

# How To Be An Effective Records Officer



**Records Management Division  
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# Being an Effective Records Officer requires

- **Effective Communication**
- **Organization**
- **Collaboration**
- **Critical Thinking and Decision Making**

# The Many Hats of an Effective Records Officer



# Effective Communication

- **What does it Mean to Communicate Effectively?**
  - **Know your goal in the conversation (i.e. persuade, inform, debate, etc.)**
  - **Ally versus Adversarial**
  - **Ask, Do not assume**
  - **Avoid “We will do this”**
  - **Stay out of the weeds**
  - **Achieve Complete Conversations**

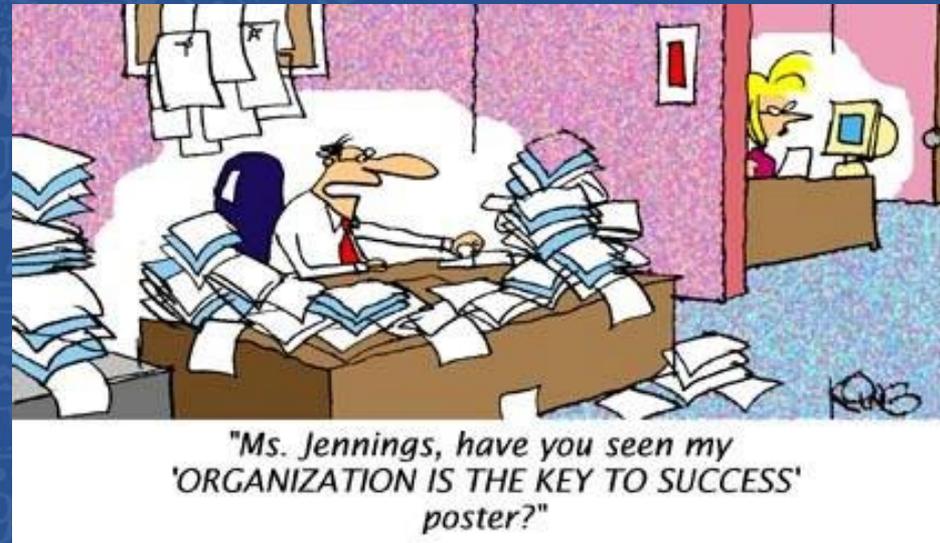
# Effective Communication

- **Effective Communication is critical in any relationship**
- **It is especially critical now.**
- **Forward trainings and information to your coordinators so they are also up to date on Records Management.**
- **It's crucial to have communication between:**
  - a. Records Analyst**
  - b. Records Officers**
  - c. Records Coordinators**
  - d. Agency Central Offices and Field Offices**

# Organization

## Why Get Organized?

- Reduced Volume
- Reduced Costs
- Improved Accountability of Public Funds
- Reduced your liability by keeping records according to retention schedule
- Makes your life easier as the records officer



# How to get Organized

- Identify your records
- Identify your divisions
- Know who your coordinators are
- Create a contact list of your coordinators and update it accordingly
  - Do you have a forms officer?
    - i. Most records start from a form
- Identify your record locations
- Identify your RDAs

# How to make life easier as a Records Officer

- **Be more detailed from the beginning**
  - It will be more work up front, but it will be easier to manage tasks and find things in the end
- **Track boxes that are sent to and from VRC**
- **Track your record destruction**
- **Create Spreadsheets**
  - RDA spreadsheets
  - Project trackers
- **Assign yourself tasks, deadlines, and follow ups**

# Collaboration

- **Good records management practices are a team effort.**
- **Communication with your Divisions, STS, and Legal is essential.**
- **Without them it becomes impossible to accomplish records management.**
- **Communication and collaboration will make for a more productive overall team and records program.**

# Records Coordinator

- Know what is happening in their divisions
- Create a game plan
- Find out what they need
- Create an agenda to help keep them focused on the task at hand
- Create set times to check in with your coordinators to make sure you are aware of any changes in their divisions

# IT

- Know the technology your records are on
- Make sure technology is STS compliant
- Help with electronic preservation
- Help with completing the records holding report
- Responsible for the destruction of electronic records

# Legal

- Know the laws that apply to your agency
- Identify any confidentiality statutes
- Identify any retention statutes
- Litigation
- Good allies to have when you are explaining the importance of
  - Following your retention schedules
  - Documenting Records Destruction
  - The need to continually revise your RDAs

# Critical Thinking and Decision Making

- **As the agency records officer you will have to make decisions about when to:**
  - **Create a new RDA**
  - **Revise an RDA**
  - **Retire an RDA**

# When to Create an RDA

- **An RDA is created when:**
  - A new division or program is created within the agency
  - A new form that does not fall under an existing RDA is created
  - An RDA is revised and a record within the RDA has a different retention period or confidentiality requirements than the other records in the RDA

# When to Revise an RDA

- **An RDA needs to be revised when:**
  - **New legislation has been enacted that affects the records retention or confidentiality**
  - **A new Records Process has been implemented in the agency**
  - **When records are converted from paper to electronic**
  - **When the agency's businesses practices necessitate shorting or lengthening the records retention.**
    - **(Must fall within audit's minimum retention of 5 years)**

# Why Do I Need to Revise my RDAs?

- **Audit Compliance**
- **Risk Management**
  - A five year old RDA that is never reviewed and inconsistently followed is the same as having no RDA
  - As long as records are retained, they are legally discoverable, regardless whether their retention period has expired
- **RDAs have the force of law**
  - TCA 10-7-303
  - TCA 10-7-509

# When to Retire an RDA

- **An RDA must be retired when:**
  - A program or division has been dissolved, overhauled, transferred to a different agency, or absorbed into another program
  - **The RDA now falls under a statewide RDA**
    - If agency legal requirements or business practices mandate a longer retention than the statewide requires the agency should continue to utilize their existing RDA
  - **A business process is no longer being done**
    - The record has become obsolete, the retention period has expired and all records have been destroyed according to its RDA
  - **An RDA is being combined with a similar RDA**
    - One is kept as the “umbrella RDA” and the other is retired
    - Must have the same retention, cut off, and confidentiality requirements

# Overcoming Common Obstacles

- **How does this benefit me?**
- **Why do I need to revise my RDAs?**
- **Can't get leadership buy in**
- **I don't have time to deal with this right now**
- **We tried this before and it didn't work**
- **Not all divisions will get on board**

# How does this benefit me?

- **Cost savings**
  - Record storage costs
  - Fine avoidance
  - litigation costs
- **Improved organization**
- **Audit Compliance**
  - Auditors will look at RDA compliance
- **Electronic Recordkeeping**

# Getting Leadership Buy In

- **Good recordkeeping will support your agency's institutional mission**
  - Reduce costs
  - If an agency is moving towards AWS all paper only RDAs have to be revised to reflect electronic retention
  - Records Management is Risk Management
  - Once again, Audit compliance

# I Don't Have Time...

- **Keep the number of physical meetings/conference calls down**
- **Do more of the work/communication online**
- **Ask about using a designee or putting together a working group to handle the majority of the leg work**
- **Streamlining your records processes saves time in the long run**

# Someone Already Tried This and It Didn't Work

- Find out what went wrong previously and explain how your plan will avoid those mistakes
- Illustrate to them your successes with other divisions/programs
- Send stakeholder metrics as the project moves forward to show progress
- Ask other agencies what worked for them

# Not All Divisions Will Get On Board

- Find influential allies who will lobby on your behalf
- Focus on your cooperating divisions first and then use your successes to get other divisions on board
- Seek external support if necessary to leverage the division to get on board

# RMD is here to help

- We are always available to assist you.
- We can pre-review RDA's for you
- One on one trainings, discussions, etc.
- Monthly RDA workshops

# Questions?

