INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PLANNING GUIDE

A practical process to plan strategically for the use
of information and technology within a mission-driven organization

Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning
1998

Upon request, this report can be made available in alternative formats including Braille, audio tape, computer disk, and large print.

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Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning

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FOREWORD

Background In 1997, the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning (DCFL) launched a statewide effort to promote information management (IM) planning within local community organizations by developing and disseminating a comprehensive Information Management Planning Guide. The effort was intended to build local capacity to provide quality products and services with improved information.

With the assistance of a federal grant from the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Training and Technical Assistance program, Minnesota DCFL provided training to local agencies in the use of the Guide to create and implement local information management plans. The grant allowed the Department to evaluate and revise the Guide and related trainings to better meet the needs of users.

Why IM Planning? Minnesota DCFL prioritized the promotion of information management planning among local organizations in order to:

> improve the reliability of information used for planning and reported to the public, including accurate reflections of activities and outcomes

> support the quality of products and services delivered to communities

build capacity to collaborate and provide leadership in the development of local IM systems

enhance competitiveness of local organizations

provide guidance for the use of state funding for IM systems

Process and Progress Using the Information Management Planning Guide, in 1998, 27 organizations engaged in planning processes exploring how to make the best use of information management resources in achieving their missions. The agencies' IM plans received scores ranging from 1–2.5 on a 3-point scale devised by the State.

Twenty-two community agencies participated in a Spring 1998 conference to evaluate the project, with 18 (82%) offering comments (see sidebar).

Updated plans will be required annually from agencies receiving CSBG and Minnesota Economic Opportunity (MEOG) funds.

Key benefits of IM planning

- Brings people together; bridges traditional "turf" lines within organizations

- Broad reach—potential to impact all aspects of an organization, including problem areas

- Offers unprecedented support to the management of costs and quality

- Strengthens organization's security and influence in the broader community

IM PLANNING
TO DO LIST
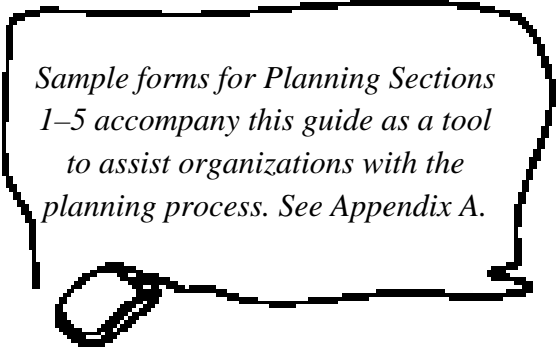
❑ **To Do**
Secure necessary approvals and leadership support for the IM plan.

❑ **To Do**
Assign IM Plan Coordinator.

❑ **To Do**
Define terms, to create a shared understanding of your goals.

❑ **To Do**
Determine what information is needed for a comprehensive IM plan, who has this information, and who needs to be involved in the plan development process.

❑ **To Do**
Schedule two to three days for the information gathering process, involving the Plan Coordinator and other key individuals.

❑ **To Do**
Bring a draft/partially completed plan to the planning team.

❑ **To Do**
Recruit internal leaders to assist with the process, and use subgroups to draft difficult parts of the plan.

❑ **To Do**
Don't get overwhelmed. Establish priorities among the infinite possibilities for information management development. Start somewhere and keep taking steps.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

This guide is a "how-to" manual for organizations interested in developing a plan to address information management issues within an overall strategic mission and direction. The guide describes a model planning process for the development of an **Information Management (IM) Plan**.

Planning Sections 1–5 are intended to provide a "consultant in a box," walking organizations through key areas of consideration in IM planning, including:

1   **a broad overview of information management systems/resources**
2-3   **service delivery and administrative uses of these systems**
4-5   **human resource and finance considerations**

The guide directs organizations to compile snapshots of their current status in key IM planning areas, and then to consider plans for development.

The guide directs organizations to compile a snapshot of their current status in each planning area, and then to consider plans for future development. Sample forms for Planning Sections 1–5 accompany this guide as a tool to assist organizations with the planning process. Disk copy of the forms is also available. See Appendix A for sample forms and information on electronic formats.

Sample forms for Planning Sections 1–5 accompany this guide as a tool to assist organizations with the planning process. See Appendix A.

A Resources chapter is also included, describing general computer information and training sources. Sample human resources policies are also provided (see Sample Policies chapter).

FORM 1

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Effective Dates _____ to _____

Organization   Approval of Board or Advisory Group

name _____

address _____

_____

phone _____   signature and date

Executive Director   Plan Coordinator

name _____   name _____

title _____   title _____

phone _____   phone _____

Staff, consultants, customers & others involved in development of plan:

NAME	TITLE	ROLE

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

DEVELOPING AN IM PLAN FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

PLANNING PROCESS

✔ **To Do**
   Secure necessary approvals and leadership for the IM plan.

✔ **To Do**
   Assign IM Plan Coordinator.
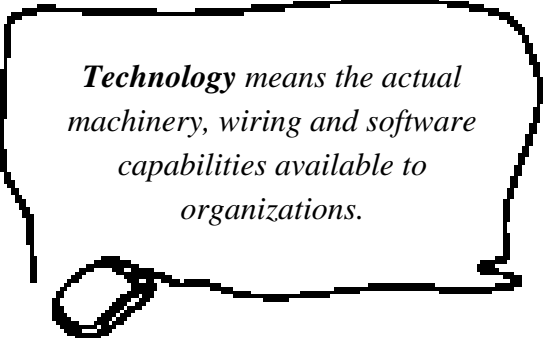
✔ **To Do**
   Define terms, to create a shared understanding of your goals.

First Steps Once the organization is committed to developing an IM plan, a thoughtful process will ensure the relevance and effectiveness of the working document. First, the organization's board, executive officer, and relevant advisory groups must commit themselves to developing the plan. Form 1 provides a structure to document key approvals and planning team membership.

The organization's executive is responsible for making staff available to develop and give necessary input into the plan. He or she also assists the Plan Coordinator by making the importance of the project clear to all parties.

Although the completed plan is truly a collaborative process involving all groups within the organization, the **IM Plan Coordinator** is assigned to facilitate the development of, and to document, the plan. This individual may or may not be a technical expert in computer systems. The important skills are:
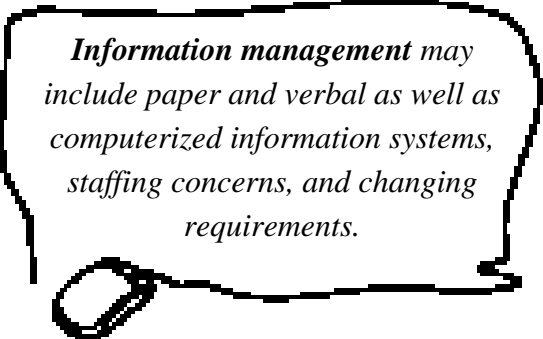
- an over-arching understanding of the organization and its operations,
- the ability to facilitate the identification of resources, issues and actions needed, and
- some degree of neutrality on technology and information management issues.

Technology means the actual machinery, wiring and software capabilities available to organizations.

Information management may include paper and verbal as well as computerized information systems, staffing concerns, and changing requirements.

Defining Terms In starting an IM planning process, it is important to define terms, in order to create a shared understanding of what your plan is and does. For example, this guide defines *technology* as the actual machinery, wires and software capabilities available to organizations, while the broader term *information management* may involve paper as well as computer recordkeeping systems, staffing concerns, and changing requirements (see Resources Section).
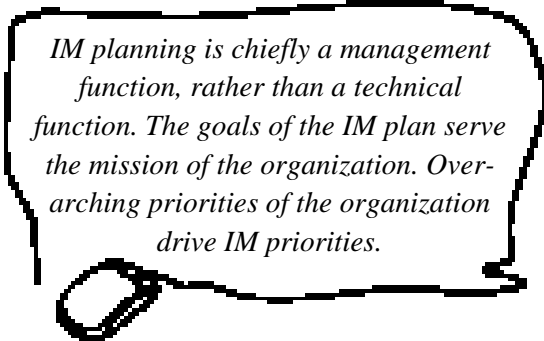
Should we hire a consultant? Most likely, your organization will use outside resources, in one way or another, to meet its information management needs. The vendor from whom you buy computer equipment is a consultant of sorts and can provide free advice on the development of your information management systems.

As for hiring a consultant to assist with the development of your plan, or to assist in executing parts of your plan, the decision is an important one, and will involve two considerations: 1) does the organization have the staff resources to develop and execute the plan, and 2) does the organization have the financial resources to pay for a contractor?

The planning process should reveal whether a consultant or vendor is needed to *implement* any part of the IM plan. Thus, the most pressing question in the

beginning is whether a consultant is needed to *develop* the information management plan. The decision is influenced by the availability of both staff and funds, as well as the skills of staff.

If skilled staff are available to develop and/or implement an IM plan, it is important to evaluate how such a commitment will affect their existing responsibilities. And, if staff have the time and abilities, it still may be valuable to use an outside consultant. For example, if your Plan Coordinator is a significant *contributor* to the plan, hiring a meeting facilitator and/or minute taker to run meetings and provide word processed copy of proceedings may be an efficient use of resources.

IM planning is chiefly a management function, rather than a technical function. The goals of the IM plan serve the mission of the organization. Over-arching priorities of the organization drive IM priorities.
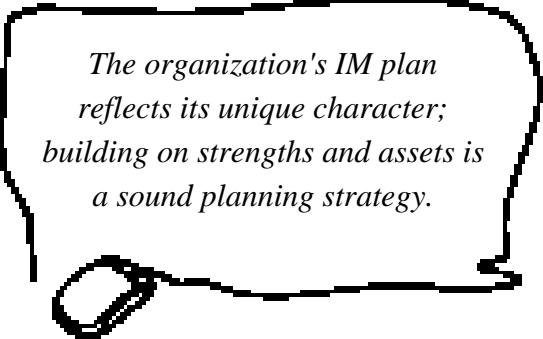
If funds are available and the organization decides to hire a consultant, it is advisable to:

- carefully check the consultant's references,
- evaluate skills and credentials,
- confirm availability to dedicate time to the project, and
- attain a total project bid (with a not-to-exceed figure) in writing.

If funds are limited, the organization may opt to develop all or most of its plan internally by assigning the IM Plan Coordinator to collect as much information as possible, and to identify gaps where assistance may be needed.

It is important to remember that IM planning is like any other strategic planning done by the organization. It is chiefly a management function, rather than a technical function. Goals of the IM plan should be designed to serve the mission of the organization. The same priorities guide the purchase and use of IM resources.

Sample Process This guide provides a model planning process with accompanying forms which may be used in creating a comprehensive IM plan for your organization. Appendix A contains sample forms and information on obtaining disk copy of formats. An IM Plan Coordinator may follow the formats provided, or similar formats, to outline and draft a comprehensive plan, and to track the implementation of planned activities.

Regardless of the format used, an effective IM plan identifies issues, priority outcomes, implementation plans and accountability for system development. Model forms may help an organization get going by vanquishing the blank page.

Some parts of the Planning Guidance (Sections 1–5) will be inapplicable to some organizations, and some aspects of a good plan will be more or less developed within a given organization. Significant parts of a plan may already exist within other documents (such as an equipment inventory or a purchasing policy), which

Effective IM plans identify issues, priority outcomes, accountability, and implementation strategies. Model forms may help an organization get going towards a plan that works.

The organization's IM plan reflects its unique character; building on strengths and assets is a sound planning strategy.

✔ **To Do**
Determine what information is needed for a comprehensive IM plan, who has the information, and who needs to be involved in plan development.

Take time to define your customers–internal to the organization, as well as external– and involve these people in the planning process.
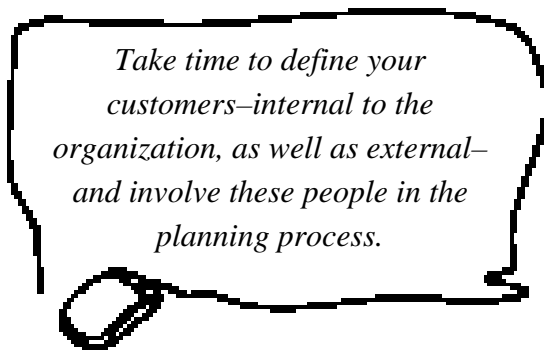
✔ **To Do**
Schedule 2-3 days for the information gathering process, involving the Plan Coordinator and other key individuals.

can simply be referenced and attached to the IM plan. To avoid repetition, a plan may cross-reference other documents or parts of the plan where an issue is addressed in full.

Getting Started It is recommended that the organization's appointed IM Plan Coordinator review the components of a comprehensive IM plan (see Sections 1-5 of model plan), in order to determine what information is needed, who has the information, and what employees, board members, advisory groups, or external customers need to be consulted in developing the plan. The group including these key individuals is considered the organization's overall information management planning team. It is recommended that the team include:

- the executive officer of the organization
- representation from the board
- relevant advisory group members
- key administrators
- representatives of employee groups
- external customers

Relevant consultants may be included in (or facilitate) the process.

For the Plan Coordinator, two to four hours, at a minimum, should be reserved to meet with the organization's overall team for initial and summary meetings, and up to 20 hours to hold interviews with key individuals. Those participating on the team should be prepared to attend the full

team meetings, and to assist in any necessary interviews, document collection or subcommittee work, generally to define policy. The hours necessary for team members is estimated at four to 12 hours.

To expedite the process, it is recommended that the Plan Coordinator bring to the team a partially completed draft or latest version of the plan. The full team can then review and give input into the general parts of the plan, while key individuals review and give input into specific parts.

✔ To Do
Bring a draft or partially completed plan to the team.

The IM Plan Coordinator may need the help of others in the information collection process. Where parts of the plan are difficult or time-consuming, a subgroup may be formed to draft proposed language.

✔ To Do
Recruit internal leaders to assist with the process, and use subgroups to draft difficult parts of the plan.

The Plan Coordinator is responsible for assembling the parts of the plan into a comprehensive document (with necessary attachments), and for periodically tracking progress against goals (unless tracking duty is otherwise assigned). A simple format can be used to organize and document the plan (see example and Appendix A). The best forms are ones produced on a computer, which can be used to track progress, by filling in completion dates or status updates, and to set new goals.

✔ **To Do**
Establish priorities among the infinite possibilities for information management development, and keep taking steps toward improvement.
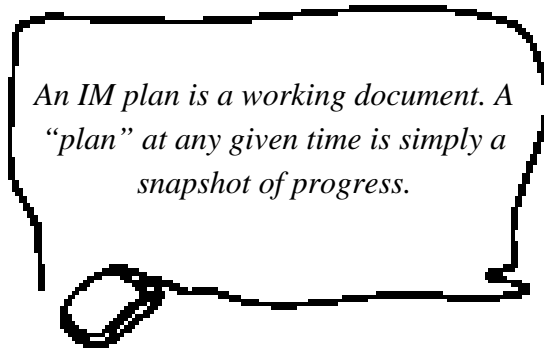
An IM plan is a working document. A "plan" at any given time is simply a snapshot of progress.

In assembling an overall picture of information management in your organization, don't become overwhelmed by the far reach of technology issues. A key to success in information management planning is to establish priorities among possible developments. Pursuing all possible improvements simultaneously, even if funding were available, would be burdensome and unwise. The team may make a conscious decision to put some developments on hold, or to pursue only those that can be accomplished at no cost, or within the resources immediately available to the organization.

Updating Your Plan Unfortunately, information management planning is not something an organization can do once, and then be done. An IM plan is a working document. A "plan" at any given time is simply a snapshot of progress. However, the overall direction of system development is likely to be more effective if guided by a clear sense of the organization's interest in using information, and its priorities for investment of new resources.

A lack of certainty in IM decision making is brought about by the revolutionary times in which we live. Technological developments which once may have seemed distant are now influencing our daily work, family and
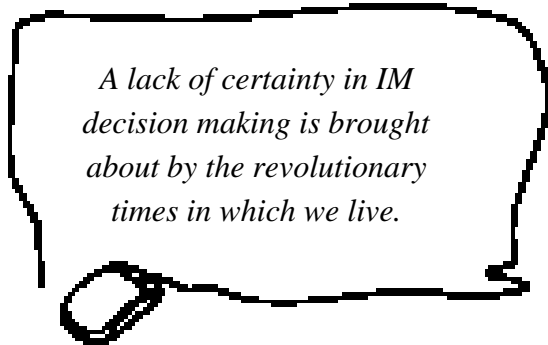
A lack of certainty in IM decision making is brought about by the revolutionary times in which we live.

community lives. But amidst such change, the basic purpose of our work is defined and carried out in ways very similar to the past: by determining goals and pursuing them, learning from experience, and, of course, using the best tools available.

The next section of the IM Planning Guide provides step-by-step advice on beginning—or continuing in an organized fashion—an organization's information management planning process.

Important Factors in Successful IM Planning and Implementation

- Common goals of leadership, involvement of appropriate and qualified parties, teamwork across different departments

- Impartiality of the IM planning process; adequately dealing with mistrust or concerns up front

- An ability to plan strategically, manage information policies and systems, and train staff in order to:

1 serve the organization's mission

2 produce and use both outcome and activity data

3 provide appropriate internal and external linkages

4 account for present information needs while planning and testing future systems

If an Information Management Plan is *required* within an organization, planning can surface amidst daily priorities.

FORM 2

Form 2

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS — 1.a. Staffing

List key positions in the organization and computer use in each
List major staff groups working within the organization, including paid and non-paid staff
(volunteers). Include those who do not currently use computers.

POSITION/TITLE may include non-paid users	CURRENT COMPUTER USE type of computer and use

FORM 3

Form 3

Information Mgmt. Coordinator   Alternate

_____   _____
name   name

_____   _____
title   title

_____   _____
phone   phone

Duties of the Information Management Coordinator

Estimated weekly hours for Information Management Coordinator _____

Other staff performing information management system tasks
including those who perform any type of work on the computer system itself, who train or
lead others in computer use, who design or manage databases

POSITION/TITLE	INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM DUTIES	ESTIMATED # HRS WEEKLY

Appendix A provides full-sized
forms, and information on
electronic formats.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO A PLAN

SECTION 1
INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

> *The basis of a good IM plan lay not in machines, but in people.*

1.a. Staffing The basis of a good IM plan lay not in machines, but in people. The sample plan format (see Form 2), asks you to list major groups working in the organization, including employees (titles of major positions and staff groups) and non-employee groupings (i.e. volunteers). In making this list, you may include those groups which do not currently use computers in their work. Don't forget maintenance staff, for instance, or other important groups.

For each position or group named, identify current computer(s) and use, if any (see Form 2).

Using a format such as provided (see Form 3), identify an **Information Management Coordinator** for the organization. Note: the Information Management Coordinator is not necessarily the same individual as the IM *Plan* Coordinator. The Information Management Coordinator is generally the most technologically-oriented and skilled person in the organization, and/or the party responsible for the organization's overall technology systems. All or part of this individual's responsibility may be delegated to other parties, including some individuals not under the supervision or control of the Coordinator.

In addition to naming an Information Management Coordinator, also name an

> *It is important to note that the IM Plan and Coordinator address the needs of the organization as a whole.*

alternate who will be skilled and knowledgeable in the responsibilities and any daily routines of the Information Management Coordinator (Form 3).

It is important to note that the IM Plan and Coordinator address the needs of the organization as a whole. An organization-wide perspective enables efficient coordination of program and site needs under one plan and set of priorities.

Once an IM coordinator and alternate are identified, briefly list the duties performed under the coordinator's responsibility. Include regular duties (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly).

IM Coordinator Responsibilities
- implement organization's IM plan, including related policies and procedures;
- create and maintain information systems that respond to data privacy needs;
- direct installation and security of equipment and software;
- direct wiring/network plan, installation, and ongoing maintenance of network(s), including electronic mail or file transfer service and Internet activities;
- recommend standard software for basic organization functions (word processing, spreadsheet), as well as specialized technology applications;
- direct installation and registration of software, and manage testing of new products and software updates;
- direct user support for all staff, including technical assistance, and the organization's technology training plan;
- manage organization's recordkeeping systems, and connections between record systems (internal and external);
- manage annual (or more frequent updating of data collection fields, to reflect changing needs;

> *Information management expertise should be developed broadly in the organization, using inside and outside resources, rather than concentrating IM skills among a small group.*

> *The emphasis on "managing" or "directing" a particular need suggests that many of the information management tasks themselves can and should be delegated to those closest to the division, program, site or database operation.*

- direct daily backup of all critical data and disaster recovery systems;
- direct record archiving system;
- direct information management systems used by external customers;
- communicate with key contact people in divisions and sites who share IM responsibilities;
- perform other duties, customized to reflect the needs and circumstances of the individual organization.

Once the duties of the IM coordinator have been identified (see Form 3), estimate the number of hours needed weekly to perform these tasks.

The emphasis on "managing" or "directing" a particular need suggests that many of the information management tasks themselves can and should be delegated to those closest to the division, program, site or database operation. In this manner, information management expertise may be developed broadly in the organization, using inside and outside resources, rather than concentrating IM skills in a small group.

Time Management If an organization operates multiple sites, and/or programs or divisions, an information management contact may be identified within each division and/or site to communicate with the organization's overall Information Management Coordinator.

In addition to the Information Management Coordinator (see Form 3), list critical staff who have information management system responsibilities: who train or lead others in computer use, and

FORM 4

Form 4

Staffing Plan

Actions to take place in the area of information management staffing
including addition or removal of staff hours spent performing information management
duties or any reassignment of duties. Note: This section does not refer to staff
development (see Human Resources Section to analyze training needs).

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized
forms, and information on
electronic formats.

who design or manage databases or technology systems. Exclude those who solely enter data or *use* information from the organization's systems.

For individuals or groups identified to have IM system-level duties in the organization, list duties and the estimated hours required weekly to perform these duties (see Form 3). The total of this column, plus the number of hours spent by the IM Coordinator, is the total staffing level currently needed for information management system-level duties.

Make sure to consider changes and improvements which can be made within available budgets, and the likelihood of increased technology use by employee groups and external customers.

As shown in the sample format (see Form 4), the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review current staffing levels and assignments of information management duties within the organization. Short- and long-range actions are then identified to ensure that all necessary IM tasks are assigned and future needs are accounted for in the organization's plan. Make sure to consider changes and improvements which can be made at no cost to the organization, or within available budgets. Consider also, the likelihood of increases in computer use by employees and external customers.

Planning does not mean that an organization can meet all of its needs or goals, but that its intentions are defined, and its energies invested strategically toward these intended outcomes.

An accurate estimate of the time needed to coordinate the information management needs of an organization does not mean that staffing is available to meet these needs. Nevertheless, such estimates are useful in planning for inefficiencies and directing future investments.

FORM 5

Form 5

SYSTEMS, CONT.   **1.b. Policies & Procedures**

Policies and procedures pertaining to information management systems
including significant working procedures in these areas

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY MISSION/PRINCIPLES

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PLANNING

CUSTOMER CONFIDENTIALITY/DATA PRIVACY

    file security needs

    data sharing policies (internal and external)

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

    purchase & inventory

    installation

    equipment security

SOFTWARE

    purchase & registration

    installation

    updating

Form 5 cont.

WIRING

    planning

    installation

    maintenance

CREATION, MAINTENANCE AND REVISION OF DATABASES:

DATABASE INTEGRATION & INFORMATION SHARING

    within organization

    outside of organization

E-MAIL/INTERNET ACCESS

COMPUTER SYSTEM/NETWORK DAILY MAINTENANCE AND TROUBLESHOOTING

    daily routines

    technical assistance to users

    archiving of records

    record back-up system

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Appendix A provides full-sized
forms, and information on
electronic formats.

1.b. Policies and Procedures The sample format (see Form 5) guides the coordinator and other involved parties in developing necessary policies and procedures to support an IM system.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT MISSION/ PRINCIPLES
> draft an IM Mission, which *enables achievement of and/or furthers* the mission of the overall organization.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT/ COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING
> set a time of year and frequency to complete or update your internal communications and IM plan, at a minimum, on an annual basis. This policy may include a communication flow chart for the organization, and provisions for review of the plan by external customers and other relevant parties.

CONFIDENTIALITY/DATA PRIVACY
> create or reference the organization's existing policy on maintaining confidentiality of individually-identifying information, and describe the procedures enacted to implement this policy in the electronic realm, specifically:

file security needs
> summarize file security needs under relevant categories such as:

external customer information
> describe information storage methods for individually-identifying information kept about external customers of the organization (intended users of the organization's products and services). Define who (internal to the organization) needs to have access to what information, whose access should be restricted, and how such sharing/security needs are fulfilled. Make policy according to applicable regulations.

Mission/Principles

IM Planning

Data Privacy

> *Quality information and communications systems raise the trust and satisfaction levels of employees and external customers alike.*

The implementation of the data-privacy policy relies on the creation and effective management of certain IM inventories (described in detail in other parts of the model plan), including an inventory of databases, data reports, and data fields maintained by the organization (a printout of fields and reports can be used).

Please note that inventories of information and reports should be inclusive of all nonelectronic reports (including forms), as well as information stored in other ways.

Example: in a service-providing organization, access to electronically-stored information about external customers may be controlled differently for different types of employees: intake personnel, data entry/retrieval personnel, employees providing services to the customer, service managers/ administrators, responsible parties.

employee information
> describe information storage methods for individually-identifying information kept about employees of the organization. Define who needs access to what information, whose access should be restricted, and daily management of security (see inventories).

other records and information stores, including financial records
> describe information storage methods, who needs access to what information, whose access should be restricted, and daily management of security. Integrate with and/or attach relevant financial policies.

data sharing policies
> describe policy and procedure for appropriately sharing (as well as protecting) customer information in regard to third parties. An adequate plan provides security while allowing proper sharing of information and data, in keeping with normal business functions and data privacy regulations. Technologies are available to allow both security and appropriate sharing.

Information Management Planning Guide

The coordinator, alternate and other appointed parties should hold system passwords at all times. Passwords should be updated as needed due to staff turnover.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

purchase & inventory

> describe methods of purchasing IM products, in keeping with organization finance policy. For instance: within approved terms, the IM Coordinator will determine what IM products are purchased with input from "unbiased" sources. The best vendor(s) for sales and support of IM products must be identified. Such a list is developed later through the model planning process (see Form 33). In establishing policies, consider any purchasing and inventory requirements tied to different revenue sources and the appropriate use of maintenance agreements, if any.
> ensure that the IM purchase and inventory system documents its practices.

installation

> assign Information Management Coordinator or his/her designee to register new equipment on a hardware inventory.

equipment security

> describe policy for checking out equipment into the custody of individuals. Create an equipment checkout form which identifies the party responsible for the equipment and the process for delegating responsibility (for instance, custodian can go through similar orientation with alternate custodians). Establish reasonable standard of security, for example: machines will be left unattended only in locked areas. Machines left in unlocked areas must be monitored by an identified party. Machinery is not to be left unattended in a vehicle.
> describe facility keying and security.

SOFTWARE

purchase & registration

> see policy for purchasing equipment. Determine standards to be maintained.
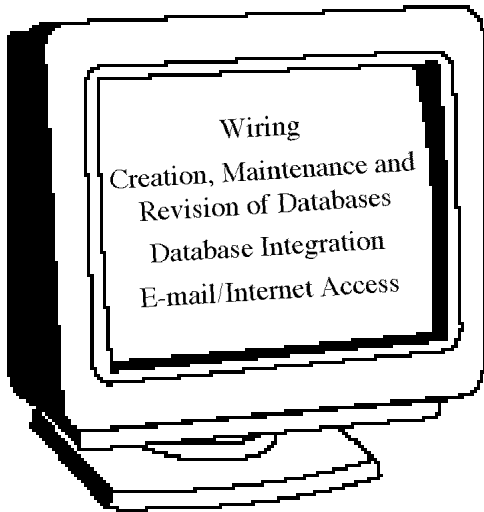
installation

> describe policy assigning Information Management Coordinator or his/her designee to: register new software, record installation on an inventory sheet, store software disks in fireproof or off-site location, maintain library of manuals.

updating

> assign IM Coordinator or others to review information on software upgrades and new software, and to alert the organization of needed changes.

WIRING

planning

> assign ongoing responsibility for planning wiring infrastructure for all sites. Attach notated sketch developed through the Network Section. See purchasing above, and don't forget the need for ongoing help.

installation

> describe policy and procedure. IM Coordinator supervises, approves.

maintenance

> describe system for troubleshooting, reporting and resolving problems.

CREATION, MAINTENANCE AND REVISION OF DATABASES

> describe initial, periodic and daily activities required for each database used by the organization, with responsibility assigned to the Information Management Coordinator and his/her designee.
> account for the need to periodically update information practices.
> Favor minimizing the number of databases maintained, and clearly define ownership of custom products.

DATABASE INTEGRATION & INFO SHARING

within organization

outside of organization

> use notated sketch to show relationships among databases and current integration practices (see discussion under privacy).
> describe working policies.

E-MAIL/INTERNET ACCESS
> adapt model policies on Appropriate Use (AU); current models are easily obtained through the Internet. Most policies restrict use of workplace technology to conduct personal business. But until all people have easy access, consider allowing use of workplace technology for personal activity when such activity does not infringe on the intended business use of the technology or take place on paid time.
> at a minimum, warn users of the lack of privacy on-line and to refrain from uses which conflict with organizational policy or applicable law (have employees sign off).
> give supervisors the authority to take disciplinary action against employees found abusing the system.

COMPUTER SYSTEM/NETWORK DAILY MAINTENANCE AND TROUBLESHOOTING

daily routines
> describe initial, periodic and daily activities required for system maintenance, with responsibility assigned to the Information Management Coordinator, technical assistance/maintenance providers and users. Attach job descriptions.
> describe required documentation and any standard procedures for virus prevention, system/data protection, data entry, crisis response, etc.

technical assistance to users
> describe technical assistance and maintenance provided to users, with responsibility assigned to the Information Management Coordinator, vendors and their designees.
> require log of activity.

archiving of records
> describe system which complies with the organization's requirements, or attach.

record backup system
> describe backup and disaster retrieval systems, including multiple backups or off-site storage.
> require testing and log.

FORM 6

Form 6

Policies and Procedures Plan

Changes to take place in the organization's policies and procedures including those involving computers and information management systems

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

TRAINING/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
> describe the organization's general provisions for initial and ongoing information management training, with specific needs to be defined through the staffing and human resources sections.
> assign oversight responsibility for implementation of the training policy to the Information Management Coordinator and his/her designee, as well as supervisors.
> adapt training and personnel policies addressing the benefits and risks of technology (see Sample Policy Chapter).

As shown in Form 6, the IM Plan Coordinator and team review the organization's information management policies and determine any need for updating in the short and/or long run. Where written policies are not currently in place, these should be drafted (or a time set to draft them), while other policies may be reviewed and attached. Remember that the policies pertain to the organization as a whole and may be unevenly developed or applied in different areas.

Lessons from IM Planning in Minnesota's Community Action Network

- Although central coordination of IM systems is an advantage, the organization's information power base must belong to the organization, not an individual

- An IM plan and system is something an organization works at over time

- Computers do not solve intractable management and communication problems, but can be an important tool for supporting best practices where goals are shared

- The need for integration of databases and linkages between systems is likely to grow

- Information systems are only as good as their performance in real-world testing

- The cost of IM systems includes more than initial purchase prices of computer stations, extending to maintenance and upgrading of hardware and software, support of users, hidden costs, and "little" items

- The use of standard products can minimize costs in training and support

Overdependency on any one party to meet IM needs—
especially an external party—is inadvisable.

FORM 7

Form 7

SYSTEMS, CONT.   1.c. Equipment

Inventory of Equipment

ITEM type, quantity and serial # (or attach)	MAKE/MODEL	USE
servers		
personal computers		
other desktop devices (CD ROM, scanner, external disk drive, modem)		
shared resources (modems, printers)		
network devices		
phones (include TDD)		
fax machines		
other equipment		

FORM 8

Form 8

Equipment Plan

Changes to take place in equipment or its use
Determine critical needs for updates, new equipment, or
changes of use in the short and/or long range.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

1.c. Equipment Inventory

Information requested on the sample form (see Form 7) for cataloging equipment and its use may be wholly or partially provided in an existing report (if available, indicate and attach to plan). The form may be filled out at a summary level if backup data on individual pieces of equipment (including serial numbers) are available. The sample format allows for inclusion of telecommunications equipment in the realm of IM planning, and asks for categorization of equipment according to its use (personal station, shared printer). Include in the inventory information on any maintenance agreements linked to specific equipment.

Using proven, standard products can extend the life of equipment up to 10 years and beyond.

As shown in Form 8, the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review the organization-wide inventory of IM equipment, determine any critical needs for updates or new equipment, and plan any necessary changes in the use of equipment (short- and/or long-range). In considering equipment decisions, involve "unbiased" parties knowledgeable about equipment options and upgradability. Using proven, standard products can extend the life of equipment up to 10 years and beyond.

FORM 9

Form 9

S YSTEMS, CONT.   1.d. Software

Inventory of software

ITEM program, # copies and serial # (or attach)	VERSION	USE
word processing		
accounting		
spread sheet		
database include custom and off- the-shelf		
email		
Internet browser		
page layout		
other software		

FORM 10

Form 10

Software Plan

Changes to take place in the organization's software systems
Determine any critical needs for updates, expansion of capabilities

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

The equipment plan is best completed along with the Finance Considerations, Setting Priorities section (Form 32). The organization may opt to skip the equipment plan (Form 8) during the early planning stages and complete it when all other sections are finalized.

1.d. Software Inventory Information requested in sample Form 9, cataloging software and its use, may be wholly or partially provided in an existing report (if so, indicate, and attach to plan). The form may be filled out at a summary level if backup data on individual pieces of software (with serial numbers) are available. The sample format asks the organization to list its software by type (word processing, spreadsheet). This exercise helps to identify gaps in capabilities, as well as incompatibilities. Include in the inventory any technical assistance agreements and their use.

Following sample Form 10, the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review the organization-wide use of software and determine any critical needs for updates or expansion of capabilities.

In choosing software, especially standard packages to be used across an organization, it is recommended that an

It is recommended that an "unbiased" individual knowledgeable in software options participates in the discussion and/ or reviews the plan.

"unbiased" individual knowledgeable in software options participates in the discussion and/or reviews the plan. In addition, organizations may consult with information management vendors, and with publications such as the *Software Digest Rating Report* (published monthly by the National Software Testing Laboratories, and available in reference libraries). It is also wise to test software before buying, with an eye toward identifying what the software *doesn't* do; (the sales literature will focus on what the product *does* do). Software capabilities should be compared to the specific needs and preferences of the organization.

When evaluating software, it is worthwhile to consider how widely used a particular package is, because it is easier to find trained users and/or training resources for commonly-used software packages. Commonly-used software packages also offer: 1) relatively more confidence that the software will be supported and improved in the future, and 2) increased compatibility with partner organizations.

It is recommended that organizations maintain software no more than one version behind the latest version. A software version is indicated in the first number assigned (e.g. Goodware 3.2 is version 3 of the software). In the case of

> *It is recommended that organizations maintain their software systems no more than one version behind the latest version on the market.*

Information Management Planning Guide

Goodware, the organization should maintain version 2.0 or later.

Remember, software updates (like 3.2 to 3.3) generally fix bugs and are available at a small cost, or free, to licensed users. Version updates (like 3.3 to 4.0) are more critical in determining basic capabilities, and cost more money.

Using software that is one version old may prevent the organization from producing the very latest and greatest; however, its productions will probably be supported by external partners.

Recent versions of software are sometimes available at no cost to qualifying organizations. A partnership with a business or other institution may provide a means of securing such resources. Alternatively, organizations devoted to providing free or recycled software may be available in your area or through the Internet.

The software plan (Form 10) is best completed along with the Finance Considerations, Setting Priorities Section (Form 31). The organization may opt to skip the software plan in the early planning stages, and complete it when all other sections are finalized.

FORM 11

Form 11

SYSTEMS, CONT.   1.e. Networking

Brief description of network

Diagram of organization's sites/floor plans showing computer
and telecommunications hook-ups and connections
including connections with external sites and networks

x   =   phone
....   =   phone line
O   =   computer
_ _ _   =   data line
®   =   network device

FORM 12

Form 12

Networking Plan

Changes to take place in the organization's networking
internal and external

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-
sized forms, and information
on electronic formats.

1.e. Networking The sample format (see Form 11) asks for a description of the organization's network, and a diagram showing telecommunications and computer wiring and related equipment. Show connections between rooms/areas, sites, and the Internet. Show connections between the organization and partners.

Following the sample format (see Form 12) the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review the organization's network, and determine critical needs.

In making plans, anticipate the need for network equipment (switches or "boxes"). Involve unbiased parties in the discussion who are knowledgeable in telecommunications options and trends. Fully investigate free or reduced-rate access options and follow IM news in the general media. It is important to know the direction of the telecommunications industry, your local access options, and the vulnerability of such systems to failure.

The networking plan (Form 12) is best completed along with the Finance Considerations, Setting Priorities Section (Form 32). The organization may opt to skip the networking plan during the early planning phases, and complete it when all other sections are being finalized.

Fully investigate free or reduced-rate access options and follow IM news in the general media.

FORM 13

USES OF INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN PRODUCT
AND SERVICE DELIVERY   **2.a. Service Delivery**

Brief description of products and services provided by the organization,
and the uses of technology in delivering these services
Reports and administrative functions covered in Section 3

PRODUCT OR SERVICE   USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN SERVICE DELIVERY
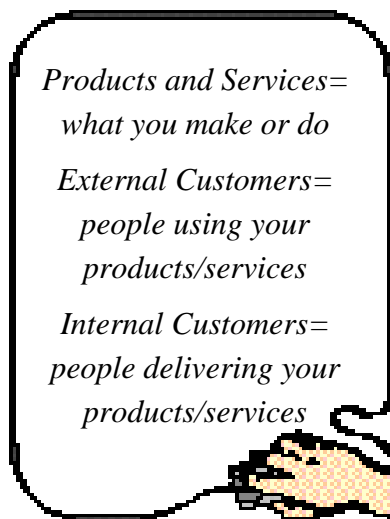
FORM 14

Form 14

Service Delivery Plan

Changes to take place in the use of technology to deliver services
This section is the driving force behind the IM&T plan. Describe new day-to-day as well
as periodic uses of information management tools in delivering products/services.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized
forms, and information on
electronic formats.

SECTION 2
USES OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN DELIVERING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Products and Services= what you make or do

External Customers= people using your products/services

Internal Customers= people delivering your products/services

2.a. Service Delivery This section is the driving force behind an organization's IM plan. The sample format (see Form 13) asks the organization to catalog its most basic functions—the delivery of its primary products and services—and to describe the role of information and technology in carrying out these activities. Describe any day-to-day as well as periodic uses of information management tools in delivering your organization's products and services. Such uses include:

- communication between the organization, its internal and external customers, and others, including accessibility measures for persons with disabilities and limited language skills;
- collection, storage and retrieval of information relevant to employees and external customers;
- production and delivery of goods and services;
- documentation of activity;
- monitoring key outcome indicators;
- research and planning;
- education of employees, external customers and other groups (see next section on external customer uses of information management systems).

Following the sample format (see Form 14), the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review the organization's
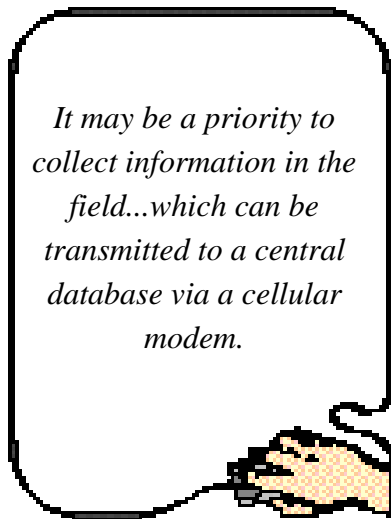
use of information and technology in delivering its basic products and services, and consider possibilities for short- and long-term developments. The process of identifying priorities is based in a problem-solving strategy. Ask key individuals what should change or be added to the organization's use of information and technology in service delivery. Considering the options available, what steps can be taken toward meeting needs and solving problems? These steps are the plan's long- and short-term actions.

It may be a priority that your organization collect information in the field with a laptop which can transmit data to a central database via a cellular modem. Or, it may be important to locate World Wide Web resources with a customer. These capabilities and others are currently in use to achieve organizational goals in many industries (i.e. medical, shipping).

In considering possibilities for the use of technology in delivering services, the organization should consider integrating data collection, entry, and use into the work life of most employees. Such practices automate daily work processes without creating an extra data entry layer.

In addition, integration of technology into daily work routines serves to increase the level of information management skills

It may be a priority to collect information in the field...which can be transmitted to a central database via a cellular modem.

among workers, a benefit which is passed on to customers and partner organizations.

In completing this plan, it is a good idea to consult the technology mission developed by the planning team (see Form 5), to re-ask how each department's or division's service delivery strategies and information management capabilities stand in relation to organizational goals, and to identify ways that each program can better utilize technology to accomplish its goals.

FORM 15

	Form 15

SERVICE DELIVERY, CONT. **2.b. Customer Opportunities**

Brief description of customers served by the organization, and the use of technology in accessing products/services

PRODUCT OR SERVICE	CUSTOMERS SERVED # and demographics	USE OF TECHNOLOGY BY CUSTOMERS

FORM 16

	Form 16

Customer Opportunities Plan

Changes to take place in the use of technology by customers

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

2.b. External Customer Opportunities

Here the organization reviews the characteristics of its external customers and describes their use of IM tools to access products or services and/or to accomplish other goals. Using the sample format (see Form 15), list any day-to-day as well as periodic uses of information management tools by external customers, especially when such use influences the organization's achievement of its mission.

Following the sample planning format (see Form 16), the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review the customers' current use of information and technology and consider ideas for short- and long-term developments.

The process of identifying priority developments in the use of information and technology by customers is based on a need-to-know basis. Ask what information resources and skills customers need in order to access your products and services and accomplish shared goals. Identify the steps necessary to enable customers to use such information and technology. These steps become the long- and short-term actions of your plan.

What information resources and skills do your customers need in order to access your products and services and achieve mutual goals?
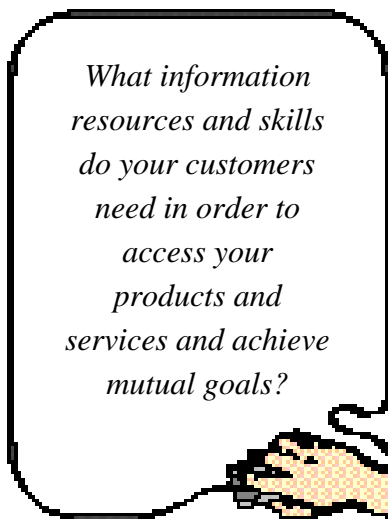
For example, it may be a priority that your organization have toll-free access to the Internet for customers, so they can communicate with the organization through the Internet.

In completing this plan, it is a good idea to consult the overall organization's mission, and the information management mission developed by the planning team (see Form 5), and to re-ask how customer needs for IM tools are addressed.

FORM 17

	Form 17
ADMINISTRATIVE USES OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS	3.a. List of Reports

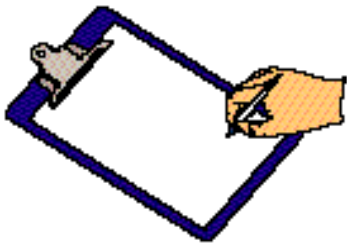| REPORT NAME–inventory all forms used	PRODUCT OR SERVICE	FREQUENCY
Customer Information Reports		
Finance Reports		
Personnel Reports		
Monitoring and Management Reports		

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

SECTION 3
ADMINISTRATIVE USES OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

An inventory of forms is an excellent starting place for an IM system analysis.

3.a. List of Reports Form 17 provides a framework to inventory (by name) the reports (including paper forms) needed by the organization. The inventory includes the forms and reports needed to deliver products and services, serve customers, and manage personnel, finance and continuous improvement activities. Form 17 should be completed as the organization's administrative uses of information are analyzed in each area (Forms 19–26).

FORM 18

Form 18

ADMINISTRATIVE USES, CONT.   **3.b. Customer Records**

For each of the products or services provided by the organization, an overview of customer records kept

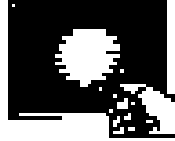| PRODUCT OR SERVICE	CUSTOMER RECORDS KEPT attach list of data fields, "blanks" on forms	ADMINISTRATIVE USE OF COMPUTER IN STORING AND ACCESSING INFORMATION database name/type	REQUIRED REPORTS cross-reference list of reports - Form 17

FORM 19

Form 19

Customer Records Plan

Actions to take place in the administrative use of computers to store and access customer information including reporting plans

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

3.b. External Customer Records

For each product or service provided by the organization, this part of the plan asks for a study of:

*   *information kept on customers*
    An inventory of data elements (blanks on forms) kept on some or all external customers for each product or service (e.g. name, telephone number, and other information). If possible, print the list of fields from databases.

*   *use of computers in storing and accessing customer records*
    An inventory of databases (by name and type) used to store customer records (make note if information is kept in another manner).

Create an inventory of:
*   *information kept on customers*
*   *data stores*

As the organization's customer records system is reviewed, cross-reference and fill in Form 18 to create an inventory of reports and forms. These include the data collection tools (paper or screen) used by the organization, as well as the information required, internally or externally, for product or service delivery.

As shown on the sample planning format (see Form 19), the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review the organization's collection, storage and use of customer information, and consider ideas for short- and long-term developments. To make such plans, the team analyzes the information collected from customers in relation to the reports
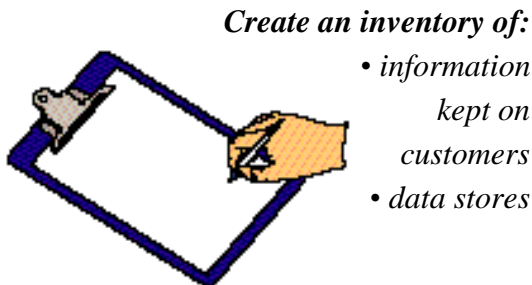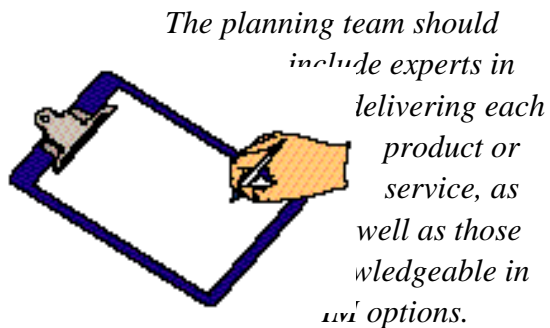
The planning team should include experts in delivering each product or service, as well as those knowledgeable in IM options.

required to deliver the product or service, as well as the use of technology in maintaining customer records. The planning team should include experts in delivering the product or service as well as those knowledgeable in options for the storage and management of data.

The process of identifying priorities in the management of customer records is based in a problem-solving strategy. The team identifies problems, inefficiencies, or gaps which detract from the quality of the product or service.

For example, it may be a priority that your organization have the highest detail and accuracy in its customer record system, due to the fact that it is responsible for assisting customers in life or death situations. Immediate entry, printing and verification of customer information may be required. In most cases, it is a priority to store only necessary information, and to avoid over-technologizing the organization's relationship with customers.

Based on a thorough analysis, the planning team determines what changes in customer information management would improve the achievement of the organization's mission, and solve problems in current operations. Steps toward these changes become the long- and short- term actions which appear in the customer records plan.

FORM 20

ADMINISTRATIVE USES, CONT.   3.c. Financial Records

For each of the products/services provided by the organization, an
overview of financial records kept and reports required

| PRODUCT OR SERVICE	FINANCIAL RECORDS KEPT attach list of data fields, "blanks" on forms	ADMINISTRATIVE USE OF COMPUTER IN STORING AND ACCESSING FINANCIAL INFORMATION database name/type	REQUIRED REPORTS cross-reference list of reports - Form 17

FORM 21

Financial Records Plan

Actions to take place in the administrative use of computers to store and
access financial information including reporting plans

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-
sized forms, and information
on electronic formats.

3.c. Financial Records For each product or service identified in the previous sections, this part of the plan (see Form 20) asks for a study of: 1) the financial data kept by the organization, and 2) the use of computers in storing and accessing this information.
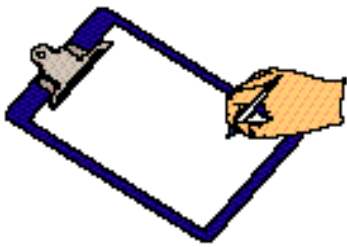
Create an inventory of:
• financial data kept
• finance databases

As the organization's financial recordkeeping system is reviewed, cross-reference and fill in Form 17 to create an inventory of reports and forms. These include the finance data collection tools (paper or on-screen) used by the organization, as well as the reports and summaries required, internally or externally, for finance management.

As shown on the sample planning format (see Form 21), the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review the organization's collection, storage and use of financial records, and consider ideas for short- and long-term improvements. To plan effectively, the team must include finance experts as well as those knowledgeable in options for the storage and management of financial data.

The process of identifying priorities in finance information management is based in a problem-solving strategy. The team identifies problems, inefficiencies, or gaps

FORM 22

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="right">Form 22</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">ADMINISTRATIVE USES, CONT.</td><td colspan="2">3.d. Personnel Records</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">A description of personnel records kept and reports required</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>PRODUCT OR SERVICE</td>
<td>PERSONNEL RECORDS KEPT
attach list of data fields,
"blanks" on forms</td>
<td>USE OF COMPUTER IN
STORING AND ACCESSING
PERSONNEL INFORMATION
database name/type</td>
<td>REQUIRED
REPORTS
cross-
reference list
of reports -
Form 17</td>
</tr>
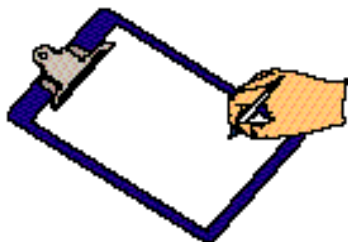<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

in technology which detract from the finance management system. To the extent that finance information management systems overlap with other systems (customer or employee) such connections should be analyzed for their efficiency and any potential quality control problems.

Based on a thorough analysis, the planning team determines what changes in finance information management would improve the achievement of the organization's mission, and solve problems in current operations. Steps toward these changes become the long- and short- term actions of the financial records plan.
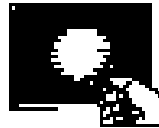
3.d. Personnel Records For each product or service, this part of the plan (see Form 22) asks for a study of: 1) the employee data kept by the organization, and 2) the use of computers in storing and accessing this information. Please note: this section covers the administration of employee records (see also Sections 1.a. and Section 4).

As the organization's personnel recordkeeping system is reviewed, cross-reference and fill in Form 17 to create an inventory of reports and forms. These include the personnel data collection tools (paper or on-screen) used by the organization, as well as the reports and

Create an inventory of:
- *employee information kept*
- *employee databases*

FORM 23

Personnel Records Plan

Actions to take place in the use of computers to store and utilize personnel information including reporting plans

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

summaries required, internally or externally, for personnel management.

As shown on the sample planning format (see Form 23), the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review the organization's collection, storage and use of personnel records, and consider ideas for short- and long-term action. To plan effectively, the team must include personnel experts as well as those knowledgeable in options for the storage and management of employee data.

The process of identifying priorities in personnel information management is based in a problem-solving strategy. The team identifies problems, inefficiencies, or gaps in technology which detract from the personnel system. To the extent that personnel information management systems overlap with other systems (customer or finance), such connections should be analyzed for their efficiency and potential quality control problems.

For example, it may be a priority to establish linkages between employee and customer databases, in order to demonstrate proper certification of employees delivering particular services. It may also be a priority to track the fulfillment of professional development requirements through a database.

FORM 24

Form 24

ADMINISTRATIVE USES, CONT.   **3.e. Monitoring & Management**

For each of the products or services provided by the organization, a description of internal monitoring & management activities

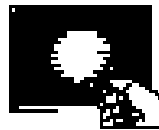| PRODUCT OR SERVICE	INTERNAL MONITORING & MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES	USE OF COMPUTER IN MONITORING & MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES	REQUIRED REPORTS cross-reference list of reports-Form 17

FORM 25

Form 25

Monitoring & Management Plan

Additional or alternate monitoring & management activities
Consider monitoring and management activities which may be better accomplished through information management resources

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

Based on a thorough review, the planning team determines what changes in personnel information management would improve the achievement of the organization's mission, and solve problems in current operations. Steps toward these changes become the long-and short-term actions of the personnel records plan.
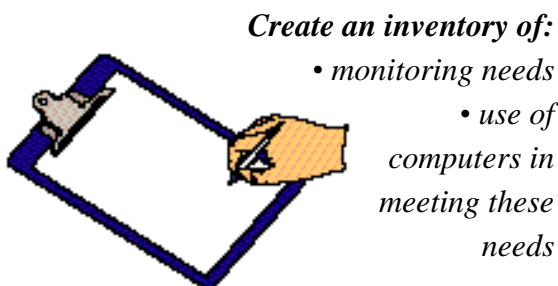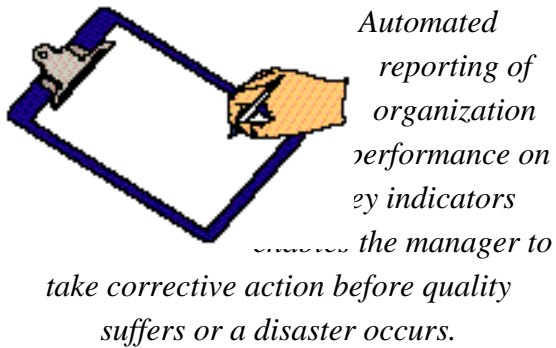

3.e. Monitoring and Management

For each product or service identified in the previous sections, this part of the plan (Form 24) asks the organization to consider 1) internal monitoring and management activities, and 2) use of computers in these activities. Using a format such as the example, record any internal monitoring of performance against desired outcomes. Such performance data may or may not be required in formal reports to external audiences.

As the organization's overall recordkeeping system is reviewed, cross-reference and fill in Form 17 to create an inventory of reports and forms needed to monitor and manage operations.

As shown on the sample planning format (see Form 25), the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review the organization's use of computers in

Create an inventory of:
• monitoring needs
• use of computers in meeting these needs

Automated reporting of organization performance on key indicators enables the manager to take corrective action before quality suffers or a disaster occurs.

monitoring and management, and consider ideas for short- and long-term actions. To plan effectively, the team must include operations experts as well as those knowledgeable in options for the use of information management systems in daily management processes.

Insofar as the organization's management system draws on the organization's customer, finance and employee information systems, the need for monitoring and management information influences the content of all other systems (Forms 17-23).

It may be a priority to establish automated reporting of organization performance on key indicators on a daily or weekly basis. Such automation enables the manager to take corrective action before quality suffers (or a disaster occurs). It may also be a priority to collect and use information which communicates the organization's positive impact on its customers and the community.

Based on a thorough review, the planning team determines what changes in information management systems would further the achievement of the mission. Steps toward these changes become the long-and short-term actions which appear in the monitoring and management plan.

FORM 26

Form 26

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS   4.a. Health Concerns

For each position, those utilizing a computer keyboard, video screen, telephone, or other IM device for more than 20 hours per week

POSITION/TITLE may include non-paid users	ANY JOB-RELATED HEALTH CONCERNS REPORTED	PRECAUTIONS TAKEN/TRAINING PROVIDED TO PREVENT INJURIES

FORM 27

Form 27

Health Concerns Plan

Actions to take place to address and/or prevent work-related injuries or disabilities related to IM tasks

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.
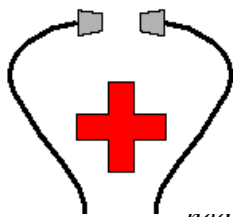
4.a. Health Concerns For each employee group (position title) listed in the IM plan (see Forms 2 and 3), this part of the plan (Form 26) asks for a description of any health concerns reported by employees, and any special measures taken to prevent health problems related to the prolonged use of IM equipment. For each employee group using IM equipment for 20 or more hours per week, note precautions taken through training, seating, furniture, screen displays, wrist supports, and so on.

Following the sample format (see Form 27), the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review any health concerns reported and measures taken, to identify needs for additional short- and long-term actions. The planning process should include input from persons knowledgeable in the prevention of IM-related health concerns.

Taking action to prevent injuries and ïsabilities can save lost ïuctivity and increased neaιτn care costs, which may result if health risks are ignored.

Identifying priorities among IM health concerns requires a risk-management perspective; taking action to prevent IM work-related injuries can save lost productivity, as well as increased health care costs, which may result if health risks are ignored.

The first priority for action is to address health concerns among any employee groups which have reported

FORM 28

HUMAN RESOURCES, CONT.   **4.b. Professional Development**

For each position, training activities and needs in the area of IM

POSITION/TITLE may include non-paid users	TRAINING PROVIDED	TRAINING NEEDS

FORM 29
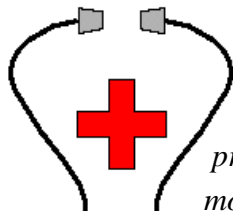
Form 29

Professional Development Plan

Planned professional development efforts to build necessary skills in IM

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

Special training should be provided to aid in the prevention of repetitive motion injuries (RMIs) and cumulative trauma disorder, both of which have been associated with the prolonged use of office devices.

problems from the prolonged use of IM equipment. Starting with these priority groups, and expanding to include all staff, special training should be provided to aid in the prevention of repetitive motion injuries (RMIs) and cumulative trauma disorder, both of which have been associated with the prolonged use of office devices. Many injuries can be prevented by addressing the need for proper equipment, posture, and by promoting work breaks, task variation, and the overall fitness of employees (have employees sign off on training). The Sample Policies chapter includes policies addressing IM-related health concerns.

4.b. Professional Development For each employee group (position title) listed in the IM plan (see Forms 2 and 3), this part of the plan (Form 28) asks for a description of training needs and resources for paid and non-paid staff.

Following the sample planning format (see Form 29), the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review the IM training needs and resources of the organization and consider ideas for short- and long-term investments. Development of this plan should be coordinated with the priority setting done in the later stages of the planning process (see Form 32), and in

tandem with equipment and software planning (see Forms 8 and 10).

The process of identifying priorities in IM staff development is based in a problem-solving and need-to-know strategy. What employee groups need what skills in order to effectively operate existing and planned systems? What communications and operations problems faced by the organization are best addressed through staff development in IM? What technical assistance is available? Steps to meet IM training needs are the long- and short-term actions of the professional development plan (Form 29).
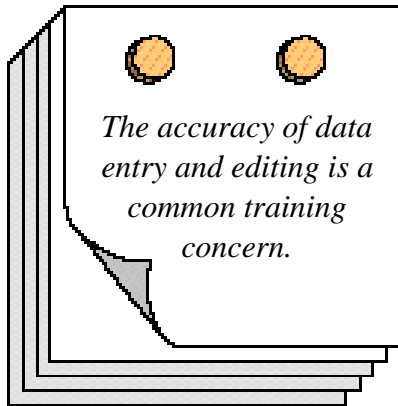
For each major software package, custom application, or other technology used by the organization, staff must acquire the level of skill needed to perform their jobs and solve minor problems independently. It is suggested that, when possible, more than one employee receive thorough training on each technology used, and that provisions be made for internal experts to train other employees. In this manner, skills can be shared and accessed by the organization as a whole, and technologies can be used to their greatest potential.

In considering priorities for staff development, the accuracy of data entry and editing is one of the most common concerns. Accuracy can be increased in two ways: first, training on the importance of data accuracy and how to monitor it is recommended for all staff collecting or

The accuracy of data entry and editing is a common training concern.
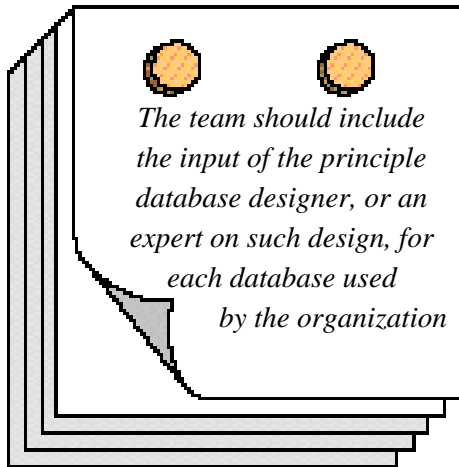
entering information (most likely an expanding number of positions). Such training–coupled with ongoing monitoring of performance—should aim to maintain the organization's data integrity within an acceptable range (97% accuracy).

Secondly, software and databases should be selected, modified and/or designed, to assist in maintaining data integrity. Ways of doing so include: auto-entering standard data in fixed fields, "normalizing" spelling and abbreviations as they are entered, automating quality control/update features, and eliminating poorly-defined or redundant fields.

The team should include the input of the principle database designer, or an expert on such design, for each database used by the organization

To maximize the effectiveness of the planning process, the team should include the input of the principle database designer, or an expert on such design, for each database used by the organization. Because the design of databases can greatly help or hinder usability, the organization's professional development plan should account for the ongoing training of database designers/experts as key individuals in maintaining quality information systems.

A variety of computer training media may be used to meet these and other staff development priorities, including classroom courses, books, video and audio tapes, and local training companies (see Resources Section for training resources).

FORM 30

Form 30

FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS   5.a. Accounting

For all revenue sources a description of any regulations or policies affecting the purchase, operation, maintenance and upgrade of IM systems

REVENUE SOURCE	REGULATIONS/ POLICIES AFFECTING PURCHASE/UPKEEP OF IM SYSTEMS	IM EXPENSES ALLOWABLE	IM EXPENSES CURRENTLY CHARGED

FORM 31

Form 31

Accounting Plan

Actions affecting the budgeting and accounting processes for IM expenses
Refer to applicable regulations and advice from an accountant

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

SECTION 5
FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

5.a. Accounting For each revenue source coming into the organization, the sample format (see Form 30) asks for regulations or policies which affect IM systems, including regulations on the purchase, operation, maintenance, upgrade and depreciation of IM systems.

In the next two columns, list the IM expenses allowable under each revenue source, along with the organization's current practices in allocating costs for IM expenditures. Show allocation practices for both organization-wide and division-specific expenditures.

Following the sample format (see Form 31), the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals review the allowable IM accounting practices against the actual practices used by the organization. One objective is to find possible funding sources for IM expenses which have not been tapped previously.

The process of identifying priority changes to be made in IM accounting practices must be based in sound accounting advice and knowledge of applicable regulations. Be sure to collect input on any proposed changes from qualified sources.

As IM funding is likely to be limited in relation to the organization's needs, the

An organization's decisions about accounting are based, first, in a clear understanding of revenue source regulations, and secondly, in advice from an accountant.

organization may want to integrate IM costs, including system staffing costs, into the budgets of divisions and departments benefiting from IM resources. If employees or customers from different departments use the same IM resources during different times, both department budgets can support the costs of the technology, at less cost to the organization as a whole. Even departments receiving indirect benefits from the computer system may be appropriately tapped for reasonable percentages. As telecommunications costs increase along with expanded networking, it may be allowable to fold this portion of the IM budget (including some wiring and network devices) into the utilities charges of user or beneficiary departments.

Remember: to the degree that information management tools and resources contribute directly to customer products and services, these resources may represent direct service or production, rather than administrative, costs.

Note: The accounting possibilities presented in this guide are hypothetical. An organization's decisions about accounting are based, first, in a clear understanding of revenue source regulations, and secondly, in advice from a qualified accountant.

FORM 32

Form 32

FINANCE, CONT.

5.b. Setting Priorities

Of the improvements needed in the area of IM, a listing of the top ten, and possible funding sources for these improvements with references to plans. High priority cost-saving or cost-neutral activities may be included here for an overall picture.

IMPROVEMENTS top ten, arranged highest to lowest	COST initial & ongoing	FUNDING SOURCES

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

5.b. Setting Priorities This section of the plan (see Form 32) asks organizations to review all of the action plans created in previous sections, especially those actions which require additional expenditures (initial and ongoing).

It is assumed that action items which save money, or are cost-neutral, will be implemented by the responsible party as planned, in keeping with the established deadline.

Note: It is assumed that action items which save money, or are cost-neutral, will be implemented by the responsible party as planned, in keeping with established deadlines. Such actions can be added to this list, if desired, to show all top-priority activities in one location.

In regard to recommended actions which cost money, the IM Plan Coordinator and team as a whole review the plans and identify the organization's top ten priorities, their approximate cost, and funding possibilities (see Form 32).

It is understood that some large-ticket items will remain on the priority list until funds become available, while other, more affordable items will be implemented relatively quickly. In the case of larger projects, the team may consider ways to phase in systems in parts as dollars become available.

For those projects placed on the priority list, the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals ensure that an implementation plan exists to successfully achieve the improvement. This may

FORM 33

FINANCE, CONT.   5.c. Purchasing

Vendors available and acceptable to supply IM products and services

VENDOR	COST COMPARISON	SPECIAL RESOURCES PROVIDED
computer hardware		
computer software		
telecommunications equipment		
wiring/networking		
consulting–planning		
consulting–training		
consulting–programming/technical assistance		
outsourced services		

FORM 34

Form 34

Purchasing Plan

Record plans for IM purchases, and changes in vendors or purchasing processes

RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE/STATUS
	immediate	
	six weeks	
	three months	
	six months	
	one year	
	two years	
	five years	

Appendix A provides full-sized forms, and information on electronic formats.

involve the identification and cooperation of several responsible staff: a purchaser, a program manager, a training coordinator. In other words, a single project on the priority list may accomplish more than one activity outlined in previous sections.

5.c. Purchasing In this part of the plan, the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals identify those vendors who are available and acceptable to assist the organization in carrying out its IM plans, especially the priority projects (see form 32). Where vendors are not available or acceptable, the organization should work to identify these resources in keeping with its needs. Mail order purchasing and phone-in technical assistance may be necessary if other resources are not available. However, all organizations should attempt to identify at least some resources for technical assistance.

On Form 33, for each vendor, the organization notes cost comparison information, such as "rate of $xx hourly, with excellent service," as well as resources (direct and indirect) provided.

Using the sample format (see Form 34), the IM Plan Coordinator and key individuals identify any actions to take place in purchasing or purchasing policies.

Remember

- Internal organization and communication issues
- Connectivity and integration of databases/systems
- System backup and security procedures and testing
- Use of new media in doing business
- Policies regarding data sharing, taking data off-site
- How to update and evaluate IM plans
- How to balance competition and collaboration between partners
- Cost allocation for shared resources

RESOURCES

A wide variety of books and magazines focusing on computers are available to help you in developing an Information Management Plan. Reference librarians at local libraries can be an excellent resource to assist in tracking down specific information.

Publishers specializing in books on computers and software include:

Curtin & London, Inc., P.O. Box 363, Marblehead, MA 01945
Osborne McGraw-Hill, 2600 Tenth St., Berkeley, CA 94710
Prentice-Hall (Bracy Computer Books), Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632
Que Corp., 11711 North College Ave., Carmel, IN 46032

IDG (International Data Group) Books Worldwide, Inc. publishes a **computer book** series for beginning computer users including:

PCs For Dummies (Dan Gookin and Andy Rathbone)
DOS For Dummies (Dan Gookin)
Macs For Dummies (David Pogue)
The Internet For Dummies (John Levine and Carol Baroudi)

Popular computer periodicals include:

Byte
Articles focus on current and upcoming computer hardware and software, security, and technology trends.

MacUser
MacWeek
Macworld
Reviews and feature articles concerning Macintosh hardware and software

PC Magazine
PC Week
PC World
Reviews and feature articles concerning IBM and IBM-compatible hardware and software.

Software Digest Ratings Report
Consumer Report-type publication providing information on computer software.

Wired
Internet information, including commentaries on Web culture, designing Web pages, and downloading software.

The following is a brief bibliography of **computer resource books** on various topics:

Adamson, David. *Walking the High-Tech High Wire*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1994.

Allen, Kathleen R. *Computer Office Setup That Really Works!* Los Angeles, CA: Affinity Publishing, Inc., 1995.

Bridge, Mac. *The Internet*. Chicago, IL: NTC Publishing Group, 1995.

Derrick, John. *Office Equipment Adviser*. Santa Barbara, CA: What-to-Buy for Business, Inc., 1994.

Dunn, Nancy E. *The Office Computing Bible: Using Personal Computers at Work*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995.

Managing Office Information Management Technology. Cleveland, OH: Penton Publishing, Inc., 1994.

Maxwell, Christine. *McKinley Internet Directory*. Indianapolis, IN: New Riders Publishing, 1995.

O'Hara, Patrick D. *How to Computerize Your Small Business*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1993.

Computer training is offered by a broad range of sources. State colleges and universities (including community colleges, technical colleges, and state universities) are perhaps the broadest network offering computer courses for beginners and advanced users. Other resources vary by locale: private training institutes, museums, school districts, counties, businesses. Consider the importance or benefit of documenting credentials of key system users (e.g. the need to use credit- or certificate-bearing training resources).

Of course, the **easiest and most current IM information** is often found on-line, and these resources may be useful, as long as their credibility can be verified. General searches under IM planning yield interesting finds.

SAMPLE HUMAN RESOURCE POLICIES

Breaks/Preventive Health If an employee works eight (8) or more hours per day, the employee is entitled to, and required to take, two (2) paid fifteen (15) minute rest breaks. If an employee works longer than six (6) hours, the employee will take a thirty (30) minute paid meal period.

In accordance with training provided, employees are encouraged to practice healthy work habits (proper desk and chair position, equipment and supply position, lifting techniques), to vary duties, take "stretch breaks," and/or allow for changes of physical positions each hour, for the purpose of avoiding repetitive motion injury, cumulative trauma disorder, or other work-related health conditions. Employees in certain positions may be encouraged to rest critical parts of the body (i.e. wrists, back, neck) during non-work hours, and/or to engage in toning exercises and/or general fitness and wellness activities in order to maintain the level of mental and physical conditioning needed to perform the job while safeguarding health. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of preventive health services offered under their health insurance plans, including stress management and other wellness education/support.

Physical examinations are required biennially for xxxx staff, including xxxx tests.

Approval for the costs of such activities may be granted by the Supervisor and/or the insurer (if appropriate) under a benefit or other fund.

Any employee health concerns related to work duties must be reported to the supervisor immediately, such that an appropriate response can be planned.

Training & Career Development The organization encourages its employees to take advantage of continuing education opportunities which benefit the organization and the employee. Employees may be required to attend certain paid training in order to perform basic job duties. Employee expenses are reimbursed.

An employee who is interested in attending a seminar, class, or course of study that is directly related to his/her position, but not required by the organization, should speak to his/her supervisor at the time of his/her evaluation. The supervisor will decide if the training/education will benefit the employee and the organization and whether the cost is justified in relation to the budget available. The employee's signed evaluation serves as

approval for education courses. If approved, the organization will pay one-half the cost of tuition and supplies.

The organization provides ongoing training specific to work assignments, technology needed for jobs, and sound preventive health techniques.

Subscriptions and Memberships Employee requests for work-related subscriptions and professional memberships may be submitted in writing to the supervisor who will determine on an individual basis whether the organization will cover the expense.

Note: The policies are based on research, augmented with additional legal and health care advice. The policies show one attempt to address risk management and training needs associated with the use of technology in the workplace. Reprinted with permission of Sirius Communications, 4454–47th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55406.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE FORMS

The sample forms attached may be used to organize an information management and technology plan, although they work best if used on a computer, allowing expansion of each form to multiple pages when necessary. The forms may be obtained on disk from the address in the front of this guide.