

HYPOTHETICAL BUSINESS SCENARIO:

MoveRight, Inc. (MRI) started with a single moving truck and incorporated in 1987. MRI is now a national moving and logistics company primarily focused in the Southeast and lower Midwest with a corporate headquarters, five regional administrative offices, and numerous local moving operation depots. MRI employs over 7,500 personnel who serve a variety of residential and commercial clients across the country. MRI has experienced significant growth over the past decade as it expanded its operations into the Midwest with acquisition of several locally owned moving companies.

MRI recently hired you as a RIM (Records and Information Management) Consultant to help drive the creation of a Records Management Program. You report to the General Counsel and do not have a staff. MRI recognized the need for a Records Management Program after it could not produce vital information during its expansion resulting in delayed mergers and increases in insurance costs.

The General Counsel tasked you with providing, within the six weeks, an assessment of the current state of RIM and the steps for developing, implementing, and sustaining enterprise Records Management and Records Retention Programs.

FINDINGS:

To assess the current state of RIM, you begin by interviewing members of the IT department to determine if technology, such as a formal Records Management System or document management application, exists to support Records Management and Retention initiatives. The IT manager informs you that no such system is in place, and employees rely on network file shares based on cloud servers or local drives to save electronic content.

During additional interviews, you discover that there is no company-wide RIM supporting documentation, such as policies, procedures, or a comprehensive record retention schedule. Some regional offices have developed their own retention schedules, but most records are not dispositioned properly, resulting in inconsistent retention practices.

After meeting with the Accounts Payable manager and reviewing offsite record storage invoices, you determine that each regional office uses different record storage vendors with significant variations in fee structures. You review inventory listings from each vendor and find approximately 100,000 boxes of physical records stored offsite across several sites. Most boxes lack adequate metadata such as content descriptions, data ranges, or retention classifications.

During discussion with the newly acquired company representatives you discover that there is significant variation in the level of understanding or awareness of Records Management principles or retention policies. Several have records and retention policies and staff responsible for enforcement while other offices allow individual staff to maintain their own records. The central corporate office has little visibility into how each regional office operates.

Discussions with the Legal department reveal that MRI was forced to be delayed, and ultimately provide a larger payment agreement, the acquisition of a local company last year. Additionally, insurance rates and surety payments have increased because MRI was unable to provide important supporting materials. The Associate General Counsel emphasizes that many physical records stored offsite are unidentifiable due to insufficient metadata, and electronic records are difficult to locate because of inconsistent files and folder naming conventions and no clear versioning system.