

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT PROCESS GUIDE



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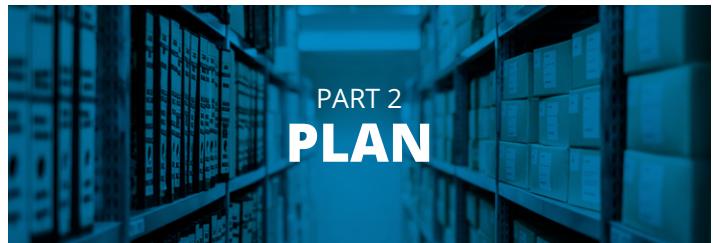
The process for document management can be a few simple steps or it can be dozens of micro steps. Document management processes do have basic phases in common, but there is no one-size-fits-all approach for every project. Your document management process is unique to your project and your organization.

THIS EBOOK IS DIVIDED INTO FOUR PARTS:



What we mean when we talk about document management process. We'll cover that here.

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Create a scope of work for a complex document conversion process from paper and microfilm to digital formats.

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Map out the framework for the actual conversion process.

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Establish guidelines for hosting, storing, accessing, and protecting digital files.

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PART 1: LEARN

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT?

First, let's get on the same page — pun intended (get it? paper? document?) — and talk about what we mean when we say “document management.” A document management system has four characteristics:

1. A method for **tracking** records as they are created, stored, accessed, used, and archived.
2. Tools and people for **managing** records.
3. Locations and formats for safely **storing** documents.
4. Tactics for digitizing records and reducing paper.

When we talk about a document management process we're talking about the whole shebang — from the moment a record is conceived until the moment it's digitized and/or archived. What's digitization? Glad you asked — the next section covers that and a few other common terms we use.

LEARN SOME DOC MANAGEMENT LINGO

Mind a quick vocabulary lesson before you dive into document management process development? Don't worry, there won't be a test at the end. The list is here for your reference.

► ACCESS/ACCESSIBILITY

Yes, accessibility refers to the ability to find and use records, but accessibility in document management refers to more than that, especially if you're a government or public agency.

Accessibility can also refer to the ability for people with limited abilities to find and use records. For example, government agencies are held to an accessibility standard called "Section 508," which is part of the US Workforce Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Ok, that's a little beyond the scope of this ebook, but we bring it up here because if you represent a government, education, or healthcare organization, you may be required to follow accessibility standards for your document management system.

To dig into the ins and outs of accessibility and compliance would be beyond the scope of this ebook. Your legal and compliance departments are the best sources of information for this information and can help you understand your accessibility requirements.

► CLOUD-BASED STORAGE

Are you near a window? Look outside — see clouds? Your data isn't there. Information stored in the "cloud" is actually saved on a server that's stored in a secure facility. Ideally, your information that's stored on remote servers is duplicated on redundant or backup servers in case a server is damaged or loses power.

Someone coined the term "cloud" to refer to the way we access information from remote servers because it feels like we're pulling it down from the sky. It's really web-based storage, which we'll talk about next. See Digital Reel for one of BMI's cloud-based document archive applications.

► CONVERSION PARTNER

We use the term "conversion partner" as a generic way to refer to whichever company you use to help you with your document management process. We hope it's BMI Imaging. We provide this free ebook because we love what we do, and with more than 60 years of document conversion experience, we get a little crazy when we read misinformation about document management and conversions.

We want to help you understand the complexities of document management and digitization and, if you like what you read, reach out to us to talk about working together.

► DIGITAL REEL™

[Digital Reel](#) is BMI's trademarked digital preservation method. It's how we convert microfilm and other hard copy records into digital formats that can be accessed from any computer, laptop, or mobile device that you want to be able to access it.

It's a web-based (also known as "cloud-based") solution. Digital Reel is full-text searchable across your entire archive and provides image enhancement functionality to allow you to optimize your records.

► DIGITIZATION

Digitization involves converting analog materials — paper and film, for example — into digital formats so they can be saved to and accessed through desktops, laptops, tablets, and smart devices.

► ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT

Here's a quick quiz: How many text file formats can you name? Most people can quickly name a few — DOC, TXT, PDF, TIFF, JPG, GIF and PNG — and if you've been around for a while maybe RTF and OTT.

An electronic document is any file that can be transmitted by computer. The Wikipedia entry for "list of file formats" contains, literally, hundreds of file formats. The point is, when it comes to document management and electronic documents, we're talking about much more than Word docs, spreadsheets, and PowerPoint presentations. We're talking about image files, databases, HTML, font files, graphics, and so many more.

► EXECUTION DATE

E-day is the day that drives the project. It could be the date your project needs to start or the date it needs to be complete; or both.

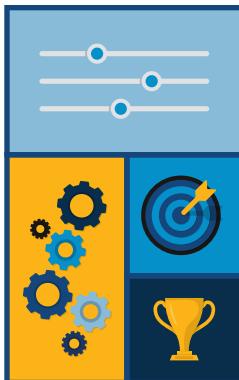
► REDACTION

Redaction is when parts of a record are blacked out or otherwise deliberately made unreadable to allow for selective disclosure of information. For example, a law enforcement agency might redact Social Security numbers from public-facing records.

PART 2: PLAN

As much as we'd love to say that document management is as easy as boxing up your books, charts, graphs, papers, and microfilm and shipping it off to be converted — well, it's not that simple.

A document management process begins with a plan, or a "scope of work," for the complex document conversion process from paper and microfilm to digital files. Work with your conversion partner to talk about your goals, requirements, and expectations.



STEP 1: SET GOALS AND PARAMETERS

Why are we doing a document management project?

"Because we have to" isn't the answer you're looking for. Why do you need a document management and digitization solution? List the pain points that you have with records management and the reasons you began this process.

You may have legal requirements to meet. You may have storage issues. Your organization may want to make records available to a wider audience or across multiple locations. You may need to reduce records management costs (physical storage costs more than digital storage).

List the reasons you need a document management and digitization process and share it throughout your organization. People tend to be less resistant to change when they understand the "why".

What does our document management process need?

You've listed your pain points/issues/problems in the previous question. Now, list possible solutions. For example, if you are near capacity with document storage, you need a document management process that can convert existing records without disrupting daily operations, or that at least minimizes disruption during the project.

You might also list a need as ongoing document management practices to digitize records on a regular, go-forward basis (rather than let them "pile up," so to speak).

Your digitization risk management needs might include:

- ▶ **People:** Human resources within your organization that will be responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed throughout the digitization process.
- ▶ **Tools:** Software, hardware, equipment, and supplies that you'll need, and include what you already have, for document management.

▶ **Work instructions:** These are the processes, checklists, training documents, and how-to's that map out your document management process for your teams, which include your in-house staff and your conversion partner (who can help you build these work instructions).

▶ **Culture:** As you shift from a physical record environment to a digital environment, you may find adoption to be slow. Sometimes, getting company-wide buy-in is a challenge. We recommended earlier that you share the "why" throughout the whole organization.

What will success look like?

Or, maybe the question is, "What does "done" look like?" How will you measure success? Reduce physical storage by 10 percent per month over the next 12 months? Decrease records management costs by 5 percent month over month? Your success metrics should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.



STEP 2: SET A TIMELINE AND BUDGET

This is where your conversion partner will be incredibly helpful in the early stages of your document management process. Once you've identified the goals, objectives, and success metrics, your digitization team will ask you two very important questions:

1. When do you want to have this project complete? Or, if you don't have an end date in mind (and that's not unusual), do you have a start date in mind?
2. What's your budget?

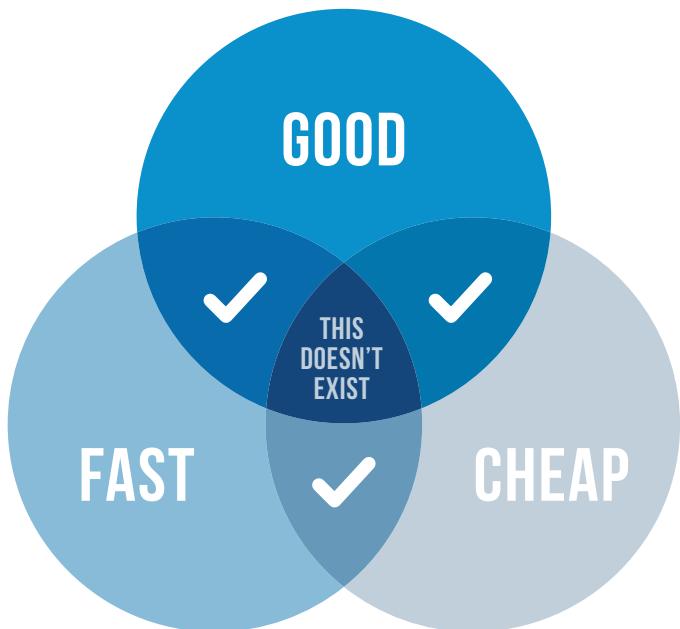
A good document conversion partner will help you set an [Execution Date, or E-day, and establish a project cadence](#). That's where math comes in. The project manager figures out your volume of work, the timeframe within which we have to work, and they establish a cadence.

Let's talk budget. Remember that saying, "cheap, fast, good — pick two"? Because a cheap, fast, and good solution doesn't exist? Doesn't matter where you first heard it; it holds true across many industries.

If you want to cut costs and have good quality, expect the process to take longer. If you want it done quickly and of high quality, expect to pay more. And, of course, if you want the job done quickly and on the cheap, you'll sacrifice quality.

Your conversion partner will help you understand the costs to convert records, and they'll help you build a case for your managers to show how digitization costs less than physical records management.

Certain types of businesses, like government organizations, schools, and universities may qualify for [financial grants available to offset digitization costs](#). Ask your conversion partner if you think you may qualify for digitization grants.



STEP 3: IDENTIFY ROLES

Identify the roles internal and external to your organization and the estimated time each role will dedicate to the initial records management process and future digitization projects.

Your document conversion partner will know this — BMI Imaging has been around for more than 60 years, and we convert more than 15 million images every month, so we can help you identify the roles and responsibilities throughout the document management process.

Typically, these are the most important roles throughout the process:

- ▶ **Records custodian:** Larger organizations will have dedicated, full-time records custodians who are responsible for making sure documents comply with the requirements of their industries and governing bodies. Smaller organizations might have the duties of records custodian fall under other job descriptions, such as office managers, information officers, or librarians. Regardless, the records custodian is in charge of deciding what records are kept, what are archived, and what are destroyed based on their organization's requirements.
- ▶ **Project manager:** The project manager has one very important job: they make sure the project is performed on time and within budget. They provide milestones and a project timeline, and they manage project schedules and logistics.

- **Digital conversion partner:** You're the expert in your field. BMI Imaging is the expert in digitization and document management processes. Your document conversion partner handles the heavy lifting while you go on about your regular business.
- **Conversion committee:** Committees can help you get buy-in, but they can also become roadblocks to getting real work done, especially if everyone on the team has equal decision-making abilities. We recommend building a document management team that is comprised of one representative from each department, with the understanding that your records custodian is the decision maker. The committee is there to be consulted and informed. Their opinions are valued, but the ultimate decision lies with the designated records custodian.



STEP 4: IDENTIFY TOOLS

It's not possible to list all the tools you may need for a document management process. The tools depend on the nature of your business, the size of your organization, and the types of records you are required to keep.

If you are converting microfilm or microfiche, [Digital Reel™](#) is BMI Imaging's proprietary solution for digital conversion to web-based viewing of microfilm archives. It's advantages:

- Accurate
- Full-text search abilities
- Adjustable grayscale image enhancement
- Cloud-based
- Affordable

BMI Imaging employs these types of tools:

- **Content management platform:** You'll need a content management solution that transforms content across organizations, departments, and functions. The purpose of a content management platform is to minimize the costs and risks of relying on paper and microfilm records, while increasing productivity by streamlining the capture and management of documents.
- **Imaging and data system:** This is the system that captures, stores, and distributes information. It's the hardware and software that transforms documents and files from physical forms (paper and microfilm, for example) into digital forms and processes the images and data for your project. These aren't merely scanners. They create documents that can be searched, indexed, and categorized.



Other tools that you may need:

- **Data collection tools,** preferably cloud-based to allow for version control and collaboration.
- **Communication tools other than email,** such as a collaborative closed social channel or a project management platform.



STEP 5: IDENTIFY RECORDS AND INDEX INFORMATION

Remember that kid you grew up with who collected baseball cards and had them sorted, cataloged, and cross-referenced by team, year, and conference? Or maybe it was Matchbox cars. Or LEGOs. Whatever it was, you knew this kid. We're them.

Records are comprised of lots of bits of information. For example, student records include names, Social Security numbers, student ID numbers, birthdates, and all kinds of data. How will you index your digital records? We recommend that you start with what you use now. If you look up students by student ID numbers, use that. If you're a healthcare organization that uses birthdate followed by name, stick with that.



Custom coding

If you already have a content management application in place, we're able to index records and prepare them for import into your existing system. In some instances we've even provided custom coding for the import due to the complexities of the project.



Legal compliance

Not all records were created equal, but before you decide what to keep, what to trash and what to archive, you must consult with your legal and compliance team to understand what you are legally required to keep and for how long.



Vital vs non-vital

Once you know what you are required to keep, you can categorize records as vital and non-vital. Vital records must be kept, while non-vital records are optional and may be kept, archived, or destroyed.



Redacting information

There may be some records that you want to keep or make public, but portions of the records must be kept secret. Typically, organizations redact any records that contain personally identifiable information, such as in healthcare, courts, property and financial records.

You and your document conversion partner will establish guidelines for redacting confidential information, and we recommend that you establish quality control checks to ensure the guidelines are followed.

PART 3: DO

Remember that old saying “measure twice; cut once”? You may notice that the “plan” portion of this ebook far outweighs the “do” portion. That’s intentional. With a solid plan in place, the “doing” runs smoother.

Now that you have your plan in place, a project manager overseeing the timeline and budget, and your organization excited to begin the conversion process ... it’s getting real! Here’s a basic overview of what “do” looks like in document management.

TRANSPORTING RECORDS

The [microfilm and document conversion process](#) begins with transportation. You and your project manager will have worked out a timeline, budget, and plan for transporting your records to your conversion partner’s facility. Or, if you are doing on-site conversion, you will arrange for documents to be transported from their storage place to the conversion site.

Yes, we can help with secure packaging and logistics.

We tag each container and track the inventory from the moment it arrives at our facility all the way through the conversion process. Your records are prepped for conversion and we do what is called a “Milestone 1,” which is our method of a proof of concept.





MATERIAL PREPARATION AND SAMPLING

Before we convert your entire inventory of records, we begin with a sample proof of concept, the Milestone 1 (or "M1" for short). Once completed, we'll review the M1 with you for image quality, capture accuracy, and indexing correctness. Once you approve your M1, we go forward with the remainder of your project.

CAPTURE, SCAN, INPUT RECORDS

Your paper, books, microfilm, microfiche, and other records are being converted into digital files.

Output formats typically come in these file formats:

- PDF and PDF/A
- JPG
- TIFF
- GIF

There are other possible formats, which your conversion partner can go over with you. You may also opt for additional features such as converting your records into searchable files, adding watermarks to images, or implementing redactions across specific fields within your content

MEASURE, REPORT

Your conversion partner should provide regular updates to you throughout the conversion process. At BMI, we utilize an internal project management tool that tracks the individual units of your project so that at any point in time we can see the progress of your project, identify constraints, and optimize the pace of your project.

DELIVERY

The digitized records are delivered to you by whatever method we agreed on during the planning phase.

Records may be delivered to you by:

- USB drive
- FTP (file transfer protocol electronic delivery)
- Document hosting (web-based access)



PART 4: USE

Go back to that list of goals and parameters you created in Part 2. Did you meet your success metrics? Hold a post-mortem with the document management process team after conversion and ask:

- What went well?
- What did we learn?
- What went wrong?
- What would we have done differently?
- What could we have done better?

TRAINING

After the conversion project, you'll need to make sure that your staff that uses your document management system knows how to help your customers (whether they're students, voters, patients, or the general public) find what they're looking for. Training and support are key.

Build awareness about your document management process by using facts and statistics. Emphasize the benefits of "going paperless" or shifting away from microfilm: efficiency, safety, and peace of mind.

If you have resistant individuals or departments, take time to understand their needs. We find that few people who resist change do it for the sake of resisting change. When we take time to understand their fears and concerns, we can help find solutions.

DISPOSAL

During the planning phase, you should have decided whether you'll keep certain physical records while users adapt to the new digital system. Will originals go back on the shelf, or will you store them and make them harder to access? How long will you wait to dispose of originals?

MAINTENANCE

We recommend that whoever is designated as your records custodian keeps a log of questions, complaints, and suggestions with regard to your document management process. A good process is fluid and designed to adapt and change as technology changes, as well as your organization's needs change.

If you don't have a dedicated, full-time document management team or a records custodian, who will manage the ongoing document conversion process? Will you outsource it? If so, who will be your process champion in-house?

GOVERNANCE

Some questions to consider with regard to the usage of the document management system:

- Will everyone in your organization have the same levels of access to the records?
- Do you want users to be able to rename and re-organize document files?
- Will users be able to access the documents across multiple devices?
- Do users need to be able to digitally export information? Or print it?
- Do you have security and backup measures in place in case a disgruntled employee, hacker, or Mother Nature damages, tampers with, or destroys records?

MEASUREMENT

Measure the impact that your document management process has had on individual departments and the organization as a whole.

Were you able to reduce records management costs? Have you reduced the time to retrieve records by creating a searchable database?

Have other processes been positively affected by the document management process? How have departments experienced efficiencies from digitization? Are they able to record and process documents quicker and with fewer steps?



READY TO GET STARTED?

Planning, doing, and using a document management process is a big deal, and unless you're in the business of digitization, like BMI, you'll probably want to work with a document conversion partner. No matter where you are in your process — just thinking about it or ready to begin — contact us to see how we can help you succeed.

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