Getting Colleagues on-board with Records Management

Coming together is a beginning
Keeping together is progress
Working together is success

Hello everyone, I’m Vickie Ambrose, Records Management Officer from Creative Scotland.

Just to give you a ‘head’s up’ – I’ve taken a simplistic route to share the content of this presentation – in fact this front page is the one with the most text on it! I just need your ears!
Introduction

As this is a ‘Lightning talk’ with a limited timescale – I’ll get cracking!

I’d like to share with you the approach I took when I engaged with colleagues which resulted in achieving their ‘buy in’ in respect of records management!

But first I’d like to provide a little context to the work I’m doing...
Background

At present, I'm leading on a project to develop and implement a records management system for our organisation.

We currently use shared drives and the first phase of this work was to:

- Communicate with colleagues the work being undertaken and seek their help
- Gain an understanding of our landscape and...
- Create a new electronic filing structure in a new drive that is meaningful to all colleagues, fits corporately and that retention and disposal arrangements can be applied

This work has been done and teams are at differing stages of moving across to the new drive. I'm co-ordinating each move with respective teams and IT, and supporting colleagues through this process.
In tandem with this, I've been carrying out research (as part of Phase II of the project) to determine what record management systems are being used elsewhere and the pros and cons of these. The output from this work is assisting in the writing of a specification which will be used to procure a records management system for our organisation.

Phase III will cover the training, support and implementation of the new system.

In a nutshell, that's the work being undertaken to complete this project.
When I was thinking about how I needed to engage with colleagues about this work, I asked myself the following questions:

What do I need to impart to colleagues? and
What do I need from them?

I needed to understand Creative Scotland’s landscape with regard to the documents and records we hold and I wanted to share the work that I would be doing in a way that would capture colleagues’ imagination and attention and help focus their minds.

I decided to create an interactive presentation that contained key information. I took time to create this as I wanted to ensure it contained a balance between, corporate, legislative and user needs and was visually engaging.
Once I had created this, I invited a selection of colleagues from different teams to be my ‘critical friend’ and permit me to deliver the presentation to them and seek their feedback. Following some constructive comments, I delivered the presentation to all colleagues, team by team – lots of talking!

In tandem with designing the presentation, I arranged to meet with all Team Leads on a 1:1 basis. This was to explain the work being undertaken and also to help prepare them and their respective teams in readiness for the presentation that would be delivered.

The key ask from me was a volunteer from each team for me to work with. This person would be the records management champion for their respective team and would cascade information and tasks to and from their team.

To assist the Team Leads I had created a bullet point summary of our discussion which I emailed to them following our meeting for them to share with their teams prior to the delivery of the presentation. The email contained things like:

*Data cleansing* – encouraging colleagues to delete files and folders that are no longer of use to Creative Scotland e.g. working documents that had served their purpose

*Current practices* regarding saving records – e.g. avoid saving work to desktops and personal drives

*Email management* – encourage colleagues to save records into the relevant shared drive folder rather than a sub-folder in Outlook

*Volunteer* – a volunteer to work with. A number of colleagues enthusiastically volunteered to help and some were volunteered to help! (*The work creating a file structure for their team and proposing retention and disposal arrangements – completing the Information Assets Register*)
By the time the presentation meetings took place teams were briefed with regard to the content. There were no surprises, although I couldn’t resist incorporating a couple of pieces indirectly linked to record management that tested observation skills and shared something about me that they may not have known!

This approach made teams laugh and helped keep the meetings light and focussed.

The interactive part of the presentation was for me to mainly listen and gain an understanding and take lots of notes of things like:

- **What information we have**
- **What do we need**
- **Where to locate key information**
- **Access arrangements** – which led to a discussion regarding duplication
- **Sharing and transparency** – in a new and easy to navigate structure, colleagues will feel more confident in accessing records elsewhere rather than emailing these as attachments and then saving them in their own team areas – which is what had been happening
- **Identifying the teams who had records that were hard-copy, digital or both**

Most teams are very much up against it with heavy volume workloads and various priorities and this project is another piece of work! While fundamentally important, it is still more to do and I empathised with colleagues during the presentation. I explained that while this is a sizeable project, it is a step by step approach that is being taken to complete it and that I would be as flexible as possible and mindful of team priorities and pressure points when work is to be undertaken.

The presentation was warmly received by each team and I was
very grateful for their time, attention and input.

Since the delivery of the presentation, I have been working with team volunteers to design a new electronic filing structure. This has been completed and approved by our Senior Leadership Team and teams are gradually moving across into this.

I would say that some of the key principles of why this approach has worked so well is from:

- Discussing the work to take place in simple terms – no acronyms or technical speak
- Listening and taking note of suggestions (with a view to incorporating some of these if feasible)
- Ownership – providing colleagues with the opportunity to help shape their respective team’s electronic filing structure while maintaining a balance between corporate, legislative and user needs
- Responsibility – reminding colleagues of their responsibility for the records they create, how to manage them and where they save them
- Review – regularly keeping in touch with teams via volunteers and being on-hand to provide support

I can say confidently that everybody within Creative Scotland is aware of the work that I’m doing and that they all have a part to play in moving this forward.
Conclusion

When I undertook this work, my first task was to write a Project Plan encompassing objectives and articulating the approach to achieve these objectives.

I had highlighted 'Buy in' from colleagues as a risk as this could significantly slow the project down.

However following Phase I, I felt confident that I could remove this risk from the Report. I'm now in the process of writing the Phase II Report and I'm pleased to say that this risk will not be highlighted.

Ultimately Creative Scotland has become my team as all are on-board and engaged.
I’d like to thank IRMS for giving me this opportunity to share my experience with you today and I’d like to thank you all for listening.