

## Leading the Profession by Example

## SUSAN GOODMAN



A successful, influential records and information management (RIM) veteran offers seasoned advice to fellow RIM practitioners.

Nikki Swartz

**S**usan Goodman, FAI, IGP, CRM, CIP, CIPP/US, CIPM, has almost as many credentials behind her name as there are letters in the alphabet. She possesses more than 30 years of experience and has earned professional certifications in records and information management (RIM), information governance (IG), and privacy. She has led RIM programs for diverse entities, including in financial services, utilities, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, legal, and government, both in-house and as a consultant.

### Beginning Her Career

Goodman's career began after she completed her master's degree (and post-master's work) in library and information science, including records management, at the SUNY Albany School of Information Science and Policy. She was hired as a deputy records manager and then quickly was promoted to records manager for the City and County of Albany, N.Y. She next moved to the New York State Archives and Records Administration as a senior records analyst. In these positions, she tackled IG, RIM, and privacy issues and generated and monitored compliance with RIM and privacy-related policies.

"My (master's) degree enabled me to get a first job with very little experience because my then-boss had a line item in the budget intended for something else that had a low budget – he was counting on the fact that that I would consider the experience worthwhile," she said. "I wanted the best learning experience I could possibly have and was thrown into deep water right away."

### Helping Shape the Profession

But Goodman did more than just swim; she created her own strokes. She has helped shape the RIM profession by taking leadership roles in professional associations, teaching graduate-level RIM courses, and contributing as a conference presenter, author, and editor of key industry articles and publications – even as she was working toward a Ph.D. in electronic records policy development and business law at the University of Michigan School of Information.

As the founder, president, and CEO of Infoflo Consulting LLC, which specializes in RIM, IG, and privacy, her passion for the profession is stronger than ever. As a forward-thinking, recognized thought leader in RIM, IG, and privacy, Goodman is in an ideal position to assess the state of the profession and offer advice to her IG and RIM peers.

## Tracking IG's Growing Relevance

When Goodman first started in the RIM profession, very few people had heard of the field.

"I was often asked what kind of 'records' – as in music – I dealt with," Goodman recalled. "There were very few available positions in RIM when I finished my MLS."

How things have changed. Today, stricter laws and regulations are in place for managing information. Companies that are negligent or have ill intent related to records retention and disposition may face legal action and enormous fines. News of information breaches are common, damaging the victims' reputation and bottom line. Because of these things, the importance of RIM and IG has grown the past decade.

"As data proliferated through advanced technologies, the need for RIM – especially electronic records management and data management, as well as IG as an umbrella function – became even greater," Goodman said. "Records and information management is an integral component of information governance within organizations – an essential overarching function that is needed to optimally leverage information assets at the least risk and cost."

## Aligning RIM and Other IG Functions

According to Goodman, practicing RIM effectively has always included incorporating into the program the RIM-, privacy-, and information security-related requirements of other IG functions (i.e., legal, compliance, the business, privacy, security, and IT/technology). These functions need RIM to meet their requirements and accomplish their goals. Having an effective alignment of these functions under an IG "umbrella" facilitates success for RIM and all other IG functions, and RIM professionals are well-positioned to transition to IG if they so choose.

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As data continues to proliferate, Goodman said, the RIM function becomes even more critical, and so does the need for IG.

"These IG component functions are interrelated and interdependent. RIM needs an effective IG function for its success, and an IG function can only be successful with effective RIM," she explained. "In other words, organizations require all IG functions to work in an effective, integrated manner under the umbrella of a well-structured, streamlined information governance function."

Like many seasoned RIM practitioners, Goodman practiced IG way before it was called IG and became effective at selling it to management. As an IG, RIM, and privacy practitioner for more than three decades, she has designed, developed, and implemented programs that governed the management of data, information, and records in all media and formats of large, global firms, as well as mid-sized and small organizations. In all the industries in which she's worked, as an employee or consultant, she has continuously emphasized the effective integration of the governance structures, policies, procedures, and technologies of aligned functions.

"Collaboration can only be accomplished by listening to and understanding the goals and concerns of all stakeholders and deriving solutions to satisfy their needs," she said. "I focus on developing a strategic, holistic approach to information governance and records management, about which senior executives and managers can feel confident. I have guided many firms to recognize the strategic advantage of leveraging in-

formation for maximum value, while mitigating the risk and cost related to its use and governance. This approach is a critical facet of information governance."

At the beginning of any enterprise-wide IG or RIM initiative, Goodman stresses the importance of getting consensus from the organization's senior legal and compliance partners.

For example, as a senior vice president on the Bank of America digital records team, Goodman co-invented a patent related to a digital records management process and tool and served as the team's liaison with the intellectual property attorney to file the patent, which is pending.

"I made sure that the process we developed incorporated tenets of applicable laws and rules as well as the ARMA Principles, ISO 15489, DoD 5015.2, and MoReq, as applicable," she said. "Incorporating these helped ensure compliance as well as adherence to best practices – and thus, the defensibility of the process and tool. It was a ground-breaking effort in this field."

## Building an Effective IG Program

From local municipalities to *Fortune* 100 and 500 companies, Goodman has had a great deal of success building RIM and IG programs. Following are some of her keys to success.

### *Getting the Right Support*

**Develop a strong business case, strategic plan, and road map.** Identify and reach consensus on the

## NOTABLE PROS

It requires strategic vision to be an advocate, to evangelize, and to move an organization forward. People with credentials, skills, vision, and passion are needed for credibility and success.

key risks the organization faces and its short- and long-term goals, and prioritize accordingly. Present various levels of effort (and associated cost) using a phased approach. Depict what the end state will “look like” and how stakeholder groups will be impacted.

**Find a champion.** Senior executive support is a critical success factor of RIM and IG. Having a leader who believes in the value of IG and RIM and will advocate for it to other senior level decision-makers is essential.

**Identify and understand the stakeholders.** Listen and understand the needs, goals, challenges, and fears of stakeholders. Don’t underestimate the negative impact stakeholders can have on your program. Incorporate stakeholder suggestions to the extent possible.

**Ensure that there is sufficient budget for the agreed-upon work.**

### *Building the Right Structure*

**Institute an effective governance structure.** This structure must include all stakeholder groups as well as stakeholder representatives at the right organizational level.

**Create IG and RIM as enterprise-wide functions.** A firm’s functions, systems, and processes are interdependent and interrelated, and IG and RIM impact the entire organization.

**Collaborate, create partnerships, and promote collaboration among other IG and RIM stakeholders.** In creating a partnership with your IT partner, for example, share involvement and credit. Joining together

groups and integrating organizations are also extremely important. Especially in a corporate culture that doesn’t promote collaboration, silos must be bridged and broken down. RIM and IG professionals should be change agents in this area.

**Develop documented roles and responsibilities that are comprehensive, detailed, and clear.** This will ensure necessary and consistent engagement. Ensure that RIM and IG responsibilities are reflected in performance reviews.

**Have sufficient, competent, and well-credentialed IG and RIM staff.** Staffing should be at the enterprise level as well as within the businesses. It requires strategic vision to be an advocate, to evangelize, and to move an organization forward. People with credentials, skills, vision, and passion are needed for credibility and success. Outside resources can be used to augment internal staff for parts of an ongoing program or specific projects.

### *Implementing the Program*

**Practice effective change management to ensure needed compliance and “buy-in.”** People are typically very protective of their processes and information. Change is difficult for most people, and RIM and IG require change.

**Ensure that the business program infrastructure includes all needed functions and points of intersection.** Operationalize this through cross-functional committee representation and integration of policies and procedures for consistency and compliance.

**Implement a two-tiered level of RIM representation within departments.** One level is records coordinators – the administrator, “the doer” – and the second level is the senior-level liaison – the go-to person for the coordinator, someone who provides advice and introductions and helps garner additional resources.

**Put policies in place that are well-based and establish clear authority for the IG and RIM program.** This will promote buy-in.

**Execute effective communication and training at all staff levels.**

### *Maintaining the Program*

**Ensure a defensible IG program.** It is important to identify, “bake in,” cite, and monitor adherence to IG (including RIM, IT, security/privacy, legal/e-discovery, and business) requirements, standards, and best practices that apply to the organization. This will increase compliance and defensibility.

**Build in a process for continuous improvement.** RIM and IG are not static; new developments arise constantly, so programs must be updated to remain current. Tracking metrics used to determine success during the monitoring process will facilitate continuous improvement.

## Growing as an Information Professional

Goodman said RIM professionals should become as knowledgeable as they possibly can be in areas aligned with RIM – including e-discovery, privacy, and technology – to understand their organization’s goals in these arenas. Effective collaboration with stakeholders, Goodman emphasized, is key to success.

Goodman also encourages peers to earn professional IG, RIM, privacy and other relevant certifications, depending on their specific interests and career aspirations. The list of credentials behind her name includes Information Governance Professional, Certified Records Manager, Certified Information Privacy Professional,

and Certified Information Privacy Manager. She also has earned a certificate for electronic records management and another one for electronic content management.

Goodman advises colleagues to plan their certification(s) process strategically and to use diverse study methods, including study groups, preparation sessions, conferences, and professional literature.

Networking with colleagues is also enormously valuable, through mentoring, attending conferences, participating in chapters, serving in leadership roles, and joining authoring teams, she said. For example, Goodman helped author and edit *The Secure Management of Personal Information* (ARMA International TR 28-2015), the ARMA electronic records management and privacy curricula, and two publications *The Sedona Conference®* published on the return on investment for information assets and cloud computing.

## Making Smart Career Choices

Goodman also shared three important lessons she has learned during her career.

**1) Don't be right, be smart.** For example, if you know that a system needed to accomplish all the firm's desired outcomes is more expensive than the firm is projecting, present the core elements and related cost, and place the less-immediately-critical elements and "nice-to-haves" in later phases.

**2) Take necessary risks.** It is only through educated risk-taking that the changes needed for effective RIM and IG will occur.

**3) Help IG and RIM evolve.** IG and RIM are evolving professions and practitioners must help the profession evolve well. Get involved so you can help move the profession forward.

## Building Partnerships for Success

Goodman said she is most proud of the professional partnerships she has formed through the years, and those are what have helped advance her career the most.

"I consider my most major achievement to be the relationships of mutual trust and synergy that I have been fortunate to build with many colleagues, clients, and professional partners whom I greatly admire and

respect," she said. "I also have gotten great pleasure mentoring others who are keen to develop professionally and seeing their excitement as they grow in RIM and IG knowledge and expertise."

Goodman has no plans to stop helping her fellow RIM practitioners make strides in the profession and in their own careers. In 2016, she was inducted into the ARMA International Company of Fellows in recognition of her achievements and importance to the profession. On July 1 Goodman took yet another step in her career when she began her tenure as a director on the ARMA International Board of Directors. **E**



**About the Author:** Nikki Swartz is a freelance journalist and contributing editor for *Information Management* magazine. She has written and edited for it and its predecessor, *The Information Management Journal*, since 2002. She can be contacted at [nikkiswartz@hotmail.com](mailto:nikkiswartz@hotmail.com).



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