

Jason Stearns

ARMA Questions for Consideration for Director Position

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**What are the key areas you think ARMA needs to focus on to reinforce its leadership in IG?**

In my opinion, ARMA Members have a single task to focus on: evolution. While records and information management will always be at the heart of who we are as an association, the modern (and successful) information professional must deal with more than records. For us to show value to our organizations, and to be leaders in the profession of information governance, we must expand our skill set to include privacy, information security, business process and management, discovery, risk management, emerging technologies, and more. While it is impossible for any one person to be an expert in all these topics, successful information professionals must be conversant in these related disciplines. If we don't claim our seat at the table, others will. By adding these skills, and building on a solid foundation of RIM, our members are able to see connections and impacts often missed by our peers. This is our strength and value. How much detail you learn on each subject will depend on the needs of your organization and where you want to go as a professional. ARMA can and must lead the way by providing our membership with the resources, thought leadership, and standards and frameworks to vitalize and enable the profession.

**Where have you had the opportunity to lead a group through change?**

ARMA's vision is "to be the driving force that enables organizations to harness the strategic power of information." This is no small task. The key to being successful in this effort is found in ARMA's Mission: "To empower the community of information professionals to advance their careers, organizations, and the profession." To build on these ideas, we must be willing to do the following:  
Take strategic and informed risks – If we are going to grow the association and build the profession, we must be willing to try new things and take different approaches; even it means moving us out of our comfort zone.

Build up and support the Regions and Chapters – ARMA's greatest strength is its network of Regions and Chapters. ARMA HQ clearly recognizes this and we can do more by implementing structures and resources that support this vital asset. We also need to look to the Regions and Chapters to identify strategies and initiatives that are working and replicate them across the association.

Build/Free up Capacity – Over the years, ARMA has built up and maintained a variety of programs and resources. Some are needed for our future, and others are not as relevant as they once were. Further, the Board of Directors and ARMA HQ have identified new initiatives that are essential to our health and survival as an organization. The challenge is that resources are limited. We need to take a hard look at our offerings and make some tough decisions. We must free up and add resources to focus on the things that position us for the future, enhance membership, and grow the association. Everything else is secondary.

Always remember where we are going – Every time ARMA decides to continue to support a current offering or contemplates taking on a new initiative, we must evaluate the tasks, anticipated gains, and expected risks against our vision and mission. Things that move us closer to achieving them should be fast-tracked, those that do not should not proceed.

**What are the top two issues ARMA should focus on in the next 12 months, and why?**

Prognostication is always tricky business, and I do my best not to engage in it. That said, I think the future for ARMA has huge potential, and if we make the right decisions and take some well-considered and informed risks we have much to look forward to. While we may, or may not, reach the membership numbers of the past, the ARMA of the future will be leaner and more nimble so as to better respond to a changing profession. This means a greater online presence in multiple channels to reinforce and clearly claim our role as leaders in the information management profession. In ten years' time we will also have re-imagined the conference and membership experiences so they better support the changing needs of the profession. ARMA can/will be the go to association for information professionals at all stages of their career, with resources available to assist our members every step of the way. The ARMA of 2029 will be thought of as more than just managing records; it will be the association for all professionals that understand that proper information management is at the center of an information governance strategy, no matter how big or small.