Chapter 2
The Business Perspective

ABSTRACT

This chapter explains what it means and why it is important to craft a business-driven information strategy. A business-driven strategy is one that is suited to your internal and external business environments. The chapter references authoritative models for describing your internal working environment to ensure that your strategy is supportive rather than contradictory. The chapter also suggests an approach for modeling business capabilities to better understand what critical business assets and liabilities. Additionally, the chapter provides guidance to assure your information is reasonable from a business perspective. Finally, the chapter considers how to bridge the gap between business and information management practices.

BUSINESS DRIVING THE INFORMATION STRATEGY

An information management strategy is a business strategy and a business responsibility. We need a strategy to ensure that value is realized from assets, and to ensure that liabilities and risks are minimized. Every organization must apply and adapt the definition, language and the culture of information to suit their business needs. This is the essence of managing information – managing your information in a way that suits your business needs. Managing information strategically means managing it as more than a support function – it means managing information as an asset that has value and that carries risks and liabilities. Organizations must develop their own strategy, understand it, believe in it, and live it. This book is designed to help you do that.

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Your strategy should be aligned with and supportive of your key business drivers. An information management strategy is business driven if it supports the way you work – your operating environment, supports your business goals and capabilities, and is responsive to changes in the larger business environment. Using someone else’s strategy and changing the names and words, or using a template from consultants does not produce a strategy that is driven by your business. Only your own business administrators and your operational staff can design and implement a business driven strategy. Organizations can engage coaches and mentors, but ultimately this is an internal business process and decision. Business-driven also means aligning your information management practices with your business drivers.

Information management strategies should be both reasonable and suitable to the organization. What do we mean by suitable? What do we mean by reasonable? A strategy that is suitable is adapted to a use or purpose and is well defined to meet a need. First and foremost, information strategies must be suitable to the business needs of the organization. For the purpose of this book, we define suitable as defined to meet the organization’s (1) current and future position in the external market and economy; (2) business operating environment and working model; and (3) business goals and capabilities. Suitable strategies thus support the organization’s business vision, its operational working models, and its tactics (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Suitable information strategies
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