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19 July 2022

Managing records: A Biblical and Ancient Concept.



For people to read the bible today in the comfort of their homes, somebody, somewhere kept custody of the scroll and preserved it using ancient preservation techniques for maximum protection, so that our generation can have the bible today. Similarly, institutions preserve records and data through their records and information management divisions. To effectively manage this process, institutions are required to have specific structures or tools in place to ensure an efficient implementation of a sound records management programme. At an institution such as the Government Institutions Pension Fund (GIPF) tools such as a well-functioning records management unit structure, records management policy, registry process and procedures, service level agreements, file plan, retention, disposal guidelines and lastly, a vital records register has been put in place to ensure systematic records and information management.

Organisations have to make strides towards transforming internal and external physical records into organized, well-structured, and well managed records. To achieve this they have to acquire and implement tools to achieve the desired records management program. In our case, the above-mentioned tools have assisted the Fund in ensuring that the functions pertaining to records management are carried out in line with the prevailing regulations and thereby complying with such laws and international standards.

During any financial period, internal efforts have to be made towards cleaning up organizational data with a focus on creating awareness and developing and training staff on file plans. Similarly, training also has to be extended to executives and administrative secretaries as well as compliance officers. Normally records management training is conducted by the records management staff where such expertise exists within the organisation.

Additionally, the Records and Information Management team will execute the appraisal (a process of distinguishing records of continuing value from those of no further value so that the latter may be eliminated/ disposed) of documents and implement the record retention schedule and disposal guidelines within any given financial period. Furthermore, an appraisal is a judgment on records, especially an estimate of how much it's worth. Usually, an individual needs an expert to give him or her an official appraisal opinion. The GIPF records management committee which is yet to be established will play that role and function of judging the value of GIPF records and making recommendations to management. This committee is usually a decision-making body whose purpose is to provide corporate oversight to the organisation's records and information management programme. The committee is therefore, composed of expertise in line with ISO 15489 international standards and will advise and ensure that the organisation complies to regulations and the laws of the country.

Lastly, every organisation ought to have a well-established and formal procedure that ensures records are disposed of regularly and orderly to safeguard against accidental destruction of records that have not met their minimum retention periods or are needed for litigation, audits, or other investigations. Organisations should therefore, encourage staff members in possession of records that are no longer relevant to contact their records management units for interventions and should be cautioned at all times against shredding or disposing records unlawfully.

Chrispin Matengu

Head: Records and information Management

Government Institutions Pension Fund

