

Information Governance Strategies for Businesses of All Sizes



Regardless of size or industry, businesses no longer have the luxury of ignoring information governance. Increasingly complex [data privacy regulations](#) and an unrelenting barrage of cyber-attacks necessitate proactive information governance strategies. Additionally, such strategies help businesses realize data value and improve their competitive edge.

Universal Information Governance Basics

Information governance includes several key components, regardless of organization size. These include:

- **Categorization and storage of data** – The foundation of any information governance strategy involves identifying where data lives and tagging that data into appropriate categories. This helps to ensure data quality and allows users to find needed information quickly. This aids eDiscovery and regulatory compliance, as well.
- **Data security** – Another critical component of information governance involves protecting networks and data from unauthorized access and preventing data loss. This includes data both on premises and in the cloud, both at rest and in transit.
- **Regulatory compliance** – Organizations must understand the regulations that apply to their location and industry and ensure compliance with those regulations. [Data compliance monitoring](#) proves essential to that effort.

- **Controlling access to data** – To aid data security and regulatory compliance, businesses need to pay particular attention to access controls. For instance, employing multi-factor authentication strengthens security. Likewise, zero trust policies and [risk-based authentication](#) guard against improper data access.
- **Managing the information lifecycle** – Information kept too long can prove a liability. On the other hand, many regulations impose a minimum amount of time to retain certain types of data. Consequently, organizations need to account for data throughout its lifecycle, carefully implementing data retention and destruction policies.



Every Organization Faces Challenges

Managing huge amounts of data brings challenges. Some challenges impact all organizations. For instance, unstructured data comprises about 80 percent of corporate data, and it can be difficult to gain the necessary visibility into this data. This includes emails, word processing files, social media and more.

Additionally, data often exists in silos. That is, a business comprises multiple operating units, and these units do not always share information readily. For instance, sales and customer service both collect customer data. But if they maintain separate databases, the company has no single source of truth.

Other challenges differ from one organization to another. For example, large enterprises wrestle with the difficulties imposed by mergers and acquisitions. Organizations merging bring sometimes conflicting approaches to records management and data security. In addition, increased bureaucracy in a large enterprise can result in slow-moving processes.

Small businesses, on the other hand, may not have the necessary expertise in-house to fully support information governance. Without a dedicated, knowledgeable IT staff and committed senior management, implementing [affordable information governance](#) can prove an uphill battle.



Adapt Information Governance Strategies to Business Needs

Consequently, information governance strategies need to be flexible, taking into account the structure and needs of the organization. For instance, any successful governance strategy must involve technical expertise. For a small business with only minimal IT staff, this will likely mean partnering with dedicated [information governance experts](#).

Regardless of business size, information governance requires a culture shift and engagement of end users. To achieve success, organizations need to match governance strategies to business priorities and identified needs. When businesses clearly communicate the value of governance and the benefits that it will bring, end users are more likely to do their part.

To help ease the process, automate data governance tasks wherever possible. For instance, tools that use AI and machine learning can automate data discovery, cataloging and tracking. This improves data visibility and helps to ensure clean, usable data.

Get Microsoft 365 Information Governance Solutions

Today's dispersed organizations need [information governance solutions](#) to help them protect sensitive data across clouds, apps, and remote devices. Microsoft Purview includes risk and compliance solutions that support services included in [Microsoft 365](#). Think Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, OneDrive, Exchange, and others.



Purview makes it easy for organizations to identify data risks, manage regulatory requirements, and get started with compliance. It automates many data compliance tasks and provides visibility into data, no matter where it lives.

Partner with Information Governance Experts

Tackling information governance one step at a time helps to make a daunting task more manageable. Start small and address one project at a time. The [information governance consultants](#) at Messaging Architects can help you design and implement a solution to match business priorities and budget.

Over time, with a comprehensive, flexible information governance strategy in place, your organization can [realize data value](#) while ensuring data security and achieving regulatory compliance.