# Forms Management Body of Knowledge

## Outline with Sources and References

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**Welcome to the Forms Management Book of Knowledge**

This book aims to provide basic and guiding principles on how to establish and manage a Forms Management Program. It includes methodologies and supporting material to assist organizations in their endeavor to develop effective forms and achieve successful forms management.

Technology and business processes will continue to evolve and Forms Management Programs will continue to adapt. The book contains methodologies that can be applied at any time and in any context by Forms Management Programs, so the book will remain a useful guide and tool.

A list and summary of each chapter in the book are included.
| What is a Form? | Forms are business tools, regardless of the media, that use areas known as *fields* for the structured capture and display of variable data in order to record, transmit, and communicate information in support of a business process. |
| What is Form Identification? | Form identification refers to elements found on the form that specifically identify the form and help users find, use, and refer to the correct form. Elements include a form title, a unique form number, an edition date, and perhaps one or more sub-category identifiers. |
| What is Forms Management? | Forms management is a professional discipline that is the authoritative source to plan, deliver and support all official forms used to carry out the business of the organization, in accordance with approved organizational policies. |
| Forms Management Program Structure | The structure of a Forms Management Program could depend on the size of the organization. The *Book of Knowledge* demonstrates the different roles, responsibilities, and tasks that are required to:
- develop and deploy forms.
- improve business processes.
- efficiently manage a forms management program.

What is important to remember is that the roles, activities and tasks outlined in the *Book of Knowledge* all need to be accomplished. How roles are assigned to positions in every Forms Management Program remains the Program’s decision and that of their organization. |
Forms Management Program Responsibilities

Aside from the FUNDAMENTALS section under each element of a chapter, section headings correspond to responsibilities assumed by Program staff. Responsibilities defined are titled as follows, and each corresponds to a course name:
- Business process analysis
- Forms analysis
- Forms development
- Data collection and presentation
- Print production
- Technology
- Forms control
- Program management

Roles are defined as follows:
- Business process analyst
- Forms analyst
- Forms developer
- Forms technician
- Head of a Forms Management Program

Each organization defines and assigns positions to assume these roles and adapt position titles, levels and responsibilities to meet their needs. Depending on the organization and Program structure, roles may be assigned to different staff, functional areas or outsourced, or alternately, individual Program staff members could assume more than one role.

### Book Chapters

The *Forms Management Book of Knowledge* addresses over 200 competency elements that are organized into the following chapters:

- Introduction
- Governance
- Communication
- Project Management
- Business Analysis, Process Improvement, Work Simplification
- Information Management within Forms Management
- Forms/Template Design and Development
- Forms Print Production
- Procurement and Contracting
- Administration of a Forms Management Program

### Forms Management Program Certificates and Courses

This section outlines the list of courses, available certificates identifying the required courses to obtain them (see chart), and the resulting professional designation upon successful completion.

### Terms and Abbreviations Used in the Book

To assist readers, this section provides a brief list of specific terms and abbreviations used throughout the book and certificate program courses.

### Definitions

This section provides definitions essential to the understanding of forms and forms management.

### What is a…

This section explains what is a form, a template, a document, form record, form edition, form version. — New York State Office for Technology, EDMS Cookbook, June 2001
## Types of Output Versions

This section defines:

- the different types of form output versions according to their delivery channels (e.g., printed forms, the many types of electronic forms and their different level of functionality).
- what is a draft form, proof, sample.
- what is a form set, form series, and form rendering.

- Jessica Enders, Designing UX: Forms: Create Forms That Don't Drive Your Users Crazy (Aspects of UX), Melbourne: SitePoint, September 27, 2016

## Types of Business Forms

This section provides insight into key types of business forms.

- Are they internal forms restricted to employee use or public-facing forms?
- Are they regulatory compliance forms, regulated forms, financially or legally binding forms?
- Are they transaction-processing or third-party forms?
- Are the forms filled by the organization and sent to clients or filled by users and sent to the organization?

It matters to understand the many types of business forms.

## Types of Information Structure

There are many ways and combinations in how information is structured and presented on forms. Some forms are:

- **Entirely structured** with a clear, organized set of fields in a definite sequence.
- **Unstructured**, as templates are, to allow the entry of information that may vary in length, but using a structured design format.
- **Semi-structured**, including structured fields for some data entry and other unstructured areas for text.
The Book, a Living Document

The Book of Knowledge attempts to provide a work methodology that can adapt and be applied to new contexts and evolving technology. This section speaks to the challenge for Forms Management Programs in keeping informed of trends and investigating products as needed to address requests on a case-by-case basis.

Governance

Governance is a foundation of a Forms Management Program. It defines the Program’s authority and accountability in an organization. It also identifies the tools required to support the Program:

- A mandate, strategy, and set of policies
- Processes, procedures, standards, and controls needed to manage and monitor forms development, deployment, inventory, and the administrative function of forms management at an enterprise level

Governance supports an organization’s immediate and future regulatory, legal, risk, environmental, and operational requirements.
Governance of a Forms Management Program is the set of policies, procedures, processes, standards and controls established and implemented to manage and monitor forms development, deployment, inventory and the administrative function of forms management at an enterprise level.

It supports an organization’s immediate and future regulatory, legal, risk management, environmental, and operational requirements. Governance also serves to define the Forms Management Program authority and accountability in the organization.

- “City Forms Policy,” in Policy No. RIM107, City of Toronto, May 18, 2010, https://www.toronto.ca/wp-
Forms Management Body of Knowledge Outline with Sources and References

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Forms Management Program Strategy

A Forms Management Program strategy is an enterprise agreement on goals, tools, and supported solutions (i.e., technology architecture, hardware, software, other specific equipment, standards) to be used, and a forms policy.

The Program strategy is aligned with the organization’s overall business strategy and objectives, and it ensures a consistent application of a set of practices to be used for the development and deployment of forms throughout the organization.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “information technology architecture”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “architecture framework”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “enterprise architecture framework”
Forms Mandate, Policy, and Strategy

A forms mandate, policy, and strategy are imperative for a well-run Forms Management Program. They help define roles, authority and responsibilities, and help the Program operate smoothly within the Program itself as well as within the organization.

Communicate the Mandate, Policy, and Strategy

It is important to communicate the day-to-day impact of the mandate, policy, strategy, and governance to employees. Communicating them via the Program Manual and other avenues helps ensure that roles and responsibilities are understood.

Example

Communications can target the need to establish form owners and who can request, approve or cancel forms.

Compliance with Corporate Policies

Forms Management policies must be consistent with other corporate policies such as security, privacy, risk, and accessibility. There is a statement of compliance within the forms policy and Program Manual.

How the Program Implements its Compliance with Corporate Policies

The Forms Management Program uses different means to ensure it implements compliance with corporate policies as stated in the forms policy. Compliance is monitored by the following actions:

- Establishing **procedures** that include a review of the policies included in or associated with forms.
- Establishing a **compliance review checklist** to use during design analysis and serve as an audit trail.
- **Maintaining contacts** with each policy owner.
- Establishing a **cycle of periodic reviews** for compliance (e.g., scheduled reviews).
- Establishing a **cycle of periodic reviews** for compliance (e.g., scheduled reviews)
- **Educating form owners** on issues associated with lack of compliance.
- Establishing a **process to manage exceptions** to compliance that need approval and detailed documentation.
**Create Policies**

Create policies for the following;
- Signatures
- Accessibility
- Database access
- Supported languages
- Supported software and tools
- Branding
- Plain language
- Authorization of the creation, revision, and cancellation of forms.

In all cases, Program procedures must support the policies.

**Definitions within Forms Management Program**

The Forms Management Program drives the organization to agree to the terms being used in order to establish strategy. Organizations define these terms and obtain acceptance and agreement within the organization because there can be disputes otherwise.

The understanding and acceptance of terms as to what constitutes a form will also help define roles and responsibilities between the different development areas.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “Uniform Electronic Transactions Act”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establish the Role of the Forms Management Program and its Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every organization needs to establish the role of the Forms Management Program and determine the role of its head within the organization, and with external organizations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Meriam-Webster Online, s.v. “custodian”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms Management Program Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A clear mandate and policy situate the Forms Management Program in the organizational structure, which defines the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The authority to which the Program reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key working relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval processes in matters related to forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Program’s structure, like any organizational structure, is typically illustrated in an organizational chart.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Gerri Knilans, “Why It’s Important to Build Customer Relationships,” Trade Press Services, July 31, 2017,
In the course of its project operations, the Forms Management Program maintains and nurtures relationships with all levels of management, including senior and executive. Turnover with management can be an issue. If there is a well-defined policy, strategy, mandate, and structure, this will ease transition to a new leader or new organization structure for the Forms Management Program.

Without a governance framework, it is imperative that the Forms Management Program have a well thought-out plan in place in order to educate and nurture new management.
### Relationship with Other Functional Areas or External Organizations

It is important to **establish relationships with other functional areas** or professional peers (internal or external) to share knowledge on forms, strategy, and resources.

Forms Management Program staff maintain and foster relationships with other functional areas and external organizations as a partner in service or in project delivery. They are often called to sit on **cross-functional teams and committees**.

To further its activities, the Forms Management Program also needs to establish the following:

- A system of form owners
- A system of forms coordinators
- A forms committee

### Forms Management Program within the Organization

The Forms Management Program may fit into an organization in many different functional areas:

- Information Technology
- Communications
- Administration
- Shared Services
- A distinct functional area reporting directly to executive management.

Regardless of reporting location, the Forms Management Program **must have access to all areas of the organization as an enterprise-wide function** and maintain relationships with key partners. The senior level executive to whom the Forms Management Program reports to must be supportive of the Program, its policy, and its role as the **recognized authority within the organization for forms**.
**Program Manual**

To support and promote its services to the organization, the Forms Management Program needs to develop and maintain a Program Manual. It describes the following to users:

- How to interact with the Forms Management Program with contact information provided.
- How to get services and answers to questions
- The Forms Management policies
- The **organization chart** for the Forms Management Program
  ...and more.

The Program Manual should be available to all employees.

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**Forms Style Guide**

To support its forms design, development, and deployment services to the organization, the Forms Management Program needs to develop and maintain a Forms Style Guide. It provides an authoritative reference that documents the organization’s decisions that pertain to forms **design standards, conventions, guidelines and best practices**. The Forms Style Guide also addresses the following topics, among others:

- Forms unique identifier protocol and location
- Branding
- Layout
- Spacing
- Type size
- Fonts

The Forms Style Guide must be kept up-to-date, broadly communicated, and promoted to all interested parties.

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- Wikipedia, s.v. “List of ISO 639-1 codes,”—A standardized nomenclature to classify languages
- Wikipedia, s.v. “ISO 3166-1,”—Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions
- Wikipedia, s.v. “ISO 4217,”—Alpha codes and numeric codes for the representation of currencies
This will help

- ensure every party understands their role.
- clarify the reasons why certain standards need be applied to forms.
- eliminate misunderstandings and foster better relations with clients.
- ensure the organization’s business information and corporate image needs are met.

The Forms Style Guide should be available to all employees and to any functional area developing and producing forms for the organization.

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**Ethics**

*Every form reflects an organization’s commitment to quality.* If a form is thrown together or designed poorly without the end user in mind, it becomes an early warning to the client to expect to be disappointed.

Similarly, an organization’s forms must be consistent with that organization’s ethics. Forms professionals should be familiar with the ethics policy of the organization, sometimes known as *Code of Ethics*, and ensure that all products and services provided by the Form’s Management

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- “Privacy and consent statement for all forms,” University of
Program are consistent with those ethics. Many organizations also have a Code of Conduct to govern employee behavior, which may also be relevant to forms development.

- YourDictionary, s.v. “sexist language”


## Communications

### Forms as Communication Tools
Forms are key communication tools. Forms are a visual representation of a reusable container. The purpose of that container is to interact with individuals by communicating to and gathering information from them in an organized way in support of a business process. This process could be a business, financial or service transaction and some of these transactions are legally binding.

Once completed, the form itself or the information gathered on the form is sent somewhere else for processing. The form

- often becomes the trigger to other transactions or activities in a business process sequence
- remains a legal record of business transactions and decisions.

Forms, as in the following examples, are often the most visible communication between a business and its client base or between a government organization and its citizens:

- Utility or service invoices
- Cheques
- Income tax forms
- Insurance claims
- Various application forms for jobs or services
- Business or government notices
- ID cards and license renewals.

Technology and the Transformation of Forms

Large and small organizations in private and public sectors use forms to feed vital, complex business information workflows. All media considered and based on industry input, the BFMA estimates 60 to 80% of business transactions are carried out using forms. For those organizations whose business processes are completely electronic, it is 100%.

In addition to traditional printed forms, there are now eforms, application and web screens, and various intelligent system interactions. With computers and mobile devices that enable e-commerce and e-services, forms have become more ubiquitous in electronic format.

Technology has transformed the way we do business and affected many activities performed by the general public, enough that forms have become commonplace in the daily life of individuals. There are more forms enabling more processes now than ever before.

- You want to shop online instead of going to the store? Fill an order form online.
- You want to renew your driver's license instead of visiting the required government agency? Fill a form online.
- You want to sell your antique dining room set? Fill a form to post it online.
- You wish to access your personal account on a website? Log in using a form.

Technology has not eliminated forms as such. Rather, it has reduced and at times eliminated some printed forms in favor of forms produced in more flexible and integrated input and output media. Eforms and intelligent applications
and systems
  ‣ enable the collection of information.
  ‣ store information efficiently
  ‣ reuse the information in multiple ways facilitating business activities.

**Good communication, Accurate Data Collection**

Organizations need to be confident that the data they receive is **accurate**. For this to occur, organizations must be sure to ask the right questions. Then users need to be able to see quickly which questions they are required to respond to on a form and to understand them in order to enter accurate information. Completing the required sections of a form **ensures service fulfillment**.

Organizations use data previously collected on other forms to **send personalized messages and prefill forms** to their audience.

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**Visual Communication Through Good Design**

While it is important that the questions and form field labels on a form be written in a clear and plain language, it is just as important for the form’s design to be visually clear and easy to navigate.

  ‣ Know your audience and use the right word in the right context for the right audience.
  ‣ Apply good graphic design and usability principles.
    — Good design to enable visual focus and usability features.
    — Apply consistent design and layout.

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Client Service Principles

Forms Management Program staff use client service principles such as active listening, responsiveness, accuracy, timeliness, attentiveness, sound advice, and respect for the client in order to elicit and address needs and requirements of the organization.

In a context of forms print production, forms development, procurement, and contracting, Program staff concern themselves with timeliness and various internal and external pressures to ensure service fulfillment.

That all Forms Management Program staff apply good client principles leads to good user experience and casts a positive, helpful image of the Program within the organization.

- Pascal, “The 8 Core Principles of Good Customer Service,”
It is through interviews and fact-finding sessions that Forms Management Program staff gather information business needs and requirements from individuals who actually do the work of the process. With the information gathered, Program staff map out the process to assist in the development or revision of a form or form system. No one knows better how the form should perform and what it must accomplish than those who use it.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “Active listening”
- “Use Active Listening to Coach Others,” Center for Creative Leadership, accessed February 23, 2021, https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-
The Forms Management Program provides consultative service to improve business processes within the organization. This consultative service includes advice and guidance to the following groups:

- Management
- Project teams
- Internal and external stakeholders

The Program's advice and guidance will cover these areas:

- Best practices in forms management
- Forms design, development, production, and deployment
- The Forms Management Program and its services

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**Advice and Guidance**

- Wikipedia, s.v. “Critical Incident Technique”
- “What are different fact gathering techniques?” FindAnyAnswer, Asked By: Danielly Coronado, last updated April 20, 2020, https://findanyanswer.com/what-are-different-fact-gathering-techniques

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**Form Management Body of Knowledge Outline with Sources and References**

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All are important to a well-run organization. The head of the Forms Management Program and staff offer advice and guidance to those who need forms developed or revised to ensure that assumptions are not made and the optimal solution is developed. Such consultation helps to guarantee that the solution—which may or may not be a form—meets the real need of the business process it serves.

Influencing and Persuasion

Persuasiveness in supporting recommended options is an asset to all Forms Management Program employees. When presenting options, it may be necessary to influence and use persuasion by providing additional information, clearly justifying the recommended option in order for stakeholders, clients and management to buy into the solution and agree to the process or solution.

Negotiation

Negotiation with other parties, whether internal or external to the organization, may be required when working on projects and Program issues. Negotiation may be required on timelines, products, terms and conditions, resource allocation, and more. A number of different elements of the Forms Management Program need to be negotiated and agreed upon.

The Program and the client, project authority, or project team agree on the following:

- The **scope** for the project
- A **timeline** to realize the business analysis, process, and form development schedule
- A **deployment schedule** such as for testing and quality assurance, pilot period, training and more
- **Resources** and partners required to work on the project.
- **Costs estimates** (human resources, financial, procurement, contracting, licensing, etc.) for budget planning.

In the case of printed forms, **negotiate cost and timeline with print vendors** for the form production and delivery schedule. Be sure to include clear print specifications—compliance with the specifications is a requirement of acceptance. These are essential when having to **negotiate remedial measures** following the delivery of non-compliant forms or missed deadlines.

Depending on the contracting amount and size of the procurement order, contracts may fall under the provisions of existing trade agreements such as the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA known earlier as NAFTA) or the World Trade Organization (WTO). As a rule, these are managed by the organization’s contracting experts as deemed necessary.

### Facilitation

Forms professionals are often called upon to facilitate fact-finding sessions or workshops. They must facilitate discussions on forms or processes to gather information and requirements, map a business process, determine gaps, obtain feedback, or change an existing form.


### Participation in Cross-Functional Projects and Team Development

When the functionality of a form crosses different functional areas or operational lines within the business environment, or interacts with external organizations, it is **essential to get buy-in from all stakeholders and ensure they participate in the final form**. This stakeholder team should not attempt to execute the design layout itself, but it does need to **participate actively in the workflow discussion** to ensure the form’s effectiveness.

Team representatives are employees from all levels of an organization and come from stakeholder functional areas involved in or affected by the project. Team members may also come from outside the organization (in particular, from vendors, key clients or users, and consultants).

In order to pull a team together, when soliciting functional areas for members, the Forms Management Program effectively communicates the **scope, requirements, deliverables, vision, anticipated results, and specifications for the project assignment, including time and effort** expected of team members.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “Cross-functional team”
### Presentations and Demos

Presentations and demos are **effective tools** for the Forms Management Program staff in accomplishing their work activities. Presentations can occur during any project phase or forms management activity. A presentation can be used to:

- outline the objectives of a form project.
- elicit more information from stakeholders.
- present a strategic initiative or Program report to senior management, and more.

As the iterative forms development progresses, Program staff provide draft samples of the proposed form and at times give **interactive demos** on how the form works. Demos allow clients, stakeholders and interested parties **to see eforms in action and to provide feedback** on features and functionality before forms are finalized.

Presentations and demos on any number of forms-related subjects are made to different audiences such as:

- The project team
- Stakeholders
- Users
- Partners
- The forms committee
- Senior and executive management
- External audiences

### Communicate Compliance Requirements and Standards

Forms management experts communicate the compliance requirements and standards of their organization as they relate to forms. They support the organization’s brand and image standards as well as comply with industry standards and laws, rules, and regulations.

Standards developed by the Forms Management Program and other functional areas (such as Corporate Communications or Marketing for branding graphic standards, Information Technology for screen layout, etc.) may be included in the Forms Management Program communications. Communication tools can include a Forms Style Guide, policy, training classes, webpages, new hire orientation, among others.

Establishing and maintaining good relationships with all of the people involved in a form’s life cycle is a responsibility of the Forms Management Program function.

Program staff establish a close working relationship with the functional areas that are involved in the development, production, maintenance, deployment, distribution, communication, management, and support of forms.

Professional relationships with staff and partners in other functional areas or organizations are important, but so are informal interactions and exchanges. These can have an important role during the course of projects.

### Client and Stakeholder Areas

The Forms Management Program staff establish a network of contacts in every functional area of the organization to assist them in interacting with form owners and stakeholders in those areas. These contacts usually are known as **forms coordinators**.

### Records Management and Information Management

Given the Forms Management Program’s fundamental role in managing information on forms and maintaining official form records for the organization, it is important to create and maintain a close relationship with the records and information management functional areas.

This relationship is particularly important in establishing the **Forms Management Program record system** for all its forms and management activities. The Information Management area is also a key partner in helping the Program establish all the rules it needs to include in the organization’s electronic document management record system in order to maintain its specific form records.


Information Technology

With the increased development and use of electronic and online forms, the Forms Management Program has developed a very close working relationship with a number of Information Technology service areas, regardless of whether the Program belongs to Information Technology or not. Relationships may be facilitated when the Forms Management Program does belong to Information Technology.

Program staff regularly deal with these groups:
- Programmers
- Data administrators
- System and application administrators
- Quality assurance and accessibility testers
- Network administrators
- Web developers and services
- Application and system architects
- Technical procedure writers
- Technical support.

These different expertise and service areas are involved at some point or another, in the forms development life cycle.

The relationship with Information Technology is critical to the Forms Management Program in ensuring:
- the Program’s service delivery activities.
- the maintenance of its working environment.

Security and Privacy Areas

It is important that the Forms Management Program establish liaisons with the privacy officer and the Information Technology security area for secure and privacy-compliant forms and form data. The Program also ensures that all organizational privacy policies are implemented in forms development and that only the appropriate users access a form or a form section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Procurement and Contracting</strong></th>
<th>Establish relationships with the Procurement and Contracting areas to achieve best quality, cost, and delivery timelines for forms purchasing, printing and distribution, and forms services.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inventory Management and Warehouse</strong></td>
<td>Inventory Management and the Warehouse are two areas with which the Forms Management Program staff communicate on a regular basis. The nature of their dealings mostly has to do with procurement orders, form stock deliveries, forms storage, and distribution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Communications and Marketing** | Given the fact forms are communication tools, having a close working relationship and liaison with the Communications and Marketing areas is essential to:  
  ▶ Promote the Forms Management Program  
  ▶ Ensure compliance with established brand standards for logo, colors, fonts, writing style guide, and marketing messages.  
  ▶ Develop effective communications strategies for large projects. |
| **Legal Services and/or Policy** | The Forms Management Program establishes relationships with the Legal Services area to assure regulatory compliance and review of forms for terms and questions of legality. This includes establishing relationships with Audit or Policy compliance areas. |
| **All Other Functional Areas** | A form can involve many functional areas. It is important for the Forms Management Program to maintain good relationships and support with all areas. |
Communicate Using Plain Language

The Forms Management Program must bring different disciplines together during meetings, demos, or presentations. Program staff use plain language to ensure that those disciplines are able to understand what is being said. Plain language is language that the audience/client can understand.

- Jakob Nielsen, “Legibility, Readability, and
Writing Skills  Effective writing skills are essential for every staff member of a Forms Management Program. Writing is an integral part of Program staff work activities and operations:

- Writing a business cases
- Preparing detailed specifications and requirements
- Producing a forms
- Giving presentations
- Publishing form announcements
- Formally answering enquiries.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “Technical writing”
- NGL Consultants, “Plain language, clear and simple.”


Forms Development

Writing skills apply to forms text, form field labels, instructions, and more, including plain language awareness for clarity and ease of comprehension for the target audience. All text should be carefully evaluated and the Forms Management experts should make recommendations for better wording to be validated by the form owner and/or communications advisor, editor, translator, or technical writer.

Forms-Related Communications

New, revised, or canceled forms are the result of process changes, which often require behavior changes. Process changes remain unknown to users unless communicated. It is essential to notify staff and users of to ensure they

- know about the changes.
- begin using new or recently changed forms.
- stop using older versions, and even destroy old stock.

Such changes can be communicated through various types of announcements such as

- bulletins.
- advance notices.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “internet”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “intranet”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “extranet”
targeted emails.
web notices.
automated system messages.
letters.
… and so on.

Communications include instructions on what to do and direct users to the new or revised form.

Technical Writing

Technical writing is any written form of technical communication used in a variety of technical, specialized and occupational fields. The intent is to communicate technical, at times complex, information to others in “the clearest and most effective way possible” \(^1\).

In the case of forms, it can refer to
- document specific user and technical requirements to define the form process and use.
- use a knowledge database of typical forms and technical support problems and answer questions consistently.
- produce print specifications related to the physical construction or production of the form.
- prepare specific terms and conditions included in procurement documents (e.g., RFP, RFQ, RFI).

Forms developers must understand form requirements in order to properly develop specifications for the desired form product. Knowledge of physical forms products, software and programming capabilities, handling equipment and manufacturing capabilities is necessary for this skill. Product research is often necessary.

\(^1\) Wikipedia, s.v. “technical writing”
Clear Business Writing

Clear business writing combined with forms management knowledge is needed to create a Forms Management Program Manual, Forms Style Guide, webpages, policies and procedures related to and required to support the Program.

Writing Procedures

In large organizations, the Forms Management Program staff can usually rely on procedure areas dedicated to writing general procedures and detailed user procedures. The Program staff responsibility then lies in providing these areas with the necessary form details, instructions, and behavior (e.g., form samples, test plans and results, test environments) they need for this task.

The Forms Management Program is responsible for writing all procedures related to forms management processes, including forms requests, forms procurement, and forms support. There are user procedures as well as procedures for the operations of the Program. Typically, these are published on the intranet.

Responding to Enquiries

Enquiries may come from the general public, private or public organizations, clients, employees, or any area internal to the organization such as Legal Services or senior management.

For technical support, skills include

- listening carefully to the problem.
- asking appropriate questions.
- responding directly to the questions asked.
- being helpful, calm and empathic.

This may include establishing service-level agreements with the organization’s Information and Technology service or help desk.
On all matters relating to forms and forms management, skills include careful understanding of the enquiry and asking appropriate questions to validate the task at hand. This may include collaborating with other areas in the organization and investigating or searching through files, documents, databases or systems to collate relevant information and data in order to draft or prepare a response.

Although many enquiries may be responded to verbally, many will be responded to in writing via email, others with a more formal written response. At times, enquiries result in a published announcement with details.

**Web Content**

Given the Forms Management Program is a global service to public and internal clients of the entire organization, it is essential that the Program provide details on its forms and services and how to obtain them. This typically would be realized through the Program’s internet and intranet websites.

**Promote the Forms Management Program**

A Forms Management Program must continually promote itself to its clients and management in order to be a successful program. Messages should include the value of the Forms Management Program to the organization:

“Well-designed forms meet the needs of the client and the organization.”

“A form is often the first point of contact between the client and an organization.”

“When forms are poorly designed, the client is left with a negative impression of the organization.”

“Remember, the only tangible product our customer receives is a form.”


Promotion methods include webpages, announcements, management reporting, metrics management, presentations, new employee orientation, new supervisor/manager orientation, executive orientation, open houses, conference attendance, partnerships, and communication of accomplishments.

A successful Forms Management Program will record the data for all metrics relating to the forms management activities. It will be able to report those metrics to senior and executive management to enlist and keep their support and commitment. Reports may be written or delivered in person, each requiring separate skill sets.
Project Management

Form requests and projects come in a wide variety of types and complexities. Each is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and logged in a project database for project tracking, monitoring, and reporting purposes. The database is also useful for project plans, the Program’s yearly management work plan, strategic planning, and historical reference.

The Forms Management Program uses different tools, systems, and databases to manage its many forms projects.

Understand How Project Management Is Handled

Project management provides a methodical approach to planning and guiding project processes from start to finish in achieving specific goals. The larger the project, the more important it is to use formal processes and techniques.

Methodologies vary by organization and sometimes vary within an organization depending on the size and nature of projects. Project management concepts, roles, tools, and practices are applied within an organization’s framework.


An understanding of the methodologies supported by their organization enables the Forms Management Program to work within that specific framework.

Most projects are cross-functional. They encompass all the stakeholders associated with the business process AND those stakeholders involved in the life cycle of the form, such as development, deployment, maintenance, and communications.

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**Forms Management Program as Project Authority**

The Forms Management Program typically performs the project manager role for forms-centric projects. Projects may be simple or complex, medium to large in size, and staffed by one to multiple team members, possibly from across the organization.

The Program uses project management principles, practices, and project management tools available. Project activities are adapted and scaled, as appropriate, to facilitate project tracking, monitoring, and reporting.

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**Best-Practices-and-Examples**

- Mike, "What Are Management Reports and What Should they Include?" Whatagraph, April 17, 2020, https://whatagraph.com/blog/articles/management-reports
| Forms Management Program as a Subject Matter Expert and Stakeholder | The Forms Management Program may participate in enterprise or cross-functional projects. The Forms Management Program is the subject matter expert on forms and its roles are variable. The Program:  
- provides guidance and direction on forms matters.  
- ensures that forms comply with the policies of the organization and Forms Management Program.  
- leads and manages the forms components of projects.  
- provides forms-related deliverables. This may include leading other Program staff or resources to produce project deliverables.  
- Wikipedia, s.v. “scope creep”  
- Wikipedia, s.v. “project charter”  
- Wikipedia, s.v. “project management”  

| Define the Work within the Project and Plan | The goals and objectives of a project are established in the initiation phase. The project charter is used to define the expectations of the project in terms of the following:  
- Objectives  
- Scope  
- Deliverables  
- Risks  
- Costs  
- Deadlines  
- Roles  
- Handover  
- Gaining management authorization for the project. This upfront planning is important to ensure that all parties (project sponsor, project authority, stakeholders, project team members, form owner) share common perceptions. It helps prevent problems caused by differing viewpoints on the basic terms of the project.

**Plan the Work within the Project**

The result of the planning phase is a comprehensive framework of the steps necessary to accomplish the project objectives. This is the project schedule. It includes these details:

- The project overall timeline from start to finish
- Key project milestones
- Resources needed (people, tools, money, time)
- A list of deliverables, each with their associated tasks, activities, and deadlines as well as the actors responsible for executing them
- Interdependencies

It is through the production of a project plan with the resources needed that the project lead can create a project schedule that includes milestones, deliverables, and dates. Each project needs a project plan and project schedule; both are critical for obtaining agreement from the stakeholders on the project. They also serve as a clear roadmap to project completion and help avoid scope creep.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “scope creep”
Manage the Project Schedule

Evaluate and adjust project schedules on an ongoing basis to
- incorporate current information.
- evaluate remaining work.
- determine the current state of the project.
- keep the project on track.

Manage Resources

All resources must be managed throughout the project and include the following:
- The project sponsor or authority
- Management
- Project team
- Stakeholders Tools
- Budget
- Project schedule (see “Manage the project schedule”)

Managing the project team and the different audiences requires all the **usual people management skills**, including
- training.
- motivating.
- establishing expectations.
- monitoring performance.
- removing obstacles
- having good communication skills.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “schedule (project management)"
- Wikipedia, s.v. “project planning”
- Psychology Wiki, s.v. “social style”
Every team member and stakeholder need to be kept informed of project status and issues to perform their role.

Project challenges include:

- **time constraints** of program staff and other team members.
- **juggling** project priorities.
- working within the **availability** of expert resources.
- the availability of budget **funding**.
- the availability of **tools** needed for the success of the project.
- the **risk of losing expert resources** to other commitments.
- obtaining **timely approvals** when required.
- monitoring the schedule and **resolving issues** to ensure project success.

**Manage Communications**

Actively communicating on a project is critical for maintaining common expectations and avoiding surprises. Project status must meet the needs of the organization, and it is communicated as appropriate for each audience.

Audiences typically include the following groups and individuals:

- Project team
- Partners in deployment
- Stakeholders and business partners
- Public clients and users
- Internal clients and users
- Technical support
- Senior management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Author/Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>guide/faq/what-is-project-communication-management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>– Scott Rudowski, “4 Components of Effective Project Team Communication,” Project Management Academy, July 31, 2019, <a href="https://blog.projectmanagementacademy.net/effective-project-team-communications">https://blog.projectmanagementacademy.net/effective-project-team-communications</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Team Communications

Communications typically report on projects:
- Accomplishments from the last reporting period,
- Planned deliverables for the next period
- Current issues
- New risks
- Current scope change requests
- Status of the project’s budget and schedule

Project team status meetings include discussions at a detailed level.

Status reports for sponsor and management stakeholders may be **brief and high-level**.

### Communications Plan

A communications plan identifies
- the audiences-affected by the project.
- what they need to know.
- when they need to know it.
- frequency of contact.
- the methods to use.

**Examples of communication include** the following:
- Email
- Informational and/or training meetings (in person or virtual)
- Links to websites
- Service bulletin notification via email, intranet, or internet with link to webpage for ongoing reference
- Involving representatives from all functional areas
- Letters to external clients or members of the public
The communication plan may provide additional information for people with a need to know more:

- A document library
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs)
- A project website
- Production of online videos and demos to inform and guide users as to “how to” or “what's new”.
- Public media and social media productions (e.g., Facebook or Twitter messages)
- Contact information for more information.

Manage Change

In the context managing projects, we are focusing on change management that addresses the people side of change. It is a framework for managing the effect of implementing new or changed business processes and/or roles. Effective application of change management is critical to the success of a project.

Change management engages individuals and groups in the change process and encourages them to take ownership for their new roles and responsibilities, such as by learning new behaviors and skills.

The Forms Management Program needs to ensure that the change management framework is applied to business process and forms-specific issues of the project.

- “Who are Project Managers?” Project Management Institute, accessed March 7, 2021,
https://www.pmi.org/about/learn-about-pmi/who-are-project-managers


Project Handover

The responsibility of projects as they progress lies with the project authority, project leader, and team. When projects are completed, the responsibility and control of processes, work, and so on are handed to designated responsible functional area or areas.

Project handover typically occurs in the final stages of a project but could also occur at any point during a project.

It is important to plan a project handover to ease the transition post-implementation and to assist those areas assuming new responsibilities. It is also important should the project manager be replaced during the project.

Business Analysis, Process Improvement, Work Simplification

This chapter provides a methodology for the analysis of a business or an organization to understand its processes and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations.

It describes, from beginning to end, the processes involved, actors participating in the processes, the information exchanged and documents produced (e.g., forms).

Analyzing business processes helps in
- documenting business operations and processes.
- locating repetitive data elements, problem areas, unnecessary forms and documents
- identifying improvement opportunities.
- recommending solutions.

The chapter also includes the following:
- A methodology to gather requirements
- Forms analysis that helps determine and evaluate the intended use of a form in relation to other existing forms in a process or within a larger group of forms and processes
- Design analysis that looks to convert business rules, logic, policy, and Forms Style Guide requirements into the form container to collect data, reduce errors, facilitate the use of information and enhance the organization's image
- A risk analysis framework to help determine form risk level, form and project priority, and project risks

handover-of-projects

Understand Your Organization

Understanding the business structure of your organization is imperative to ensure that the Forms Management Program provides forms that flow throughout your organization effectively and efficiently. This is important because it is only through understanding how business operates that the Program staff can better grasp the forms within its organization.

Most organizations are structured in a hierarchical arrangement of systems, functions, processes, procedures and tasks. There are many business models to help you understand your organization.

**Examples**

- One model breaks systems into value generating systems and support systems.
- The US Bureau of Labor and Statistics uses a different model, defining core business and support business processes.
- Another model divides business into two major cycles that cover buying to paying and producing to collecting.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “business analysis”
- Ben B. Graham, Detail Process Charting: Speaking the


Wikipedia, s.v. “business model”


Wikipedia, s.v. “interoperability”

Define and Evaluate the Project Request

Before beginning any in-depth work on the development or production of the form, it is crucial to ensure the form owner and the Forms Management Program areas define and agree on the intended purpose, business requirements, desired outcome, scope, and timeline of the project. This helps ensure funding, time and resources are available from all parties.

To achieve this, the Forms Management Program will assign a forms analyst or business process analyst to evaluate the project request regarding its nature, resources, feasibility, priority, risk, timeline, and alignment with organization priorities. A decision is made on whether a request is admissible or not. The Program responds to the client and assigns the project accordingly.

Obtain Information on the “5 Ws and an H”: Who, What, When, Why, Where, and How, as They Relate to the Project

The “5 Ws and an H” is an easy formula to help Forms Management Programs remember the information required to support client needs in developing their forms.

(Also see the Zachman Framework²)

² Wikipedia, s.v., “Zachman Framework”

- Wikipedia, s.v. “business process management”
- Wikipedia, s.v., “critical incident technique”
Promote Process Improvement and Work Simplification

Promoting process improvement and work simplification remains the focus and a priority of any efficient Forms Management Program. The purpose of the Program is not to create more forms, but rather ensure that those forms required by the organization to conduct its business are simple, clear, effective, cost effective, and well integrated in the organization’s business processes. Making simplification of end-to-end processes the focus of the Program’s service priorities and ongoing objectives adds value to the organization.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “privacy law”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “business process re-engineering”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “time and motion study”
Collect and Document User/Client Requirements

Consideration and attention is to be given to all clients:

- Clients and form owners, users, stakeholders and any interested party
- The organization as a client with its business needs and related legislation, policies, rules, regulations and procedures that impose specific requirements
- Systems, applications, or technical equipment linked to business processes and forms.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “business process improvement”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “active listening”
The Forms Management Program documents all criteria, requirements, and specifications and takes them into account before determining the form solution and beginning development.


Determine and Apply Business Rules

Business rules control and limit processes and can be implemented in the form container. Business rules applied at a form level implement the organization's policies, procedures, strategies and governance. The following are examples of business rules:

- Signature requirements over or under a certain amount.
- Approval deadlines, such as the number of hours or days an approval request can sit before it is sent to another approver.
- Functional areas and position levels designated responsible for handling work processes, including their forms.
- Automatic routing within a workflow according to the sequence of events.
- How records of transactions are kept.
- On printed forms, detachable sections for a portion to return, signature blocks with instructions, marginal words, etc.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “business rule”
- “What are business rules? What are their business...
Perform Process Analysis

Techniques

Detailing end-to-end processes and roles via workflow diagrams, error analysis, statistical analysis, recurring data analysis, and fact-finding sessions are also very useful in drawing out requirements to ensure the current process is well investigated and documented. Such process analysis techniques are also effective in obtaining potential simplification opportunities for future improvements.

Forms Management Program staff can validate the information provided through other techniques, such as observing process or users in action, and through observation and time and motion studies.

Each data element on the form is documented for its caption, content, and format during process analysis.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “business analysis – requirements elicitation”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “business process mapping”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “time and motion study”
- Matthew Stibbe, “How to Do a Time and Motion Study to Make Real Change,” I Done This Blog, The Science of Small Wins, December 18, 2018,
Once the process and form elements details are collected, mapped and well documented, business process analysts can review and develop any number of possible avenues and processes. These can include full or partial automation, but they must satisfy the information needs and requirements of the client and organization. The solution may include forms or not. Develop two or three options, as needed.

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<td>Wikipedia, s.v. “business process modeling”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wikipedia, s.v. “change management”</td>
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Present the following for each solution developed:

- Its pros and cons
- A clear cost-benefit analysis
- Other financial analysis such as payback or return on investment (ROI)
- Issues and anticipated benefits

This is to provide the client and organization with the necessary information to make an informed decision on which solution to choose and implement.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “cost-benefit analysis”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “return on investment"
Risk Analysis

It is essential for the Forms Management Program to perform a risk analysis that identifies potential risks, the likelihood of the risk occurring, the severity if it does occur and mitigation factors associated with forms, forms projects and their proposed solutions.

An analysis may identify these risk factors:
- Legal risks
- Reputation
- Financial risks
- Vendor performance
- Technical complexity
- Organizational readiness

Rating and understanding the risk factors of critical forms and projects in the organization will ensure the Forms Management Program can effectively communicate to senior management all potential risks as well as prepare better work plans to include corresponding timelines for strategies related to procurement, development, deployment, training, mitigation, and communication.

Propose and Recommend Solutions

Proposed or recommended solutions could be presented in a variety of ways to clients and the organization, as in these examples:
- Using sample form designs
- Using sample applications to demonstrate workflow and electronic automated fill-ins that may help user completion

- Wikipedia, s.v. “risk.”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “risk management”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “project risk management”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “risk matrix”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “business process reengineering”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “business case”
Producing a proposal outlining the solutions with all the details (pros and cons of each solution, cost-benefit analysis, return on investment [ROI], samples)

In all cases, it is crucial to obtain approval on the chosen solution and to document any changes agreed upon by the client, interested parties, and the Forms Management Program.


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**Edit Existing or Write New Procedures Related to the Solution**

In the case of a new form, new procedures explaining how the form is to be used may be required, depending on its complexity.

In the case of an existing form for which procedures already exist, they may need to be edited and updated.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “change management.”


Prepare or Coordinate Training Plan and Materials for the Solution

When the form has a significant impact on users, there may be a need to prepare or coordinate/collaborate with training resources and communication experts to develop training material to explain and document the new solution. This is required to ensure that staff are prepared to use the new solution when put into production and avoid an overload of help calls to the technical or business help support.

Information Management

Information Management, including forms' records management activities, is an essential function of the Forms Management Program in the name of the organization.

- “This is How to Build the Best User Documentation,” TechSmith®, updated September 2020, https://www.techsmith.com/blog/user-documentation
- Wikipedia, s.v. “change management”
The head of the Forms Management Program ensures staff are fully trained to understand the relevance of information management in their function and how to assume their roles and responsibilities with respect to maintaining form records.

The Forms Management Program

- is the **custodian** of the organization's forms and templates.
- is also the **owner** of
  - the forms that pertain to the forms management processes and operations.
  - a few organization-wide forms.
  - all forms related information.

**Information Management Function within the Forms Management Program**

Information management within the mandate of the Forms Management Program goes beyond the usual responsibility of maintaining form history records and document records.

There are activities routinely performed by the Forms Management Program staff that are basic information management functions but may not appear so to others. One such function is **managing information**, which is essential to achieve its mandate of

- developing effective forms.
- managing
  - forms, their source files, and different output versions.
  - form lists and catalogs.
  - metadata about forms.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “information management”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “document management”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “records management”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “content management”
Manage Information Displayed on Forms

To a Forms Management Program, information management includes activities associated with forms development, more specifically to the **standardization of words and information elements** contained in forms, applications, or systems. This ensures consistency of use and that clients and users understand a particular term to have the same definition or meaning.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “privacy law”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “classified information in the United States”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “classified information”
Implement Form Identification and Maintain Form Lists and Catalogs

A Forms Management Program must establish a system in which each form is given a unique form number. Additional identifiers may be assigned to a form's output versions and filenames. A unique number and identifiers are needed to
- organize forms.
- prevent duplication.
- distinguish different form editions and versions.
- facilitate form identification and maintenance.

This involves the use of lists and catalogs of all the organization’s forms.

When assigning form numbers and form identifiers, it is important to consider their use in different contexts over the life cycle of the form and their many delivery channels.

The form title and identifier displayed on the form are according to the concepts, methodologies, and conventions of this section.

- Techopedia, s.v. “rendering,” https://www.techopedia.com/definition/9163/rendering
- Wikipedia, s.v. “List of ISO 639-1 codes”
- Andiamo, “ISO 639-1 standard language codes,” https://www.andiamo.co.uk/resources/iso-language-codes
Filenaming Conventions to Manage Form Editions and Versions

Technology has made it essential to establish a methodology to use consistent filenaming conventions to clearly identify and designate form source files and output files. When assigning filenames, it is important to consider their use in different contexts over the life cycle of the form and their many delivery channels.

In addition to the form identifier displayed on the form as per the form identifier methodology, a form may have several different filenames associated with it. Multiple files may be due to

- different versions.
- different editions.
- multiple deployment channels or locations.
- technical constraints
  … and more.

This chapter is concerned with the different filenames of forms. Forms Management Programs need to consider which filenames to use for

- draft form files under development.
- form files in testing phase or in quality assurance.
- forms according to each output version deployed in production.
- archived form files in directories kept as official record versions.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “ISO 3166-1,” Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions
- Wikipedia, s.v. “list of U.S. state and territory abbreviations”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Canadian postal abbreviations for provinces and territories”

- forms stored in an electronic document management system.

The Program must also consider how to **adapt filenames** to meet specific system requirements or constraints.

**Example**

An inventory system may not have field length that can accommodate the standard form identifier.

The filenaming conventions should also address how to display additional information on the form such as language, series, output format (software suffix), and edition date.

---

Maintain Backup Copies of Form Source Files and Records for Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery

The Forms Management Program is responsible for ensuring that forms can be deployed to end-users in case of business disruption. This may include maintaining backup copies of forms by the Forms Management Program or working with the Information and Technology area to ensure it is done. The Forms Management Program must communicate its requirements to those administering the business continuity and disaster recovery plan for the organization.

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  Part 2 of 4: http://www.bfma.org/?62
  Part 3 of 4: http://www.bfma.org/?63
  Part 4 of 4: http://www.bfma.org/?64


- Kim Lindros, “How to create an effective business continuity plan,” CIO.com, July 18, 2017,
### Manage and Maintain Digital Assets

The Forms Management Program is responsible for managing and maintaining a number of digital assets. Digital assets include:

- the official form source files and their output version files.
- the digital history record for each form.
- copies of every edition and every version of forms or templates whether in production, in development, archived, or cancelled.
- the digital form profiles in different systems and databases such as an inventory management system and the forms management database.
- logos, scripts, objects, and more.

The use of a consistent naming convention, a forms management database, and a records protection policy greatly facilitates the managing and updating of the digital assets for which the Forms Management Program is responsible. The Program develops and implements a system for updating and protecting those assets.

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- Wikipedia, s.v. “digital asset”
### Maintain a Forms Management Database

Maintaining information about forms in a database within the Forms Management Program is essential in the management and delivery of its activities and services.

A forms management database should include:
- metadata for each form.
- transactional data for each form project.
- form production and construction specifications.
- relationships to other forms, legislation, policy, and procedure.

Operationally, the Forms Management Program leverages the data using queries, reports, and possibly other tools. When establishing the relational database, it is useful to:
- implement the use of keywords and standard terms.
- implement a standard database record setup.
- develop queries and reports.

The database can also help implement systems to automate forms management processes.

### Implement and Maintain a Retention Plan for Records and Data

The **records and data retention plan** for official records maintained by the Forms Management Program is based on the organization’s:
- established recordkeeping practices.
- retention schedule.

This section provides definitions and details on the following:
- What are records?
- What are vital records?
- What is a record series?
- What are recordkeeping requirements?
- The types of records within the Forms Management Program.

### Sources and References

- Standard on Forms Management, Canadian General Standards Board CAN/CGSB-6.2-2009, 4.2, B. 2.5.1 b., B. 2.7.3. c.
- “What is BUSINESS OWNER?,” The Law Dictionary, accessed April 11, 2021,
https://thelawdictionary.org/business-owner

- *Wikipedia*, s.v. “classified information in the United States”
- *Wikipedia*, s.v. “classified information”
- *Wikipedia*, s.v. “General Data Protection Regulation”
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<tr>
<th><strong>Maintain General Recordkeeping and Filing Systems</strong></th>
<th>As a rule, a Forms Management Program area will hold the following types of records and filing systems:</th>
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<tr>
<td>‣ <strong>An approved filing system</strong> agreed upon by Forms Management Program and the organization’s Information Management or Records Management areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>‣ <strong>A file series</strong> dedicated to the administration of the Forms Management Program itself—This group of records typically covers the following subjects:</td>
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<td>− Administration, of the Forms Management Program</td>
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<td>− Organization image or branding</td>
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<td>− Human Resources</td>
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<td>− Contracting</td>
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<td>− Procurement</td>
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<td>− Reporting</td>
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<td>− Presentations</td>
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<td>− Forms Style Guide</td>
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<td>− Program Manual</td>
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<td>− Form reviews/scheduled reviews</td>
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<td>− Inventory system</td>
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<td>− Warehouse and distribution reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>− Forms request and development processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>‧ and others</td>
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</table>

- Wikipedia, s.v. “records management”
- Standard on Forms Management, Canadian General Standards Board CAN/CGSB-6.2-2009, section B. 2.7.3., August 2009
Forms Management Body of Knowledge Outline with Sources and References

© Business Forms Management Association

One official record for every single form in the organization usually called the “form history record”—Form history records are managed under the Program’s file series, and their record identifiers are usually assigned numerically by form number sequence or alphabetically by title.

Additional official record files as required, namely one for every
- multi-form project (e.g., legislative change X in year Y, which will impact a large number of forms; special forms review or consolidation project, call for forms, etc.)
- non-form project (e.g., software upgrade, software evaluation and procurement).

At times, organizations launch major organization-wide projects to address a specific situation such as
- new branding.
- the implementation of new legislation.
- the merger of two or more organizations into one. … and others.

Document Organization-Wide Special Projects and Scheduled Reviews

These large organization-wide projects often impact many forms and require more planning and effort. The Forms Management Program needs to keep a record file on such major initiatives, whatever the nature, in addition to filing relevant documentation into form history records.

The project file record should include key documents like the organization’s project plan—including its rationale and the portion detailing the impact on forms—resources and financial requirements, tenders, progress reports and results from the project implementation, and reports to executive management.

Scheduled reviews allow the Forms Management Program to confirm the status of forms and determine which forms are no longer in use. Those forms no longer in use should be cancelled and their records modified according to results of the review. Reviews are also useful in

- finding streamlining or consolidation opportunities.
- checking for compliance with
  - policies (privacy, security, safety, etc.), and
  - standards (branding, graphics, language, etc.).

When conducted well, scheduled reviews result in improved and more cost-effective business processes for the organization. Form reviews are recommended every 12 to 18 months.

For every form affected by a review, either revised or cancelled, the supporting documentation and rationale are included in the individual form history record.

Overall results of the entire review project, including the review’s report, are added to the record for scheduled reviews. This type of record is identified by type of review and date and is part of the Forms Management Program administration record series.
The Forms Management Program is ultimately responsible for the forms container and for applying the Program Manual, Forms Style Guide, and organization standards. Client functional areas who know their business well, on the other hand, are responsible for the content. They need to communicate, to the best of their ability, their information requirements, business needs, and specifications to the business process analyst, forms analyst, or developer with respect to a form or process being developed or modified.

The Forms Management Program area is responsible for satisfying the clients’ requirements. Program staff must ensure clients obtain the information they need to conduct their business effectively. To achieve this, forms developers are responsible for conveying the information elements required into a form design that user friendly, efficient and cost effective.

Forms/Template Design and Development
This chapter touches on the forms/template development process and on the many factors affecting forms/template development:

- Client needs and requirements
- Industry standards
- Forms design standards, guidelines, and best practices
- Compliance with laws, rules, policies, and regulations
- Branding
- The use of plain language, usability principles, and accessibility requirements
- Delivery channels, including print

Return to Table of Contents
The chapter provides basic principles of forms design and insight on the importance of
- knowing features of forms development software.
- performing testing and quality assurance of forms.
- managing forms deployment and associated communications for successful implementation.

### Forms Analysis
According to the Canadian Standard on Forms Management, forms analysis consists in "determining and evaluating the intended use of the form, its relation to other already existing forms within the process, the manner in which all data will be" captured, displayed, and processed "and the utility and effectiveness of the form as an information-processing tool."

Forms analysis is an important step in the forms development process. It allows the assessment of a form within specific business processes. Program staff compare the form to the overall group of forms in an organization. Forms analysis also occurs during form reviews, a call for forms, and improvement projects.


### Design Analysis
As an integral step in the forms analysis process, the forms analyst and/or developer performs design analysis to convert the rules, logic, business and style guide requirements into objects on the form container.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “classified Information”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “classified Information in the United States”
One reviews language quality and consistency, assesses usability, and ensures designs are appropriate for the intended final output format such as printed forms versus electronic forms, online applications, screen designs, or mobile applications.

The intent is to make the form easy to understand, navigate, and fill.

**A well-designed form**
- helps reduce errors and costs.
- enhances the organization’s image.
- creates a better client/user experience.

**Industry Standards**
A number of existing industry standards impact forms, whether these are printed or electronic. Forms developers need to be aware of the various print industry standards, electronic forms, and web standards when planning to develop or update forms. These standards include:
  - Paper standards (paper and envelope size, thickness, weight, color)
  - Ink colors and color systems, binding, packaging.
  - Printing methods, printer drivers
  - Electronic forms and web standards (HTML, XML, web design guide, Accessibility, W3C, etc.)
  - Scripting and programming languages.
  - Standards for barcodes, MICR, OCR.

- Wikipedia, s.v., “paper sizes”
- Wikipedia, s.v., “programming language”
- Wikipedia, s.v., “proprietary language”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “ISO 216, international standard for paper sizes”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “security paper”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “acid-free paper”


- Wikipedia, s.v. “list of programming languages”

- Wikipedia, s.v. “printer driver”


- Wikipedia, s.v. “national conventions for writing telephone numbers”

- The Associated Press Style Book, 55th ed. (New York:
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<tr>
<td>Wikipedia, s.v, “world wide web consortium”</td>
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<td>“Print quality,” Computer Hope, updated November 13,</td>
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Layout Standards

In addition to industry, web or accessibility standards, a number of other relevant standards may apply:

- The international standard for date (YYYY-MM-DD) and time (HH:MM:SS) or organization standards—and when to apply each
- Postal standards (specific to countries or regions)

- Wikipedia, s.v. “best practice”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “ISO 8601, international standard covering...
Standards and conventions for the display and writing of telephone numbers (varies by continent: e.g., the standard for North America is different from that in Europe) … and others

All standards are to referenced and included in the organization’s Forms Style Guide, updated as necessary, and applied on every project.

- “Use international date format (ISO),” W3C, accessed February 8, 2021, https://www.w3.org/QA/Tips/iso-date
- Wikipedia, s.v., “barcode”

Form Design Standards, Guidelines and Best Practices

Forms developers implement design elements and layout principles as specified in the Forms Style Guide—for example, naming conventions, zoning, balance, graphics, color, spacing, grouping, sequencing, typography (determined at the organization level).


- Wikipedia, s.v. “monospaced font”

- Wikipedia, s.v. “x-height”


- Orana Velarde, “Visual Guide to the Anatomy of
Typography [Infographic],” Visme, accessed February 8, 2021, https://visme.co/blog/type-anatomy


Wikipedia, s.v. “all caps”

Wikipedia, s.v. “leading”


Rebecca Creger, “6 tips for better line spacing in your typography,” 99designs, accessed February 8, 2021,
https://99designs.ca/blog/tips/6-tips-line-spacing-typography


- “What is the difference between layout and design?,” Graphic Design Stack Exchange, accessed February 8, 2021, https://graphicdesign.stackexchange.com/questions/58257/
what-is-the-difference-between-layout-and-design


- “Quality levels and guides for printing,” Public Services and


Branding

Most businesses and organizations, whether public or in the private sector, will have some type of branding that is defined in a style guide. The branding (logo, color, font, etc.) is to be included on forms. Forms Management Program areas are encouraged to produce a Forms Style Guide to communicate how they include the organization’s brand or corporate image in their forms designs.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “vector graphics"
- Wikipedia, s.v.,“brand"
- Sarah Gibbons and Kate Kaplan, “Brand Vocabulary in the Context of UX: Key Terms Defined,” Nielsen Norman Group, May 21, 2017,
Peripherals Used with Forms

With more and more technology advances, more equipment, applications, or systems are also used in conjunction with forms. These peripherals need to be fully documented by the business or forms analyst for the forms developer to ensure their technical requirements are met and included in the solution that will be developed and implemented.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “magnetic ink character recognition”
Specification Writing

Forms developers must understand form requirements in order to properly develop specifications for the desired form product. Knowledge of physical forms products, software and programming capabilities, handling equipment and manufacturing capabilities is necessary for this skill. It may require product research.

- “Envelope Specifications,” screen capture in Form Center database, Essociates Group, Inc.,
- “Envelopes,” Sizes.com, accessed February 8, 2021,
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<td>accessed February 8, 2021, <a href="https://www.oki.com/us/printing/support/understanding-paper-">https://www.oki.com/us/printing/support/understanding-paper-</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weight/index.html</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Printing and Writing Paper,” American Forest &amp; Paper Association, accessed February 8,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Paper Grades and Types,” McCaughan Paper Ltd,</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="https://pariscorp.com/paper-weight-guide/">https://pariscorp.com/paper-weight-guide/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="https://www.cutcardstock.com/pages/paper-weights-explained">https://www.cutcardstock.com/pages/paper-weights-explained</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Paper 101 – Paper Weight Guide,” Cardstock Warehouse,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Know your audience and user base. Depending on the user situation, age group, and context where forms are used or deployed, consideration should be given to form design elements such as the text typography and size, additional instructions, accessibility for persons with disabilities, alternate output formats, and others to ensure the form is accessible to all.


- Timothy Carter, “7 ways to know your audience better,” Marketing Land, August 1, 2016, https://marketingland.com/7-ways-get-know-audience-better-181862
Usability

Usability (or ease of use) needs to remain a priority focus of every forms developer when developing forms or templates. No one likes to fill out or receive complicated forms. **Badly designed forms only result in disorderly presentation and inaccurate data collection.**

Keep in mind the importance and relevance of a good design. Consider the following elements:

- Design and layout of information components
- White space
- Plain language

- Merriam-Webster, s.v. “ergonomics”
Usability begins with meeting the form owner and stakeholders to see how to improve the form and how to clarify, and perhaps reduce, the information requested. This provides the opportunity to discuss the importance of a good design supported by reference to the organization's style guide.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “usability”
- Jakob Nielsen, “Usability Testing with 5 Users: Design Process (video 1 of 3),” Nielsen Norman Group, 3:36,
accessed February 8, 2021,
https://www.nngroup.com/videos/usability-testing-w-5-users-design-process

- Kathryn Whitenton, “‘But You Tested with Only 5 Users!’: Responding to Skepticism About Findings From Small Studies,” Nielsen Norman Group, February 24, 2019,
https://www.nngroup.com/articles/responding-skepticism-small-usability-tests

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/errors-forms-design-guidelines

- Raluca Budiu, “Marking Required Fields in Forms,” Nielsen Norman Group, June 16, 2019,
https://www.nngroup.com/articles/required-fields

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/web-form-design

- Jakob Nielsen, “Reset and Cancel Buttons,” Nielsen Norman Group, April 15, 2000,
https://www.nngroup.com/articles/reset-and-cancel-buttons

- Katie Sherwin, “Placeholders in Form Fields Are Harmful,” Nielsen Norman Group, updated September 10, 2018,
https://www.nngroup.com/articles/form-design-placeholders

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/date-input/

- Marieke McCloskey, “Form Design Quick Fix: Group Form Elements Effectively Using White Space,” Nielsen Norman
Accessibility

The Forms Management Program staff knows and applies applicable legislation, regulations, and policies within the relevant jurisdiction and organization regarding designing, developing and constructing a form to make it accessible (usable) to persons with disabilities such as visual or hearing impairments, learning disorders or illiteracy.

This process employs design techniques that, coupled with the use of assistive technology such as Braille, screen readers, enhanced display devices, audio devices, and more, enable challenged users to interact with the form.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “accessibility”
- “What is Alt Text: Definition and Tips,” SendPulse, updated February 5, 2020,
The Forms Management Program staff must be familiar with, and act as an advisor regarding, specific laws or group of laws, rules, regulations or other orders prescribed by an authority (internally and externally) that impact business forms and processes. These laws and regulations can be federal, by state, provincial, municipal, even organization specific. Below are some examples, and there are many more:

- Wikipedia, s.v. “Information Privacy Law”
Privacy laws
- Freedom of Information Act in the United States
- Access to Information Act and Privacy Act in Canada
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Act in Ontario

Health laws
- National Provider Identifier (NPI)
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the United States
- Canada Health Act

Archives
- Library and Archives in the United States
- Library and Archives of Canada Act

Federal, state, provincial or municipal licensing

Advertising, insurance, and banking laws.

Security (passwords, encryption, protection, redaction, masking, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Object Libraries</strong></th>
<th>Object libraries are a collection of self-contained identifiable components of a software system or form design that have well-defined usage, design, and function. Each component is saved separately as an object and can be reused to ensure consistency of data, appearance, and behavior. The Forms Management Program must ensure the object libraries are used, organized, maintained, easily accessible, communicated to, and shared by all Program staff and forms developers, whether internal or on contract.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source Files</strong></td>
<td>The form source file is the single digital design file used to create all output versions of a form. The Forms Management Program is responsible for the development of form source files and of each potential output version (XML, HTML, PDF, paper), as well as their maintenance, storage, and archiving. <strong>Source files constitute one of the most valuable assets under the responsibility of the Forms Management Program.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clear Presentation and Communication</strong></td>
<td>The Forms Management Program applies plain language principles such as using familiar words, considering reading levels, and using consistent vocabulary for data labels, captions, and instructions. <strong>Plain language puts the reader first and foremost.</strong> It organizes information in ways that make sense to the reader and uses language that is appropriate for the audience’s reading skills. The objective is to ensure the audience can understand the form the first time they read it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Wikipedia, s.v. “library (computing)”
- Hoa Loranger, “Plain Language for Everyone, Even Experts,” Nielsen Norman Group, October 8, 2017,
Translation to Other Languages

The Forms Management Program applies general rules and processes for translation, such as **always beginning with the form in its primary language** instead of another translation.

Translations convey the “meaning” and “sense” of form content instead of a word-for-word literal translation. The Program maintains translated forms to keep in sync with primary forms.

If forms require more than one language, the Program provides instructions on how to achieve this, which language and keyboard layout to use, specific details with respect to filenames, and the form's unique identifiers.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “Diacritic”

### Create and Refine the Form Container

Develop the form container using an **iterative design process** with various drafts.

- Check and correct errors in composition, such as spelling, grammar, trademarks, branding, and punctuation.
- Compare the client’s mock-up with the newly developed draft to ensure data elements, instructions, and other content are accurate and the format is acceptable.
- Obtain stakeholders’ review and approval of content and design.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “List of word processors”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Rapid application development”
### Knowledge of Electronic Features during Development

How electronic features are applied affects how the form works and behaves and how the user and other actors in the business process (e.g., systems, databases, peripherals) interact with it.

Electronic features include the following:

- Field help
- Masks
- Formatting
- Data object type
- Buttons
- Menus
- Ribbons
- Actions
- Macros and scripting
- Tabbing order
- Dynamic form, responsive form
- Information suppression
- Interface formatting
- Access rights, privileges, and permissions
- Accessibility
- Data source and output
- Data submission and data exchange
  … and more

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### Testing and Quality Management

Thorough testing of forms occurs before deployment to ensure the form is functioning to the form owner’s satisfaction. Testing generally covers these aspects:

- Content clarity and accuracy
  - Functionality
  - Usability

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- Wikipedia, s.v. “Download”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Data exchanges”
There exist different testing scenarios. They can vary depending on the form’s complexity and size of the organization.

- The forms developer first performs tests during the development phase to validate features, functions, and scripts as the form evolves.
- For printed forms, the forms developer ensures — adequate space in every form field and — the sequence and location of form elements meet the client’s requirements and handling processes.
- The testing and quality management area in Information Technology performs more formal and thorough tests.

The users, form owner, and training areas perform user acceptance testing to ensure the form is functioning to the stakeholders’ satisfaction.

**Drafts, Samples, Prototypes, Proofs, and Approvals**

There can be many states of a form produced during the different stages of the form’s development and production processes. These are generally in the form of drafts, samples, prototypes, and proofs.

This varies depending on the complexity of the form and the media and output format of its different delivery channels. The drafts, samples, prototypes, and proofs are shared with the form owner and stakeholders as part of the iterative development process to reach an approved form solution.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “Website wireframe”
These various form states are used to **obtain approval of:**
- form solutions.
- form content, design layout, functionality, and features during development.
- form **final output versions** before printing or deployment.

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**Deployment and Implementation**

The Forms Management Program coordinates with the form owner and stakeholders to determine when, where and how a form is to be deployed. Where a form is to be deployed varies depending on the intended user base and delivery channels, such as these:
- Enterprise systems and websites
- Specific groups of users
- Warehouse
- Catalog, library, portal, repository
- Third party sites
- Documents such as procedures manual.

Deployments require some type of notification or communication to staff or client base. A successful implementation may require a quick message or the creation or update of policies, business procedures, user procedures, training, and documentation to help technical support staff or the installation of additional software, hardware, or other equipment.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “Prepress proofing”
- Merriam-Webster, s.v. “logistics”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “software deployment”
Environmental and Safety Awareness

The Forms Management Program is aware of and complies with organizational policies related to environmental footprint. As much as possible, it uses eco-friendly, recycled, or recyclable products such as soy-based ink, adhesives, recycled papers, and more. It aims to limit the production of toxic waste by-products from forms. Whenever feasible, the Program encourages the use of electronic forms.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “paper recycling”
Signatures

The Forms Management Program performs risk assessment to determine whether a signature is needed. It uses knowledge of the different types of signatures and their application.

The Forms Management Program implements signature process flows, including deadlines and the designation of alternates for routing, tracking, and approving forms or form-related tasks, as required.

The Program is aware of the legislation and regulations of their jurisdiction with respect to signatures and understands their obligations. It also applies the organization’s established signing authority delegation chart and policy, as well as the internal and external security and audit standards. This ensures the appropriate delegated authority signs and approves forms in the correct form process context and that the signature process is traceable, repeatable, auditable, and tamper-proof.

- Sustainable-printing
  - Wikipedia, s.v. “signature”
  - Wikipedia, s.v. “Great Peace of Montreal”
  - Wikipedia, s.v. “electronic signature”
  - Wikipedia, s.v. “digital signature”
  - “What is the difference between an electronic signature and a digital signature?” StackExchange, Information Security,
The Forms Management Program uses general knowledge of one-, two-, and three-dimensional barcodes (e.g., QR codes, PDF417, interleaved 2 of 5, etc.), how they work, and when best to use them. It also knows their symbology and associated reader technology to apply specific requirements such as size, font, unique placement, and others.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “PostBar”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “PDF417”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “barcode”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Interleaved 2 of 5”
- “Barcoding Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ),” Barcodes, accessed February 5, 2021,
**MICR Technology**

The Forms Management Program uses general knowledge of how MICR (Magnetic Ink Character Recognition) technology works and how to use it on forms, including placement, spacing, specialized fonts, specialized inks or toners, and other requirements and standards.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “magnetic ink character recognition”
Other Recognition Technologies

The Forms Management Program uses general knowledge of other types of recognition technology such as these:
- Optical character recognition (OCR)
- Intelligent character recognition (ICR)
- Handwriting recognition
- Optical mark recognition (OMR)
- Intelligent mark recognition (IMR)

Other types are used less often for forms:
- Radio frequency identification (RFID)
- Voice recognition
- Biometrics

- Wikipedia, s.v. “automatic identification and data capture”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “optical character recognition”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “intelligent character recognition”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “optical mark recognition”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “radio frequency identification”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “speech recognition”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “speaker recognition”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “biometrics”
Forms Print Production

It is without a doubt that technology has significantly affected the print industry and continues to do so to this day. Forms are now developed digitally, many being deployed and used electronically, and interoperating with business systems. Even so, some forms still need to be printed. The volume of forms’ print quantities dwindles or remains, depending on their type and use.

Technology also affects the print industry, where new print methods and processes evolve using new print technology and equipment with new features and materials.

Although Forms Management Program staff need not be printing experts, they are likely to develop and manage both electronic and printed forms. This is why they need to know basic and common printing methods and where to obtain expert advice on printing and print products. Their knowledge of the print industry will expand and evolve with every forms project.

Form Products

While printed form products such as stationery items, envelopes, tags, and labels are more common, other form products are manufactured for specific uses. Those include:

- cut sheets.
- unit sets.
- continuous forms.
- sales books.
- register forms.
- cheques and other secure forms.
- mailers.
- pegboard.
- folders, kits.
- specialty forms such as ID cards and licenses.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “xerography”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “multipart stationery”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “stationery”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “form (document)”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “label”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “notebook”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “web application”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “intelligent form”
**Form Materials**

Form materials refer to what forms are made of. They include various substrates:

- Paper and its varieties such as bond, ledger, offset, card, and carbonless paper.
- Vinyl, Tyvek, and film.
- Other materials such as ink, carbon paper, glassine, cellophane, and so on.

- Wikipedia, s.v. "substrate (printing)"
- Wikipedia, s.v. “carbonless copy paper"
- Wikipedia, s.v. “paper size"
- Wikipedia, s.v. “security paper”
- Merriam-Webster, s.v. "safety paper"
- Wikipedia, s.v. “tyvek”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “acid-free paper”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “ledger”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “acid-free paper”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “wove paper”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “paper vellum”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “paper density”
- “Water Based Screen Printing Inks,” ScreenPrinting, Ryonet Corporation, accessed February 14, 2021,


Production Method: Print Output

Advancements and innovations in technology have allowed for the development of a wide variety of printers.

- Ink jet printers
- ID card printers
- Sophisticated high-speed laser printer
- MICR-compliant laser printers
- Multifunction digital printers that can print, sort, insert, and staple, and create digital files

Quality desktop printers are now more accessible to the general population and organizations typically install quality network multifunction printers to support their staff business needs.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “laser printing”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “digital printing”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “inkjet printing”
- Mallory MacDermott, “CMYK vs. RGB vs. PMS,” Printing Partners, May 2, 2013, https://printingpartners.wordpress.com/2013/05/02/cmyk-
Low volume electronic forms and templates are often printed on desktop or local area network printers. They are often produced after a static form or template has been filled in electronically, and the form and data are then printed together.

Production Method: Manufactured

Conventional static forms can be produced via press printing or manufacturing process. Large volumes of forms or forms requiring a high-quality product are typically printed on presses for best results and economies of scale in print production costs.

Manufactured forms likely have added construction steps or processes before or after they are printed, such as envelopes and self-mailers. They can also be manufactured using a more complex print process, such as silk screening.

- Dictionary.com, s.v. “blueline”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “prepress proofing”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “offset printing”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “relief printing”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “screen printing”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “thermography”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “embossing”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “embossing”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “intaglio (printmaking)”
- “Print quality,” Techopedia, accessed February 18, 2021,


Additional production processes may occur directly (in-line) on the press or on other equipment after the press (off-line). These operations include:

- collating, stapling, saddle stitching, binding.
- drilling, perforating.
- numbering.
- overprinting.

- Team Avalon, “All Kinds of Binds: A Look at Different Types of Binding,” Avalon, April 24, 2014,
- cutting, die cutting and shape cutting.
- scoring, folding.
- gluing.
- banding, wrapping.

References:

- https://solutions.teamavalon.com/blog/all-kinds-of-binds-different-types-of-binding
- Wikipedia, s.v. “hole punch”


- “Using Fan-apart Carbonless Adhesive On the Mini UltraPad Padding Press,” CFS Binding Supplies video,
Post-processing

After the form is printed, various actions can occur that require inserting and folding. Less often used today are bursters, decollators, and random-length detachers.

Post-processing equipment is employed with forms during their use or handling, typically after the forms have been completed by users and long after the actual blank form was printed at the forms manufacturer.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “barcode reader”
Procurement and Contracting

Procurement and contracting are required functions of the Forms Management Program associated with different forms management activities. They are required to:

- procure forms and print services to ensure inventory supply of printed and manufactured forms.
- procure specific forms services such as forms inventory and storage services.
- procure forms development expert services for forms projects or other specific expertise to address a particular forms initiative such as selecting and implementing forms development software.
- obtain form-specific training and technical support services for Program staff.

This chapter provides insight on the importance of the vendor relationship with form industry vendors, on procurement and contracting processes, options, and documents.

Vendor Relationship

Vendors are those who are outside the organization but furnish needed products and/or services. Maintaining cordial vendor relationships helps to assure that the information available from each is complete and accurate and serve the best interests of the organization.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “vendor relationship management”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “supplier relationship management”
- “10 Strategies for Improving Supplier Relationship
Product and Service Evaluation

When a newly identified requirement may be able to take advantage of a product that is also new, or is not currently used by the organization, it is prudent to conduct a product evaluation to confirm the appropriateness of the product, whether physical or electronic, as an option for the environment where it is proposed.

When a technology evaluation is required, the Forms Management Program area must coordinate with the Information and Technology area and stakeholder areas (e.g., Mailroom, Web Services; Information, Document, Records, Procurement, and Contracting Management areas, etc.) to ensure compatibility and architecture fit.

Prior to buying a product or service, it is wise and sometimes mandated to request a quotation or proposal from potential vendors. Even with known vendors who have provided products and/or services in the past, the Program handles each new requirement the same way.

Formalizing the quotation and/or proposal process ensures that nothing is assumed or left to chance and that all legal bases are covered adequately. It is a good practice to consult with the procurement professionals within your organization.

- Merriam-Webster online, s.v. “contract,” merriam-webster.com
- Keith Murphy, “What is a Purchase Order?”, Planergy, August 16, 2019, https://planergy.com/blog/what-is-a-purchase-order
- Wikipedia, s.v. “contract”


- Wikipedia, s.v. “statement of work”


- Wikipedia, s.v. “request for quotation”

- Wikipedia, s.v. “request for proposal”


Contract Negotiations

Long-term relationships with vendors are common in the forms industry. These are generally formalized with legally binding contracts. Terms and conditions included in contracts spell out, clarify, and formalize the products or services required by the organization.

Terms and conditions specify requirements, deliverables, tasks, or services to be rendered, how these are to be delivered to the organization, a schedule or delivery timeline, expected outcomes, performance expectations, agreed costs or service fees as well as terms of payment.

This is typically achieved through the writing of clear criteria and requirements, statements of work, specific contract clauses and forms print specifications.

Formalizing terms of contracts is often the responsibility of procurement and contract professionals in an organization. The Forms Management Program consults and collaborates with them when establishing contracts with vendors. This ensures that nothing is assumed or left to chance, that all legal aspects are covered, and that the Procurement and Contracts area involves Legal Services when necessary to avoid potential litigation.

Inventory Management and Warehousing

This chapter addresses the activities performed by a Forms Management Program to assure a constant access, availability, and supply of forms to meet an organization’s business needs.

For printed forms, inventory management consists in

- maintaining the optimal quantity of every form stocked in the inventory
- providing uninterrupted supply of forms
- producing and providing forms at a minimum cost while taking up minimum warehouse space.

References:

For eforms, inventory management is achieved by maintaining portals, online catalogs, and lists of available forms. Webpages provide essential details about the forms:
- Form number/identifier
- Form title
- Available versions
- Brief description or purpose
- How users can access the forms

The Forms Management Program webpages, whether on the internet, intranet, or extranet, provide information on the different fulfillment options and on the forms replenishment and deployment processes.

### Inventory Management

In today’s context of forms management, inventory management and warehousing have evolved to apply to printed and stocked forms as well as to eforms. Although eforms are not physically stocked in warehouses, they are stored in virtual libraries or online catalogs for user access and availability.

Whether the forms are printed and stocked or virtually stored, their importance relies in their **constant availability to support day-to-day business activities**. Their availability is so critical that in some cases, they can significantly impact on people’s lives or an organization’s business and financial success, or its failure and reputation loss.

- Nicole Pontius, “What is inventory management?,” Camcode, updated April 13, 2021,
https://www.camcode.com/asset-tags/what-is-inventory-management


Fulfillment Options

General forms **warehousing** is either provided by the organization or contracted. The Warehouse is one or several locations that
- receive, store, and maintain supplies of forms.
- pick, pack, and ship orders to clients (staff or public).

Purchasing or automated ordering systems begin the fulfillment process of client orders. The Warehouse completes fulfillment by delivering or shipping forms to clients.

**Print on demand** is a process of printing forms or documents when and where-needed. Forms printed on demand typically are **not stored** in the Warehouse. These include
- templates.

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jdtjn1fLUg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jdtjn1fLUg)
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Inventory”
- Piasecki, David, from “Glossary” in Inventory Management Explained, Ops Publishing, 2009
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Print on demand”
- “Print On Demand for Ecommerce: What It Is, How It
Forms Delivery, Shipping, and Billing Options

Forms shipping and billing options include:
- bill as shipped.
- bill upon completion.
- ship all to user.
- ship all to third party.
- pick and pack program.

Awareness of inventory shipping options can impact:
- how billing and payment are handled.
- who owns inventory.
- when inventory ownership transfer takes place.
- when to count usage.

Electronic fulfillment is a process of fulfilling user and client needs electronically using business rules and workflow built into a form. Organization-wide forms are paperless end to end and are entirely fulfilled electronically, that is:
- filled in electronically.
- transmitted via workflow.
- Approved or signed electronically.
- handled and processed electronically from start to finish.

Print-on-demand can also be ordered from a print shop or warehouse where the forms are printed at the time of order because there is no inventory.


Forms Management Body of Knowledge Outline with Sources and References
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2022-01-17
Options relating to organization accounting, purchasing, and vendor relations, and contracts are considered.

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### Replenishment

Inventory replenishment of a form is ensuring stock is filled to **avoid running out of stock and risk affecting business operations and continuity**. To ensure a constant and reliable supply of forms, the Forms Management Program and the Inventory Management area collaborate to replenish stock.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “Replenishment”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Reorder point”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Safety stock”
- Steve Milano, “How to Figure Out Minimum Inventory Levels,” Chron, October 22, 2020, https://smallbusiness.chron.com/figure-out-minimum-inventory-levels-25863.html


Deployment Management

Establish the methods to deploy printed forms and electronic forms through online catalogs, repositories, portals, or warehouses to meet all user points of access.

Establish a method to check on and track usage activity:
- Printed forms issued and distributed
- Eforms opened or downloaded

Establish policies to implement permanent URLs for eforms and forms deployment.

Establish a communications strategy for forms deployment, for disposition of forms inventory, access, and security rights to forms.

Automated Systems

Automated systems such as barcoding, RFID (radio frequency identification), freight optimization, and just-in-time inventory are typically used for forms warehousing.

Automated systems such as barcoding, RFID (radio frequency identification), freight optimization, and just-in-time inventory are typically used for forms warehousing.

outsourcing
- MediaWiki, s.v. “User rights”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Create, read, update and delete”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Reorder point”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Role-based access control”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Deployment”

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- Wikipedia, s.v. “Reorder point”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Role-based access control”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Deployment”

Automated Systems

Automated systems such as barcoding, RFID (radio frequency identification), freight optimization, and just-in-time inventory are typically used for forms warehousing.
Form information or metadata for warehousing may be collected to aid these systems. For example, the following information elements are often included on labels and stored in automated systems that are used to calculate warehousing, freight, and shipping needs:

- Forms units of issue and/or bulk packaging size
- Forms unit and/or bulk weight
- Form number
- Edition date and version
- Purchase order or contract number

As the functional area responsible for and custodian of organizational forms, the onus is on the Forms Management Program to establish a common understanding with Inventory Management and the Warehouse with respect to:

- Forms inventory management.
- Form receiving, quality assurance, and approval of stock received.
- Storage.
- Shipping.
- Distribution activities, including for restrictions.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “Barcode”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Radio frequency”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Radio frequency identification”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Just-in-time manufacturing”

- JUST-IN-TIME Certification Review Course, Student Guide, Prepared by Robert W. Hall, Ph.D., CFPIM, Indiana University and Mark E. Ippolito, CFPIM Indiana University, pp. 1–2, APICS, 1992
- Carl W. Brannon, “Forms Management,” Business Forms Management Association (BFMA), 2004,
This understanding is essential for **delineating respective roles, responsibilities, and authorities** regarding forms inventory management.

Common understanding and working protocols

- may be written in an internal **service agreement**, or
- defined in a contract with an external service provider.

**Receiving**

The Forms Management Program is responsible for checking and testing the quality of forms received and approving forms for storage and release by the Warehouse.

The Forms Management Program must coordinate with the Warehouse and have an understanding of receiving activities such as

- accepting shipments.
- accounting for and matching quantities listed on shipping documents.
- decisions regarding stock storage location.
- stock rotation activities where appropriate.
- filling of existing back orders.
- verifying unit of issue.

**Storage, Shipping, and Distribution**

The Forms Management Program is responsible for

- determining a form’s units of issue.
- establishing delivery time requirements.
- directing distributions as required.

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- Wikipedia, s.v. “Invoice”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “Voucher”
Forms shipping and distribution methods should be **flexible** enough to satisfy the organization's business needs, both routine and special situations. The Forms Management Program must coordinate shipping and distribution activities with the Warehouse:

- Shipments to users in order to fill requisitions.
- Shipments between warehouse locations to balance stock levels.
- Shipments from suppliers.
- Return-to-vendor shipments when an error is discovered or for some other reason stock must be returned.

Accurate records must be kept of each transaction and inventory levels adjusted accordingly.

### Inventory Control

The Forms Management Program is responsible for:

- determining a **maximum quantity** based on annual usage.
- setting a **minimum quantity** or low stock point.
- calculating an **economic order quantity** (EOQ).

Program staff review inventory usage reports and ensure there is **enough stock of the form to do business**. The Program can set order limits to be sure there is no hoarding or over-ordering.

The Forms Management Program coordinates with Inventory Management or the Warehouse on:

- physical inventory reconciliation to the perpetual inventory.
- managing metadata on forms used by inventory.
- inventory usage cycles.
- determining types of reports required.
restrictions—who can order a form and in what quantities.
old stock and superseding precedence.

Larger organizations may have separate inventory management areas that manage low stock notices, replenishment projects, economic order quantities, and more.

**Invoicing Options**

Terms of payment are often addressed in contract negotiation or purchase order. Other invoicing issues include agreeing on remedial action if goods or services received are unsatisfactory. Depending on the organization’s needs, internal invoicing (chargeback) can be established.

**Administration of a Forms Management Program**

Administration refers to the many activities associated with running and supporting the Forms Management Program as a valuable functional area and business partner within its organization.

It includes managing the activities associated with

- running the Program (budgeting, producing a management work plan, project planning, strategic planning)
- the development, deployment, and management of the form products and services it delivers.

Activities include

- establishing
  — a governance framework.
— a risk management framework.
— a forms policy, Program manual, and Forms Style Guide.
— a forms management database.
— common terminology on forms.
— filenames conventions.
— form identifier methodology.
    ....and more.

- human and financial resources management.
- inventory management.
- consulting and providing expert advice on
  — forms.
  — forms compliance.
  — forms design and development.
  — information and business process solutions.
  — forms management.
- forms development and deployment
- procurement and contracting of forms printing and forms services.
- database management.
- communication.
- user and technical support.

The role, mandate, scope, and responsibilities of a Forms Management Program may vary from organization to organization, depending on its structure, the nature of its business, and its size.
Establishing the Forms Management Program’s Governance

One of the most essential components of ensuring a successful implementation and performance of a Forms Management Program is establishing its governance. The governance is the set of policies, procedures, processes, standards, and controls established and implemented to manage and monitor forms development, deployment, inventory, and the administrative function of forms management at an enterprise level.

- “Signing Authority Policy,” University of Victoria, March 2021, https://www.uvic.ca/universitysecretary/assets/docs/policies/FM5100_1002_.pdf


Human Resources Management

Human resources management is a basic activity for any organization and business functional area. Human resources activities include the following:

- Identifying responsibilities for various roles
- Determining knowledge and skills required of staff
- Determining staffing needs and levels
- Recruiting and hiring
- Scheduling employee development and training
- Succession planning
- Using outside expert resources


- Leading Effectively Staff, “Use Active Listening to Coach Others,” Center for Creative Leadership, November 24, 2020, https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-
Day-to-day operational activities associated with staff management
  — Assigning projects and tasks
  — Managing attendance and leave
  — Resolving employee-employer or client-employee issues or conflicts
  — Fostering good communication, collaboration, and a healthy and ethical working environment.

Identify Responsibilities of Various Roles
Identifying the activities of the Program is the first step in human resources planning. With this knowledge, the Program can establish the types of roles needed to accomplish mandated services and planned objectives for the organization.

Determine Knowledge and Skills Required
Before contemplating staffing positions, it is important to first determine the knowledge and skills required for staff to perform their job and deliver the Forms Management Program’s products and services. This is necessary for
  ‣ producing job descriptions, job criteria, or statements of work.
  ‣ posting, job openings, assignments, or contract opportunities.
  ‣ evaluating candidates to select the right resource.
  ‣ assessing performance.

Determine Staffing Needs and Levels
Using metrics, calculate the level of work activities and the resources needed to deliver the Forms Management Program’s mandated services and planned objectives to the organization.

Articles/Coaching-others-use-active-listening-skills
  — Paula Andruss, “5 Benefits of Investing in Employee Training and Development,” Education and Career News,
Factors to consider include

- the nature of the business or industry.
- the number of forms in the organization.
- current and anticipated workload.
- the use of forms coordinators.
- the level and value of products or services provided.
- the level of authority (e.g., clerical, professional, management).

Recruiting and Hiring

Qualified and experienced forms management employees are difficult to locate. A new employee generally requires a one-year ramp-up period.

Finding suitable candidates usually means looking for the person

- with the best set of aptitudes to learn the field, and/or
- with relevant knowledge and experience in related fields that can be trained on forms management principles.

Related fields include
- Graphic design
- Web design/Web development
- Print production
- Business analysis/Business process analysis
- Computer programming
- Application development
- Information Management
- Project Management
- Usability/UX Design
- Communication/Marketing

accessed July 12, 2021,

- Derek Smith, “Investing in Employees: Why Training Is Important,” BizLibrary, January 2, 2020,

- Susan M. Heathfield, “What Every Manager Needs to Know About Succession Planning,” The Balance Careers, updated June 8, 2020,
https://www.thebalancecareers.com/succession-planning-1918267

- “Beginner’s guide to succession planning and processes,” Insperity, accessed July 12, 2021,
https://www.insperity.com/blog/succession-planning

https://www.roberthalf.com/blog/management-tips/7-steps-to-building-a-succession-plan-for-success

- Wikipedia, s.v. “succession planning”

- Will Kenton, “Succession Planning,” Investopedia, updated December 6, 2020,
https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/succession-planning.asp

- Bjarne Espedal, “Management Development: Using Internal or External Resources in Developing Core Competence,” Research Gate, June 2005,
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240698135_Management_Development_Using_Internal_or_External_Resources_in_Developing_Core_Competence
- Wikipedia, s.v. “benchmarking”
- “ARMA International,” https://www arma.org
- “Xplor International,” https://xplor.org
- “Project Management Institute,” https://www.pmi.org
resources/articles/121496/


- “Association for Talent Development,” https://www.td.org


Employee Development

Although training is ultimately the responsibility of each individual, the organization has a vested interest in helping employees continue their education and training. Each Forms Management Program employee, working with the Program head, should develop an individualized training plan.

Specialized Training for the Forms Management Program Staff

Development of expertise in forms management takes time and experience. New employees become productive more quickly if a structured training process is in place to cover all the basics for most Forms Management Program roles and responsibilities.

Expert forms management training is highly specialized and very difficult to find in the general marketplace. This training is usually provided by expert Program staff and typically occurs on a one-to-one basis with mentoring.

Program staff and forms developers need to understand and learn the technical intricacies of
- office suite software.
- forms development software.
- peripherals and associated technologies.

This is necessary to explain, develop, produce, and program forms, and it requires highly technical, specialized, and often customized training.

It is important to obtain management approval of a non-standard training approach for the Program’s training needs. This is necessary because training opportunities and expert training resources in forms management and associated fields are not common or readily available and cannot always be planned long-term in advance. The opportunity is to be taken when it presents itself.
Succession Planning

Proper organizational-level succession planning is critical, as development of expertise in forms management tends to have a long ramp-up period. After an individual is identified in the succession plan, **determine missing skills and develop a training and development plan** for that person to gain the necessary experience to meet the position requirements and objectives of the succession plan.

Locate and Use Outside Expert Resources for Forms Management Responsibilities

Many times, outside help can provide a **major boost to get a project done**, such as

- a call for forms.
- a large multi-form project.
- an analysis project
- Program evaluation.

There are few independent contractors with the necessary expertise available. Finding them and **making a contact list** is crucial.

Financial Management

Financial management is another basic activity for any organization and business functional area. For a Forms Management Program, financial management involves

- budgeting, including work planning and expense forecasting.
- remediation for non-compliance.
- financial analysis.


Budgeting

Budgeting is a **recurring yearly activity** under the responsibility and leadership of the head of the Forms Management Program in collaboration with its functional area senior management and that of other areas, as applicable.
Budgeting requires taking into account operational needs such as:
- salaries.
- ongoing activities.
- maintenance of forms management service levels.
- management work planning.
- expense forecasting for large scope projects or for other events or requirements.

The Program’s budget is regularly monitored over the fiscal year and adjusted as necessary.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “cost-benefit analysis”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “return on investment”


### Financial Value of the Forms Management Program

The Program head is responsible for

- improving operations through better business processes.
- providing forms that are efficient and effective.
- fostering innovative approaches to business processes and forms.

When successfully implemented, improved forms and business processes result in

- higher efficiencies.
- cost benefits and savings.
- possibly increased sales and revenues.

### Remediation for Non-compliance

Financial compensation or remedial arrangement may be necessary for deliveries of forms, products, or services that are **non-compliant to specifications provided**. For forms expenditures—when a project goes wrong or forms delivered are **not accepted** following quality assurance—most vendors are cooperative and willing to work through any problems.
When disputes arise, the contract or purchase order prevails. In the absence of such documents, negotiations between the parties and their Legal Services—may help provide resolution.

**Financial Analysis**

A Forms Management Program has the fiduciary responsibility to contain and reduce costs and to provide cost comparison on the Program’s project options and asset acquisitions. Understanding the mechanics and application of cost-benefit analysis techniques is essential to that end, e.g.,
- payback.
- cost of current method versus cost of future method.
- activity-based costing.

This requires working with the organization’s Finance, Human Resources, Procurement or Sales, Information Technology, Translation, and others to obtain the figures used for
- time value of money.
- internal rate of return.
- salary levels.
- vendor daily or hourly rates.

**Inventory Management**

Whether the forms inventory is managed internally or externally, the Forms Management Program ensures it is managed in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Users and clients have a quick and easy access to the forms they need for business or to perform their work activities.
| Manage and Protect Forms Management Assets | The Forms Management Program has the **duty to protect**
- physical assets provided for its operational needs.
- **essential organization assets** such as forms, form source files, form output files, and form history records in order to realize its mandate.

| Technological Architecture and Infrastructure | Many organization business processes rely on Information Technology support for access to
- a network infrastructure.
- software (e.g., office suite).
- Systems and applications.
- tools and equipment.
- databases, programming, and scripting assistance.
  ... and more.

The Forms Management Program remains up to date on the organization’s technological architecture and infrastructure.

| Software Distribution and Management | It is in the best interest of the Forms Management Program to be **proactive** in many areas, activities, and projects. The following are particularly important given the **impact** they may have on users, the organization, and the Program:
- Software distribution and management and understanding its impact on the organization
- Software upgrade or change
- Upcoming desktop changes and their consequences.

Understanding the organization’s software deployment, upgrade and implementation strategy is a part of the Program’s **strategic planning**.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “information technology architecture”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “architecture framework”
- Wikipedia, s.v. “enterprise architecture framework”
- “What Does Desktop Mean?,” Techopedia, accessed July 14, 2021,
The organization’s Information Technology area probably has specific plans and policies for desktop upgrades and software support. **Continuous, open dialogue is essential to maintaining continuity and service.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File Distribution and Management</th>
<th>File distribution and management is concerned with</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ deployment.</td>
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<td>‣ access to forms.</td>
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<td>‣ policies and procedures associated with forms.</td>
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<td>This includes determining</td>
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<td>‣ security and access levels.</td>
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<td>‣ deployment methodology and implementation.</td>
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<td>‣ filenaming conventions.</td>
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<td>‣ communication strategies.</td>
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<td>Typical methods of distribution include</td>
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<td>‣ forms repositories.</td>
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<td>‣ forms catalogs or lists.</td>
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<td>‣ forms portals.</td>
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<td>The following are important factors to consider:</td>
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<td>‣ The different forms delivery channels</td>
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<td>‣ User access points to forms</td>
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<td>‣ Security</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ User access rights to forms, sections of forms, and permissions to perform certain actions in forms</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

https://www.techopedia.com/definition/5424/desktop-graphic-user-interfaces

- Wikipedia, s.v. “software license”
### Forms Development Software and Technical Requirements

Implementation of forms development software and technical requirements starts with the **forms management strategy**. This requires collaboration and agreement with the Information Technology area to ensure that the Forms Management Program requirements are met.

Proper software selection for forms design and development, process mapping, deployment, and metrics management is **essential to successful forms service delivery**.

The software capabilities must meet the requirements of the strategy and the Program’s technical specifications and requirements. **Software used for forms development must be specific to that purpose** and is typically **not** general purpose software.

It may be necessary to create a **customized user profile and desktop configuration** for Program staff and ensure Information Technology recognizes these as **THE standard** for the Forms Management Program staff. At a minimum, features include:

- access rights to libraries, schemas, databases, directories, servers, and other software
- signature support
- workflow support
- productivity tools
- **full access** to the forms development software product, and design and programming capabilities

### Program Staff User Profiles, Access Rights, and Security

Forms developers and Program staff are **not typical users**, and the Information Technology area needs to be aware that their desktop configuration, software, and user profiles are **not standard or typical**.
In addition, it is likely that the typical user account will not support the operational and technical requirements of the Forms Management Program staff, who require **more features, access rights and functions most users never use.**

As a result, the Program needs to be aware of the standard user profile and ensure they are granted a different *customized user profile* that meets their needs and allows them to perform their work activities. This different user profile is recognized, recorded, and maintained as the Forms Management Program standard user profile.

**Technical Help and Support**

The technical help and support services set up for general users **typically does not meet the needs of forms developers and Program staff.** This is because they use specialized forms software, more in-depth functionality and features of the office suite, and other tools such as the forms management database and inventory management system needed for forms business processes and forms management processes.

Before a specific forms development software or product is selected and approved by the organization for implementation, the Program must make sure the **chosen vendor offers full software maintenance, upgrades, training and technical support** or can refer a reliable expert service provider.

For specific databases or systems used by the Forms Management Program, whether developed internally or procured externally, the Program works with the Information Technology area to reach an agreement with the vendor or other service provider for those services.
| **License and Maintenance Agreements** | The organization, either through its Information Technology area or the Forms Management Program, vendors’ *end-user license agreements and maintenance agreements*, which are contracts, for forms development software and other specialized forms software and products used to develop and manage forms. This is required to be able to enforce and plan the levels of support, upgrades, fixes, and training. |
| **Strategic Relationships** | The Forms Management Program develops and maintains strategic relationships with the organization’s Information Technology and Information Management (including Records Management) areas regarding  
- enterprise architecture.  
- data architecture.  
- software.  
- document, file, and records management.  
- the Forms Management Program’s technology framework and working environment.  
- future direction.  
Strategic relationships are essential to an enterprise-wide forms management strategy. They ensure that areas that support the Program in the delivery of its services have a clear understanding of the Program’s responsibilities and operations to provide it optimal support. |
| **Information Management** | Information management under the Forms Management Program is a multifaceted responsibility that affects the work, deliverables, and services of its staff in multiple and different ways. Each Program staff member holds individual responsibility in applying information management principles and in administering information management for the organization and the Program.  
Information Displayed on Forms

An important information management function under the responsibility of the Forms Management Program is that of **standardizing words and information elements** contained in forms. This ensures **consistency** of use and enhances users’ understanding of the terms to have the same meaning. This is also important when forms are associated with or link to organization applications and systems.

Form Identifiers

Forms Management Programs need a means of identifying forms in order to efficiently manage all aspects about them over time. This is typically achieved using a form number and form identifier methodology. It is essential that the Forms Management Program establish a **unique form identifier methodology** and develop policy to identify a form throughout its life cycle.

This includes establishing standards for unique identifiers (e.g., form numbers with other identifiers such as language version, state version, series, etc.). The form identifier methodology is included in the Forms Style Guide. It is a best practice not to reuse a form identifier after the form becomes obsolete.

Form Titles

A form title is meant to **convey the main purpose of a form** at first glance. This is useful to both users and those who process forms. Effective and consistent form titles help the users locate the exact form they need. Guidelines include the following:

- Creating **short, clear, descriptive and instructive** titles.
- Using a **subject, then action** style.

introduction-to-usability

- Wikipedia, s.v. “style guide”
Using subtitles.

Avoiding the word “form” in titles.

To assist in creating consistently formatted form titles, the Program establishes **graphic standards and conventions**. Font and type size for the title and the title’s typical position on forms are included as recommendations.

**Abbreviating Form Titles**

- Form titles often need to be **abbreviated** based on technical restrictions, such as database field length.
- data field limitation.
- requirements of external systems or webpages.

The Program establishes

- a **standard, convention, and/or methodology for abbreviating titles** based on accepted grammar rules.
- guidelines regarding
  - when to abbreviate form titles or keep them written in full.
  - how form titles are displayed on forms and other media.
  - which types of forms must **NOT display the title**.

**Examples**

- A form’s **full title** should appear in **form lists and catalogs for user selection** or reference.
- Inventory systems may require that long form titles be **abbreviated due to limited field space**. Best practice is to use another field of the form inventory profile where it is possible to enter the full title.
Filenames Conventions

To effectively manage forms, the Forms Management Program needs to plan for and develop **filenaming conventions for different form editions and versions** (output formats). The Program must consider a form’s delivery channels and output formats in different contexts and over the course of its life cycle. **Many files may be associated to one form.**

**Examples** of possible filenames

- A form begins with working filename during a form’s development or revision phase.
- Another filename used during testing and possibly a different one during training.
- A filename for the final approved source file for each edition.
- A different filename for the edition and output versions deployed in production.
- A filename for the high-resolution output file required for printing or manufacturing a form.
- A filename for form files officially retained as records in directories or an electronic document management system.

Just like each form needs a unique identifier, each form file (output format and edition) **requires a unique filename.** Typically, form filenames are based on the Program’s form identifier methodology.
A form’s filenames should be stored in the forms management database under the individual form profile and in its form history record.

The Forms Style Guide
- includes clear details on the **filenaming conventions**.
- provides **guidelines** in assigning filenames with samples of each type and format.

Multiple Languages

For organizations that do business with clients in multiple languages, the Forms Management Program needs to develop a process for
- the translation of forms.
- the management of multiple language form versions.

This involves the following:
- Establishing a **process for initial translation** of forms
- Obtaining translation for edits and small changes made to existing translations
- Keeping various form editions and versions **in sync** with the edition of the primary form
- Using a translation memory by keeping
  - a **glossary** of standard terms used throughout forms with their officially translated equivalents in other languages
  - a **list of forms** that have already been properly translated
- Ensuring that the technical environment supports multiple languages.
Protect Forms Management Program Assets

As owner/custodian of organization forms, templates, and forms-related information, the Forms Management Program is responsible for safeguarding all forms assets. There must be an ongoing process to ensure the optimum availability of critical business functions within a required time frame. The objectives are to reduce the level of risk and cost and to minimize the impact on staff, clients, users, and all other interested parties.

Forms Management Program assets include the following:

- Forms and template source files, output files of all versions, and all editions of forms including
  - forms in development (including in testing or quality assurance)
  - forms in production
  - earlier editions and versions of active forms that are no longer deployed
  - cancelled and archived forms
- Mission-critical forms
- Forms history records and data
- Forms management database and other databases such as the forms inventory
- Key documents such as the forms policy, Program Manual, and Forms Style Guide.

The Program works closely with the Information Technology and Records Management areas to understand the organization’s backup strategy and procedures in place. The Program also works with print and service providers of forms or forms services to assess their backup procedures. The Program ensures that backup procedures meet the Program’s requirements.
To protect form assets, the Program deploys correct editions of forms through required channels to ensure users always access the most up-to-date forms. Problems can arise from forms stored on user desktops. This creates a risk of an incorrect edition and version of the form being used.

**Form Records**

The Forms Management Program works with the Records Management area to develop a plan for the management of its form records, whether digital, physical, or both. These include the following types of records:

- Records for the administration of the Program itself
  - Form databases
  - Branding
  - Procurement/contracting
  - Forms management governance, policy, and procedures
  - Forms development or management software project records
  - Forms Style Guide
  - Program Manual
  - Forms inventory
  - Form reviews
  - Forms technical support
  - Forms committee
  - Budget
  - Human resources
  - Training
  …and others
Form history records to document project details and decisions about forms, events, actions, and edits made to forms during their life cycle.

- Records for major organization projects involving forms.
- Form and template source files and output files
- Image files and object libraries
- Records of communications published about forms, webpages, and content.
- Records documenting the selection, procurement, and implementation of form-specific software, tools, and equipment.
- Records on forms-specific user desktop configuration and user profile.

The Program determines what information needs to be retained, stored, and protected for legal, historical, operational, and reference purposes, considering paper and digital format. Records guidelines are aligned with information management and records management requirements, policies, and the retention and disposition schedule established for the organization.

Standard Terms and Keywords
To ensure consistency in forms, forms development, and forms management activities, the Forms Management Program
- establishes a list (glossary) of common and standard terms to use on forms.
- develops standard terms and keywords to use in digital form records, databases, and other relevant forms management tools or systems.
A glossary of these standard terms and keywords as well as guidelines for their use are included in the Forms Style Guide. Glossary terms are used appropriately in all documents the Program produces, including reference material such as internal job aids and procedures.

A **data dictionary** is necessary for any specific database utilized within the Forms Management Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms Management Database</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A comprehensive forms management database is an <strong>essential tool</strong> for a Forms Management Program. The Program plans and establishes a forms management <strong>relational database</strong> to maintain detailed information about each form. This is needed to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▸ manage a form's <strong>life cycle</strong>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>▸ support and track <strong>forms projects</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▸ assist in overall <strong>forms management activities</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The forms management database is one of the <strong>most important digital assets</strong> the Program uses and maintains. It includes information <strong>about</strong> the form:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▸ The form's <strong>unique number/identifier</strong> and current edition date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▸ The form owner and functional area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▸ The physical or electronic specifications of the form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▸ The language or languages in which the form is produced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▸ The form's relationships to other forms, systems, legislation, policies, or procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▸ The form's priority and risk level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▸ Key information elements included on the form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The users of the form (e.g., public, internal staff, specific group or functional area, restricted)

The **output formats** in which the form is deployed and on which delivery channels

...and more

In addition, the database holds a complete **record** of every form project associated with each form along with the **form's revision history and earlier edition dates**.

Program staff must have a basic understanding of relational databases, including definitions, operations and structure. This helps staff understand the importance of accurate data entry and facilitates how to extract information that has been entered.

**Database Management**

Governance of enterprise databases is usually established by and under the authority of the Information Technology and Information Management areas. This is to ensure

- a supportable environment.
- data compatibility, integrity, and consistency
- security.
- successful data exchange and backup.

All databases, including those owned and used by the Forms Management Program, must **comply** with these practices.

Ensuring the accuracy of data entered in the database is the responsibility of the Forms Management Program. Measures may include establishing a data dictionary and formalizing operational practices.
Digital Asset Management

The Forms Management Program needs to develop a plan to manage its many digital assets:

- Forms management database
- Library of form elements
- Image files, logos, graphics
- Source files and output files of every edition and every version of every form
- Digital form history records
- Form templates
- Objects, coded programs, and scripts
- Database records

An organized and secure method for storing, accessing, and using specialized form assets is necessary for consistency and efficiency. It helps with both ongoing forms development and mass changes. The plan addresses managing these assets as part of the Forms Management Program library or through a shared library and shared responsibilities.

Program Work Planning

Providing the different forms management services to the organization requires work planning. A Forms Management Program juggles multiple project types with forms being deployed on different channels. Scheduled projects are often interrupted by unexpected projects that must be completed as well.

Like every functional area in an organization, each year, the Forms Management Program takes stock of its different projects and workload, analyzes past years’ performance to plan for future years. This is necessary to secure the resources required to plan for and deliver forms projects and services.

- Wikipedia, s.v. “service-level agreement”
- “Service Level Agreement (SLA) Template and
During this annual exercise, the Program reviews its human, financial, and technical resources needs and identifies resource gaps and risks that could affect service delivery and priorities.

The Program formally secures the collaboration of partner areas and services that assist the Program in delivering its form services.

### Service Levels

It is a best practice for a Forms Management Program to establish a standard for the delivery of its different services and form types. This informs clients on the process associated to their service request and provides them with a basic level of expectations. It also provides guidance to Program staff as to the procedure to follow and expected delivery timeframes within which to plan their work.

The Program may establish service level agreements (SLAs) with other functional areas that provide services to the Program in support of its service delivery activities. A service level agreement

- helps to set shared expectations for timeframes and quality.
- provides an objective reference for reporting on program performance.

Other functional areas may initiate a SLA with the Program for the services the Program provides to them.

### Strategic Alignment of Resources

Juggling multiple projects of different scope, level of complexity, and urgency requires that the Forms Management Program closely monitor its projects and its resources. To achieve this, the Program

- develops management work plans, project plans, and schedules.
sets criteria to assign priorities and timelines.
• negotiates and allocates resources according to priorities.

Projects are assigned priority and resources based on
• alignment with organization objectives and priorities.
• the priority assigned to a form by the Program using other factors such as
  — complexity.
  — risk to the organization.
  — project size and scope, target audience.
  — criticality.
  — cost.
• the date and time since a request was received.
• available resources.

Program Work Distribution and Tracking
The Forms Management Program establishes a method to evaluate whether there are enough resources (financial, human, and effort) to handle the anticipated workload. This is necessary to effectively:
• assign tasks and projects to staff.
• assign staff to organization-wide or joint-enterprise projects.
• approve funds to support forms management activities and projects.

Program Risk Management
The Forms Management Program must be able to anticipate risks and prepare mitigation strategies for projects and the Program’s ability to deliver services. Risks may be associated with the following:
- Human resources—e.g., inability to complete workload with current staff
- Financial resources—e.g., insufficient funds to support the Program’s operational workload and project deliverables
- Timeline—e.g., inability to deliver all project deliverables in the required timeline
- A form’s business criticality and established risk profile
- Information management and security
- Software
  - Non-availability of required forms development or forms processing software
  - Inability to provide a good solution
  - Inability to deliver solution to all users
  - Insufficient number of software licenses to support forms activities

### Program Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan

The Forms Management Program business continuity and disaster recovery plan should be included in the corporate plan and updated regularly. The plan is meant to ensure that Program staff can

- continue working.
- ensure access to forms.
- provide their services to end-users in case of business disruption.

This is achieved by securing workspace, computers, software, access to form files, and so on. The business continuity and disaster recovery plan may include an offsite location with access to necessary resources so that operations may continue.
Good project management ensures that all the appropriate steps in the process, from the initial investigation phase through deployment, are successfully completed by the responsible individuals in a logical sequence and in a timely fashion.

Form projects in the Forms Management Program come in a wide variety of types and complexities. They range from
- requests for new forms,
- revisions to existing forms, and
- form stock replenishment to
  - **multi-forms projects** such as
    - scheduled reviews,
    - calls for forms,
    - organization-wide projects, and
- **recurring operational events** such as
  - scheduled mass mailouts,
  - forms cancellation,
  - technical support calls,
  - enquiries,
  - training,
  - research, and
  - software evaluation.

- Sandra F. Rowe, Project Management for Small Projects, Management Concepts Inc, November 1, 2006
- Adrienne Watt, “Stakeholder Management,” BCCampus,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establish a Structure for Project Management</th>
<th>The Forms Management Program needs to establish a structure for project management. This includes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- defining project types and categories along with their risk and priority level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- establishing procedures for different project types.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- implementing tools and methods to track, monitor, and report on projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- assigning roles and responsibilities to Program staff.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Large-scale, organization-wide projects led by the project management office (PMO) and strategic projects led by the Program are more complex. They generally require specific negotiation on:

- deliverables.
- tasks.
- resource allocations and availability.
- timelines.
- tools.
- reporting.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Resources</th>
<th>The Forms Management Program balances human and financial resources, expertise, timelines, and activities across all projects and communicates any gaps to the appropriate management level.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead Forms Projects</td>
<td>As the organization authority and subject matter expert on forms, the Forms Management Program leads forms projects. These include forms and template development projects such as requests for new forms, revisions to forms, consolidation or cancellation of forms. Other projects include forms replenishment, forms review, responding to technical support calls, enquiries or special requests. Projects can be initiated by users, clients, partner service areas, the Program or the organization. Activities include the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Analysis, review, development, production, and implementation of forms and templates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Identifying and resolving possible impacts on related forms, peripherals, business processes and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Finding solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Developing the design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Coordinating stakeholders and partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Facilitating resolution of issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Coordinating deployment, implementation, and communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lead Forms Components of Other Projects

Whether projects are organization-wide, cross-functional or cross-organizational, the Forms Management Program is the recognized authority and subject matter expert on forms. It leads project components of with respect to forms and template service delivery. Such projects are usually conducted in collaboration with other partners and stakeholders. Project examples include:

- the application of legal requirements or legislative changes.
- rebranding.
- organization mergers.
- corporate initiatives.
- software implementation, migration, or updates.

The Program’s resource serves as a project team member on larger initiatives and officially represents the Forms Management Program function on the project team. This resource

- is responsible for addressing forms-related issues and activities.
- works in partnership with other project team members.
- reports to the project authority and to the program head.
- assumes the role of Program team leader and
  — provides advice and consultation on forms matters.
  — enlists other Program resources to provide forms services.

Plan, Manage, and Report

Projects must be planned, managed, and monitored in order to accomplish their deliverables and objectives. The Forms Management Program determines the interval, tools and methodology for planning, tracking, monitoring, and reporting for all projects.
Protecting the Organization’s Branding and Ownership of Its Forms

The Forms Management Program applies branding to forms and templates to ensure the organization’s visibility and secure its reputation through **branding integrity**. The Program is also responsible for ensuring that the organization remains the rightful owner of its forms and form designs, regardless of media. Ownership means

- holding the right to **create, use, modify, publish, reproduce, and cancel forms** as business activities and requirements evolve in time.

- having the right to **grant permissions or licenses** to its forms, trademark and branding images to third parties.

To achieve this, the Program works with Legal Services to ensure the necessary wording, clauses, terms, and conditions are included in contracts and legal documents. This is particularly important when outsourcing services to create, modify, or automate forms.


- Wikipedia, s.v. “intellectual property”


- Wikipedia, s.v. “United States intellectual property law”

**Ongoing Activities**

Ongoing activities are those performed on a day-to-day basis by the Forms Management Program. These activities are required

- to ensure the organization has **access to forms at all times**
- to deliver **forms services** in general.

They may not all be performed every day, but do represent the normal activities Program staff are **expected to perform on any working day** or fiscal year.

Ongoing activities constitute the basic workload that serves to establish the Program’s operational base budget and resources.

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**Responding to Enquiries, Technical Support and Client Requests**

Responding to enquiries, technical support calls and client requests is a **fundamental service** provided by the Forms Management Program to its user and client base. Enquiries and requests may come from users, partners, stakeholders, vendors, and senior management.

The Program’s effective handling and prompt responses help **maintain good relationship with all parties as well as uphold the Program’s reputation.**

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**Recurring Operational Events**

Some operations in an organization are **recurring events** that affect forms, such as

- annual tax preparation.
- regular mailouts (e.g., invoices, statements).
- seasonal business requirements such as renewals, holiday sales, annual conferences, agribusiness harvest and animal husbandry, etc.

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- “Forms Management & Design Services Benchmarking,” Best Practices, LLC, Business Forms Management Association (BFMA), February 2007,
The Forms Management Program must have **knowledge and advance planning** to meet forms requirements for recurring events. Generally, such events are documented with dates, project type, specific tasks, and more for planning purposes.

The Forms Management may:
- **own and/or initiate** all or part the activities and tasks associated to the events.
- be responsible for **performing activities and tasks** associated to the production or acquisition of forms required for the events in collaboration with partners.

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### Forms Replenishment and Forms Inventory Management

Forms replenishment projects are generally triggered by the inventory system through **low stock notices**. These are automatically generated by the inventory system when stocks fall below the minimum quantity of forms required to meet business needs.

Low stock notices are generated on a regular basis and the inventory closely monitored. Program staff proceed to review the forms, update them if warranted, and then send a print order to prevent stockout and ensure forms continue to be available to users for their work activities.

### Business Process and Forms Analysis, Forms Development and Deployment

Business process analysis, forms analysis, forms development, and forms deployment are all part of a standard forms life cycle. They are regular activities and tasks performed by the Forms Management Program overall.

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[Note: Further details and sources are listed at the end of the passage, including links to various resources and publications related to forms management and related topics.]
### Ongoing Forms Improvement

Ongoing forms improvement is an **ever-present concern** to the Forms Management Program, the objective being

- to have **fewer** forms
- and
- make the forms that are in use more efficient and more economical.

To achieve this, the Program views every project as an **opportunity to make improvements** to forms and business processes.

Every change or improvement, no matter how small or routine it may seem to experienced Program staff, has a value to the organization that should be documented and reported. In conducting **proactive, ongoing forms reviews**, the Program not only improves forms and business operations but also shows the value of its services to clients and management.

### Scheduled Reviews of Forms

Every time a service request is received about a form, a review of that form is automatically performed by the Forms Management Program. This type of form review is part of the Program’s ongoing activities.

A scheduled review of an organization’s forms population is necessary for the good health of the organization’s business processes and effective forms management. Typically, each form should be reviewed **once every 12-18 months**.

- Some organizations may schedule a review for **all forms** every 12-18 months.
- Alternatively, a 12th or 18th of the forms’ population is reviewed each month. At the end of 12 or 18 months, all forms have been reviewed.

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- John Downs, “Creating a Successful Forms Management
Scheduled reviews aim specifically to

- **validate** the status, usefulness, consistency, and compliance of forms with standards and legal and policy requirements.
- confirm that the **form owner** is identified correctly.
- find **improvement opportunities**.

Findings and review results affecting individual forms are included in the form’s history record for future reference and update purposes. Findings and review results are also summarized in a report submitted to senior management and put in the scheduled review record file.

**Cancelling Obsolete Forms**

The Forms Management Program routinely declares obsolete forms that are no longer being used and cancels them. This occurs

- during the **analysis phase** of projects.
- when form owners **formally advise the Program in writing** that the form is no longer required or has been replaced by another form, system, or process.
- through an **enquiry procedure** to learn whether a form is actively being used, such as during scheduled reviews.
- via a unilateral decision by the Program because
  - the form has had no usage for some time and no requests for change, and
  - the form owner has not responded to enquiries.

Inventory reports and web usage reports to **identify forms not issued** in the past 12 or 24 months are generated at least once a year or at the time of a scheduled review. The issue report and inventory status of a form can be checked at any time.
The criteria to declare a form obsolete are defined within each Forms Management Program. The Program encourages form owners to notify the Program when forms are no longer needed.

### Handling Unofficial Forms

Official forms indicate that they were professionally designed and developed for a specific purpose and intent. They are compliant with legislation, policies, standards, and regulations and uphold the organization’s reputation. They have a form number and a history record. **Unofficial forms**, also known as "rogue" or "bootleg" forms, are created by users to meet a perceived need or gap in a business process.

The Forms Management Program may stumble upon them by chance, when meeting with users and stakeholders, via ad hoc monitoring (intranet pages, listservs, forums, news feed, newsletters, bulletins, social media). Including a formal call for unofficial forms in a scheduled review project is also an effective way to collect them. A call for all forms used in an organization is often required after an acquisition, a merger, or expansion.

Unofficial forms are reviewed and analyzed by the Program to determine if they are needed, and if so, to bring them into compliance.

### Maintenance of Form Lists, Catalogs, and Databases

In order to manage all forms and their multiple versions and editions efficiently, the Forms Management Program must **continually maintain primary recordkeeping systems**. These recordkeeping systems can vary, but typically include

- a forms management database to create a master list of all forms.
forms catalogs and published form lists with links for user access. These are most often created from the forms management database.

online portals.

a forms inventory.

server and file directories/libraries for managing form files in production along with earlier archived editions.

It is imperative for the Program to have the **most current and accurate information about forms at its fingertips at all times.**

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**Records Management Activities**

As custodian of the organization’s forms and templates, records management activities are an **essential function** the Forms Management Program. The Program keeps

- form history records
- form records associated with forms management activities.

Depending on the Program’s recordkeeping system, file records could be physical (paper files), digital, or a combination of both. There may be a forms management database and a project database. Updating form records with relevant documentation is a daily activity for Program staff.

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**Communication Activities**

It may not seem obvious, but communication is an underlying and **inherent function** of the Forms Management Program. One of its core functions is that of developing forms for business operations, and **forms are important communication tools**. If they are to be effective for users, forms must be produced in clear and
plain language. They must use good graphic design and usability principles to assist users in navigating them.

Further, there are communication activities in every aspect of Program staff work—responding to calls, meeting with clients, discussing the language to use on forms, writing specifications, preparing and giving presentations, publishing announcements about forms, and more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet and Intranet Presence of the Program</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the Forms Management Program, a web presence is a <strong>prime method of communication</strong> with the organization, form owners, stakeholders, partners, clients, and users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Program details how to use the services, provides FAQs and contact information, and publishes form announcements. These are only a few of the items that should be documented on the web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The web is also a key channel on which to <strong>publish the forms catalog</strong> for easy user access to forms. Ongoing maintenance of web information is vital.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Links to and on Forms and Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many organizations make third-party forms, such as government forms, available to their form users <strong>via web links</strong>. It is imperative for the Forms Management Program to regularly <strong>check and maintain</strong> web links. The use of a link-checker web tool to report broken links automatically and help fix them ensures that links remain active and are not broken. Checking once a month is not too often.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automated link-checker software checks links in websites but <strong>not</strong> links on forms and other documents. For this reason, the Program must take care to maintain links on forms and forms documentation (e.g., links to other forms, associated instructions, procedures, policies, etc.) as well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forms Industry Research

A hallmark of a well-run professional Forms Management Program is **keeping up with technology and the forms industry**:

- Software
- Tools and peripherals or equipment
- Forms printing and deployment methods
- Products and materials
- Trends
- Best practices in forms management
- Industry standards
- Benchmarking and procedures
- Vendor status in the marketplace (mergers, acquisitions, closures)

Achieving this involves

- belonging to a professional association.
- interacting with peers.
- attending vendor shows.
- reading industry publications.

Program Documentation

A number of internal processes and detailed procedures support the Forms Management Program’s interaction with users and delivery of services to the organization:

- submitting a forms service request.
- expected service indicators.
- forms approval process.
- developing new forms and revising or cancelling forms.
- responding to technical support calls and enquiries.
  …and others.
These processes and procedures **must be documented for different audiences** such as clients, users, partners in service delivery, and the Program staff. Ongoing maintenance of documentation is vital.

For clients, users, and staff in general, an outline of the Program’s services
- guides them on how to submit form service requests and what details to include.
- provides an expectation of how their request will be handled.

Defined processes with procedures, job aids, and how-to guides internal to the Program are needed for employees to **accomplish their work in a consistent manner**. There is much less risk for variation and error when processes are defined and operational procedures are formalized and documented in writing. Process and workflow maps also help illustrate the steps to follow. Documentation is extremely **helpful for new hires** to the Program.

**Educating Form Users and Partners**

Educating other employees about the Forms Management Program’s role and responsibilities can be broken to the following areas.
- Educating **existing employees and new hires** to the organization at orientation to understand the Program’s role and be informed of the services it provides.
- Educating **forms coordinators** identified by their functional areas as liaison with the Forms Management Program—The objective here is to ensure there are individuals in every functional area throughout the organization with greater understanding of forms and forms management who can assist clients, users, and the Program.
Educating the functional areas, outsourced organizations or service providers working as partners with the Program in delivering forms services.

Educating management at all levels about the value, benefits, and goals of efficient and effective forms management helps ensure the Program's viability.

This requires planning, preparing specific materials (e.g., presentations, quick reference job-aids), and providing scheduled and ongoing training. Education is a process, not an event.

**Marketing the Forms Management Program**

To effectively market itself, the Forms Management Program needs to develop a marketing strategy and plan. In doing so, the Program looks at different products and communication media to determine those most able to carry its message and best reach its different audiences. Marketing channels include

- the web.
- brochures.
- presentations.
- newsletters.
- events.
- person-to-person contacts.
- videos.
  ...and more.

The strategy includes several objectives:

- Inform general staff as well as target audiences on
  - the role of the Forms Management Program, its services to the organization and how to obtain them.
  - how to reach Program staff.
Communicate senior management’s endorsement of the Program to foster acceptance by the organization to comply with its forms management policy.

Ensure the program’s visibility, usefulness, reputation, and viability.

Through different channels, the strategy achieves this by emphasizing the benefits that can be obtained through the use of well-designed, clear, user-friendly, and effective forms.

### Project Management and Tracking

Tracking is an essential part of managing forms projects and includes monitoring the progress of different types of forms projects:

- Simple enquiries
- Low stock notices
- Form print orders
- Forms and business process analyses
- Complex large projects affecting multiple forms
- Producing strategic management reporting metrics

…and others to name a few.

Project management activities include tracking project deliverables, resources, budget, dates and deadlines, activities, and tasks. The progress of each project is documented in the forms management database, and/or their corresponding tracking system. Important events, steps, and decisions are also documented as they occur during the course of projects in the form history record or applicable form record.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing support for a Forms Management Program often depends upon upper management’s level of confidence in that the Program is worthwhile and that the return on investment is adequate. One way to maintain firm trust in the Program is to <strong>provide management reports</strong> on a regular basis.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Requirements for Management</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management reporting is an essential part of every professional Forms Management Program. Reporting the right information can be determined only via extensive conversation with direct management and all management levels to learn <strong>what they view as valuable and important</strong>. Reporting to different management levels requires <strong>adapting</strong> report format and details to meet everyone’s information requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Framework for Management Reporting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once management reporting requirements are understood, the Forms Management Program develops a method to <strong>capture the data to obtain that information</strong>. The data can include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- projects, their outcome, and the Program’s contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- tasks, activities, business processes and operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- expenditures of the organization that are improved in some way by forms management activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- savings or contribution to the organization compared to the cost of the Forms Management Program, showing the <strong>ongoing value of Program</strong> to the organization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This framework tells **what data to collect**. The Management reporting section that follows tells how to use the data and report on it.
### Forms Management Program Reports

Using the management requirements and the Forms Management Program **reporting framework**, statistical information is gathered to create planned and ad hoc reports for the organization. Reporting audiences include:

- direct management (the authority to whom the Program reports)
- functional area senior management.
- the project office.
- the forms committee.
- executive management.
- external organizations.

### Benchmark Variances

Information on how other organizations perform their forms management function is found in a benchmark study. A **gap analysis** shows how one organization’s Forms Management Program varies with the points in the study compared to others. It helps:

- discover **improvement opportunities**.
- show management the areas where the Program is actually **leading** others.

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- Wikipedia, s.v. “benchmarking”

- Merriam-Webster, s.v. “benchmark”


