

White Paper:

Realize the benefits of information management

Summary of Contents

1. Summary	3
2. Measuring the benefits	4
3. Where do you start?	4
4. Quantifying the benefits	5
5. eDREAM method	7
6. Taking ownership	8
7. Reaping the rewards	8
About Bramble.cc	10

1. Summary

Today there is pressure on both public and private sector organizations to cut costs, in some cases by 10-20% over the next year or two. The question is: *where are those savings going to come from?* Answer: through implementing a common and controlled information management environment.

The fact is, in the information age, most large organizations - in the public or private sectors - spend an inordinate amount of time creating, reading, manipulating, storing and sharing documents and other data.

They are knowledge-based or, to be more accurate, information-based.

You would think, therefore, that they would regard information as their most important asset. *Wrong.* Instead the focus is on other resources, such as people or equipment, information technology and possibly individual items of information.

People are often left to their own devices, teams don't collaborate effectively and information is simply not managed on an enterprise-wide basis.

This is a serious failure of management. What needs to happen is that an organization must be re-engineered around its information, which needs to be understood, categorized, standardized, structured - and above all, *controlled*. Only then can an enterprise fully realize both cost and efficiency benefits.

2. Measuring the benefits

No organization should embark on an information management project unless it can realize significant *benefits*. The questions are: what benefits can be achieved, what will be the value of these benefits and how can they be achieved?

Whilst benefits realization is a key component of the MSP programme management method (and advocated by the Office of Government Commerce, OGC) in the public sector, actually identifying and measuring the benefits of information management initiatives can be difficult.

In the work that we do with public sector clients we regularly find as many as *25 distinct benefits* to support business cases for information management projects, and we have a checklist of over 50. Every benefit is measurable and almost all are expressed in monetary terms - the value that the project will deliver to the organization.

And we have had similar experiences with clients in the private sector too.

3. Where do you start?

No information management project can be entered into lightly. A lot of work needs to be done in terms of analyzing and scoping the project, outlining the business case and ensuring full benefits realization.

At Bramble.cc we engage with key project stakeholders in order to determine:

- **business requirements for information processing**
- **how people access and use information**
- **the types, subjects and functions of information**
- **how information is used and shared across the enterprise**
- **how information might be better used and deployed to benefit the organization.**

No stone is left unturned in this rigorous process - which is why we have been able to help many high-profile public and private sector organizations to establish sound information strategies based on business need, not guesswork.

4. Quantifying the benefits

Quantifying benefits to inform a cost-benefit analysis or a return-on-investment (ROI) decision can be a sensitive and challenging task for information management projects, especially in the public sector.

Projects that avoid this step often have difficulties later, which is why the OGC mandates it for central government bodies. Often a project, information or IT manager knows that the project is worth doing, but is unable to persuade decision-makers without hard numbers.

The discipline of benefits realization ensures that projects and programmes deliver what they promise: it provides focus, demonstrates value-for-money, reduces the risk of failure and maximizes the benefits eventually achieved.

It starts with an honest assessment of the expected outcomes of the project or programme, the identification of the benefits, the quantification of their value and an understanding of how and where in the organization they will be achieved. Balanced with an analysis of the costs and risks, this assessment provides the essential input to a business case and committed decision-making.

The informed support of senior management is critical to the success of benefits realization, starting with the identification of benefits perceived to be of value to senior management. Consequently it is important to start every assessment of benefits by engaging with senior managers to ensure that the benefits will support a successful business case.

Bramble.cc is highly experienced at helping senior project sponsors to justify the investment in an information management initiative. We know that, however sound the technology is, without a solid business case that clearly outlines the anticipated costs and benefits, a project might not even get off the ground.

We aim to start every assessment of benefits by engaging with senior managers to ensure that it is the organization's perception of value that is built into the benefits selected, and that they will support a successful business case.

Benefits can be achieved in the following areas:

- **direct savings - e.g. in reduce paper consumption or storage costs**
- **efficiencies - delivering the same service at lower cost**
- **effectiveness - delivering a better service**
- **risk reduction - e.g. in areas of compliance and disaster**
- **customer benefits - the customer or citizen having a better experience**
- **corporate memory - increased information assets and reduced cost of recreating existing information.**

To paraphrase PRINCE2 (project management standard) and MSP (programme management standard), “a benefit must be measurable and is usually monetary.” Neither features of solutions, nor the changes in working practice that they enable can be categorized as benefits.

5. eDREAM method

As well as taking standard practice from PRINCE2 and MSP, Bramble.cc has developed eDREAM, a method for information management that encapsulates the real-world experience of our senior consultants in both public sector and commercial enterprises. It is specific to information services and identifies savings, the impact on core business, the reduction of business risks and the value added to assets and customers.

The eDREAM method encapsulates the parameters, indicators and calculations for all the benefits that we have modelled to date in a large spreadsheet. This provides a ‘value model’ with which to calculate rapidly and in successively more precise iterations the value that can be expected from planned business changes.

This lets us investigate ‘what if’ scenarios in order to select the approach that will maximize benefits. These scenario calculation values also provide business-based performance criteria which can be used to:

- **prioritize solution scope and features**
- **estimate a base-line before implementation**
- **test the acceptability of the solution during pilot before roll-out**
- **measure progress towards achieving benefits during roll-out.**

The value model also summarizes the values of benefits by type and stages them year-by-year, ready for carrying over to the business case.

6. Taking ownership

For every benefit there must be an owner, a manager responsible for bringing about the business change enabled by the project. The unambiguous identification of each benefit and the indicators used in calculating and measuring the benefit ensure that business change managers have a clear understanding of what is required of them, and form the basis of a profile for each benefit.

The checklist of benefits that we produce enables swift compilation of a set of benefits profiles. Our benefits linkage tools enable a business change manager to understand the dependencies between the planned benefits, business change and the project outputs.

7. Reaping the rewards

The reward for making changes is the ability to effectively and efficiently leverage information, thereby dramatically increasing its value as a key organizational asset. The experience of customers, suppliers and partners improves, and the risk of costly mistakes reduces. *The business finally gets good at what it does.*

We have found that a one-off investment in implementing effective information management, proven across the UK public and private sectors, typically delivers:

- **efficiency savings of around 5% of operational costs per year**
- **rapid ROI in around a year following implementation**
- **the same ongoing cost savings in subsequent years.**

About Bramble.cc

Bramble.cc is the UK's leading independent, specialist consultancy and solution provider for information management. We will dramatically transform an information-based business by firstly re-designing and improving the structure of their information, then implementing a programme of change to realign the business with its information.

This management-of-change approach results in consistency, standardization, control and integration of information. The transformation to an information-centric business can go by many different names, including knowledge management, electronic document and records management (EDRM, EDM or ERM), enterprise content management (ECM), case management, and workflow.

These are systems in the broadest sense of the word, requiring the integration of content, process and people, as well as technology. Bramble.cc is the UK's leading, independent specialist in these areas, delivering full-lifecycle services and solutions. We also run a quality management system which is accredited to ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.

Bramble.cc is one of few suppliers accredited by Buying Solutions on framework agreements for information management consultancy and solutions for the UK public sector.

For further information visit www.bramble.cc, email contact@bramble.cc or call us on 020 7735 0030.

