

RIPA International - Tailored Solutions Case Study

Effective Records Management

RIPA International supports the Government of Barbados



Introduction

Every organisational activity from the management of finance and personnel to the delivery of services depends upon reliable information. More and more governments and businesses are recognising that information is a vital resource that needs to be carefully managed in order to achieve overall objectives. Within organisations, records are evidence of transactions, activities and decisions and are relied upon to demonstrate accountability and transparency. Well-managed records are essential if governments and organisations are able to function effectively, develop and implement policy, plan and take decisions, provide public service, introduce meaningful reform programmes and deliver successful projects. Throughout the world, governments and businesses are automating work processes to improve performance, especially in the delivery of services. Controls and processes used in the paper world must now be incorporated into electronic systems to ensure record keeping requirements for security, access and information integrity are enhanced and maintained. Electronic systems have the capacity to improve

evidence-based decision-making and make work more efficient. This raises two challenges; the need to automate work processes and the need to manage the products of these processes.

The Training Solution

At the request of the Training Administration Division (TAD) of the Barbados Government RIPA International developed a series of five two-week courses in 'Building an Effective Records Management'. Participants on the programme came from a wide range of backgrounds including administrative staff, postal workers, police officers, customs agents and prison guards.

This highly successful and well received programme was carried out over a 2.5 month period and was attended by over 100 members from different ministries and agencies of the Barbadian public service.

Course Delivery

Delivery of this programme placed great emphasis upon the individual development of practical skills in order to equip participants with the strategies, skills and tools required for effective records management across the Government of Barbados.

The course programme included the latest developments and best practice

in records management. This included an examination of:-

- The legal and regulatory framework
- Record keeping methods and techniques
- Records security
- Management of electronic records.

Delegates were able to develop action plans ready for implementation on return to their posts. These plans varied in scope and examined the role of written procedure manuals, retention and disposal schedules and the development of disaster recovery plans.

The course was well received by both the TAD and participants who valued the sessions. After formal sessions of the course were completed, course facilitators were on hand to discuss any specific issues arising from the course. The course utilised various teaching methods such as study tours to the Training and Administration Division Registry and the National Archives. In addition the University of the West Indies provided insight into their own internal records and information management programme.

These visits gave participants the opportunity to understand how records management worked in other organisations and to see their activities as part of an entire information management life cycle including archival preservation.

Client Benefits and Course Outcomes

Overall, this tailored programme proved to be extremely successful and was well received by all delegates. More importantly, RIPA International was able to assist in significantly raising the profile of records management in the government of Barbados and resulted in a large number of empowered and motivated staff committed to making changes. This type of focused in-country training provided a unique opportunity to draw together staff from across government to develop common knowledge and a commitment to change.

By the end of the programme all delegates were able to:

- Identify the symptoms of poor records management and be able to recommend improvements appropriate to the organisations needs
- Evaluate the implications of new technology
- Determine whether records management systems are cost effective
- Raise awareness of the importance of efficient records management in the public sector
- Make strategic approaches to records management and the components of an improvement programme
- Develop an action plan for improvements to the management of records in their own working environment.