Case Study:

Business Case of Sports Technologies Inc

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Executive Summary:

After reviewing the Current Business Scenario and its findings, seven key issues have been identified in the organization. All of these impact STI in multiple ways and cause other problems to occur. These fundamental issues need resolving to stabilize finances and continue operations. Some of these issues are: no records management system in place, no records retention or disposition schedule, and no taxonomy in the network shared drives. Another issue is no implementation process for the ongoing maintenance of these drives. There is also no process to address legal holds and inadequate employee training on handling company records.

The recommendations STI should adopt to solve these problems are: developing a records inventory, developing a retention schedule, determining an ERM system, training employees in effective electronic and print records management, and legal holds. Other recommendations are developing adequate storage for print records, creating a taxonomy system that employees would know how to use, training employees to maintain the shared drives, and determining a maintenance schedule. STI should not try to implement all of these procedures at once but should follow a step-by-step process, first developing a records inventory. Following this approach will be helpful when creating a records inventory and retention schedule.

Before moving to digital records, starting with paper documents is another recommendation that may smooth out this process. Once STI has completed these two steps, they would have a functioning records inventory that allows for a taxonomy system to be implemented. Determining the ERM system to be implemented depends on what taxonomy system is used. These choices will affect employee training on these systems.

Also, these choices will help locate documents necessary for legal holds and assist in determining adequate storage for both print and digital records.

Analysis Part 1: Identification of the Problems

There are many records management issues at STI. All of them impact STI's ability to function as an organization. Each case will be discussed in detail individually, along with an explanation of how these issues affect STI.

The first issue that was found to exist is that there is no records management system at STI. RMS is essential for managing records in an organization through the records life cycle. Without one, there is no way to control the creation, maintenance, and destruction of records, let alone the business transactions associated with them. There is no way to understand STI records since there is no metadata, making it almost impossible to find the records they need to operate, creating a significant problem. The unprecedented growth of digital information alone and the diversity of file formats make it hard to keep track of these records.

The second issue is not having a records retention schedule at STI; this retention schedule determines whether a record is: fiscal, legal, operational, regulatory, or if it has historical value. If an organization does not have one, it will cause the destruction and deletion of records that are still necessary. It may also cause lawsuits related to intellectual property and issues resulting in the mishandling of customers' personal information, impeding an organization's growth since it can cause duplication of records or the inability to find the documents and information it needs.

The next issue found was that there was no taxonomy in network shared drives. Taxonomy is essential in organizing records and information, but it is also crucial in network shared drives. This is because taxonomy is a collection of controlled vocabulary terms used to describe an organization's information records. STI cannot locate relevant records and information, which impacts its ability to respond to discovery requests and wastes employee time, leading to the lack of typical file naming conventions, causing the misnaming of folders and subfolders at STI; creating issues with records related to STI's acquisition of the TD app. Including custom programming, customer information, development, financial, and test of QY, to be inappropriately classified, allowing them to be disbursed throughout the organization in both physical and electronic formats.

This leads to the next issue, inadequate print and electronic records storage. The lack of adequate storage can cause damage to physical documents and the loss of electronic personal information. This will force STI to repair the water-damaged papers (duplicate records), and they may need to pay for off-site storage; this also causes issues with no governance regarding the use of cloud providers for shared drives.

The next issue is no maintenance of shared drives. No ongoing maintenance of the shared drives impacts STI because it causes the drives to become bogged down with too much memory. This data can quickly become outdated, and the shared drives themselves. The last impact is redundant information due to the lack of taxonomy.

Another issue is that there are no processes to address legal holds, which hurts STI as much as the absence of RIM culture. Creating issues such as being unable to find relevant information and records for litigation, causing fines to be levied. STI is also unable to find documents pertinent to acquisition. It may cause other legal problems in the future. This ties into other issues, like the lack of a RIM culture since all departments continue to destroy or delete records that may be pertinent to the acquisition and pending litigation.

The last issue impacting STI is the lack of employee training on handling company records. The lack of training is seen in employees sending and storing business content on their email accounts and personal devices. The effect is also seen with employees not following records management processing, thus causing the loss of crucial organizational information regarding legal holds, especially when some employees are temporary.

Analysis part 2: Recommendations

STI should follow a step-by-step process starting with developing a records inventory and a retention schedule to know what records exist in their current inventory. It is also good to begin with, paper documents before moving on to digital records to make the process smoother. STI can start this process by interviewing the department heads to determine what records are on hand. Once these two steps are completed, it will be easier to develop a taxonomy system.

To develop adequate storage for print records, STI should follow specific steps. First, they should ensure that confidential information isn’t in the lobby to keep personal privacy safe and not store paper files in a place with leaky pipes. Second, they should keep the records away from any food and drink to avoid damage. Third, STI should not use paper clips or any other type of fasteners since, over time, they can rust and damage the documents. This also includes not using rubber bands, self-adhesive tapes, or glue on them because it could be damaging to get the paper apart if needed. Fourth, the organization should keep them in a room with the same temperature and not much light, away from radiators and vents, to help avoid damage to the documents. Other recommendations are to make sure that all paper records are flat and unrolled, especially for oversize documents, and to keep acidic papers away from other records to stop the acid from damaging other papers.

As for managing shared drives, STI needs to be aware of the sustainability challenges. STI also needs to be aware of the financial obligations of managing shared drives and rapid technological changes when updating the drives. They also need to have a good idea of the values and benefits of digital preservation for their electronic documents to ensure adequate conservation. To do this, STI should implement incentives for stakeholders to create accountability. For accountability, in this case, developing defined roles and responsibilities for employees regarding document conservation, helping determine how resources flow to ensure preservation and access. They should also be aware of the significant cost components such as hardware and software licensing subscriptions and the future storge and transfer of their electronic records. STI should also consider contingency plans for conserving the authenticity of their digital records.

When introducing taxonomy into shared network drives, first make new columns or main file headings. Then name them based on the types of digital documents the organization has. Examples could be budgeting and billing, correspondence with customers, meetings, and minutes. Second, add in the metadata or data about the types of digital documents. The third step is to group digital documents to make it easier to find them. Fourth, filter the content of the main file headings of columns by the metadata from the digital files since it will help when searching for them. However, these steps can be adjusted to fit specific shared drives.

When picking out an ERM system, STI should wait until after compiling the electronic records inventory since this will determine what ERM system is needed and how it will affect the organization. If these steps are not followed, the wrong ERM system will be used, making it harder for the organization to keep electronic records correctly and make it harder to find the correct records timely. All employees must work with the ERM system since it will help with compliance and make employee training more manageable.

When training employees, it is important to make sure they know about the best practices for records management and understand the principle of compliance, legal holds, and other ARMA principles. It is also necessary to develop adequate training and development programs. Involving staff in the process is beneficial since it will help determine learning needs. It will also help motivate employees since they are involved in the process

Specifically, with records management training and legal holds, it is suggested that the organization start with a meeting with each department head or have interviews with employees to determine what they already know. Then begin to introduce terms and processes in records management while explaining why they are important. Offer training exercises in the areas each employee needs, either in-person or online. Also, follow up with employees to ensure they get the necessary processes and skills down.

The justifications for these recommendations are that it will be easier to locate relevant information for any reason, not only for its ability to respond to discovery requests. It also prevents potential lawsuits related to intellectual property and helps avoid the mishandling of customers’ personal information. Accessing the correct information and knowing who will store the documents in the future allows STI to keep the records they will need in the future but not hold on to information that is no longer beneficial to STI. Following these recommendations will also save STI money, having adequate storage of print documents, they will not have future document recovery costs, and if a disaster happens, it will be easier for them to get up and running again.