



Managing information for productivity and business success

by **B Kirby White**

Businesses large and small, institutions, associations and government departments and agencies by using a new information structure on the network are accessing new ways of managing projects, supporting and supervising their staff and planning for the future. This is about managing for business productivity and success.

This is about the way that the business is managed. It is not about leaving it to the staff to do the right thing or middle managers to keep control. It is about being effective at the top and being responsible for how the business is managed. It is not a software solution or document, knowledge or records management. It is not IT.

On July 1 2005, a government emergency services training unit rolled out a new drive structure on their part of the network enabling management of information and materials in set and constant locations. The drive structure was based on the work of the unit providing: a natural language index to work and work related information through folder structures; the focus for review of all unit information needs; a place to store folder related products such as templates and links to other materials, people, organizations, websites and resources and a place to site training for its personnel; information management benefits in areas such as faster location of materials, version control and review processes; a greater level of accountability for files and materials and the ability to backup important materials as required. The unit could now focus on supporting and promoting leadership and teamwork.

This was for the head of the unit the start of a whole new way of managing and supporting every member of staff in the various programs and in particular in meeting competency objectives in the training they are providing for emergency service volunteers. This was accountability at the most senior level and came about because of the manager personally taking on whatever was needed for best practice after recognising that the responsibility for success had to start at the top.

The manager found it easy to accept the view that the place where the information is held is just as important as the information itself if it is be used to manage effectively and productively. This leads to economic benefits and staff being supported and acknowledged.



The drive structure to be the intelligent network for the unit was designed with its management to meet the specific needs of the work they would be doing and to be used well into the future.

This methodology is easy and reliable. It is now available and is fast to implement and use. It is free to choose and free to use and a number of businesses have a list of outcomes that have not been possible before.

Businesses with an intelligent network designed around the business and for the business have CEOs and senior managers who know that documents and files on any subject and in any format are in their right place, that what is there is what should be there and what is needed is able to be constantly and easily reviewed.

Because of the new network structure compliance and policy needs have been identified and staff members have what they need to know what to do and what not to do at all times. They have background information and links to relevant support materials there in the folders where they are working to assist with their understanding and training.

Those businesses have been able to focus on, create, repair and site policy, procedures, templates, manuals, reporting structures and guides to support the work of each staff member and group.

Staff training needs are continually reviewed and training is created, collected, managed, stored and provided for staff when and where they need it and training is continuous.

Each new project is supported by resources or links to their location. Links are available to resources in the business, to related work being carried out elsewhere. Business knowledge about each project is logged by staff as they work.

The businesses have been able to create new rules for communication and information and emails carry links not attachments. Duplication of files and effort is a thing of the past and the annoying issue of version confusion no longer exists.

In more than one of the businesses the old cumbersome hard copy document collection has been re-organized and where possible digitization has been undertaken. Now paper files and other media are recorded, labelled and stored in the same order as computer based information and the information is included in business knowledge. The movement to archives is determined by policy.



With an intelligent network some sections of the network have special backup and security arrangements and these are determined by content and the needs of the business.

Now it is possible to have groups manage the integrity of the information storage system with file naming conventions in place and working well. Arrangements for supervision and control are in place and working.

Best of all, those businesses continue to see significant cost savings in storage and staff time and the huge costs in time and resources used in finding materials have disappeared.

This is about business information organization and the intelligent network and it is the single most important development in business management in many decades. These are available to any business through the **Ten Steps to Best Business**.

<http://www.tensteps.com.au>