another option: offering phased retirement, which allows workers to gradually reduce their hours before stopping work entirely. **More than 40 percent** of older workers today want to make a gradual shift to part-time work or less stressful jobs. Unfortunately, while some organizations have begun to offer phased retirement options, including the U.S. federal government, only 18 percent **offer this option** to most or all workers.

Ultimately, the goal is to limit the number of potential bottlenecks, so a clear understanding of processes across departments is necessary. Here, it's critical to work with LoB managers who understand the major processes involved and can identify potential failure

## DID YOU KNOW?

*Nearly 40 percent of an organization's information and institutional knowledge resides in filing cabinets or 'employees' heads,' according to IDC.*

areas. Once those areas are identified, these processes can be improved, either by automation, or by adding redundancies that can limit the impact of losing a key employee.

The workforce is changing as many Baby Boomers retire, so there's clearly a need to preserve institutional knowledge, and quickly. Senior executives must grasp this concept sooner than later, so they can help their organizations gain the most value from all types of information assets.





## *An End to Gridlock—and a New Beginning for Your Organization*

In this new world of work, information is a critical part of every enterprise, and organizations of all shapes and sizes are handling an increasing amount of data every single day. With this glut of information, gridlock is often the result. But with careful planning and the right tools, gridlock doesn't have to paralyze your organization.

**With careful planning and the right tools, gridlock doesn't have to paralyze your organization.**

Whether it's building a strong mobile infrastructure, tearing down information silos, or digitizing physical records, the end result is stronger information mobility. And beyond breaking through gridlock, information mobility has a number of benefits for organizations.

IDC's research into information mobility found that organizations at the highest level of information mobility experienced an average net annual productivity increase of 28 percent per employee; 4 percent higher revenues, an 11 percent reduction in operational costs, higher customer count, and lower churn.

It's clear that with a strategy and technology deployments that enable information mobility, organizations can eliminate information gridlock and significantly improve operations. And if you're facing these same challenges, a true business partner can help you get started. For more information about how to build a gridlock-busting information mobility strategy, [contact Ricoh today](#).

**Haven't read part one of this guide?**

Visit [www.workintelligent.ly/resources](http://www.workintelligent.ly/resources) to download part one for free today.





**ENTERPRISE**

## About the IDC Study

IDC conducted a global survey of 292 director-level and above executives from IT and lines of business in US companies. This was backed up by 12 in-depth interviews with line of business and IT executives from companies with a high level of information mobility. 56 percent of respondents were from IT departments, and 45 percent were from lines of business. The goals: understand the business benefits of information mobility and the current state of information mobility across organizations.