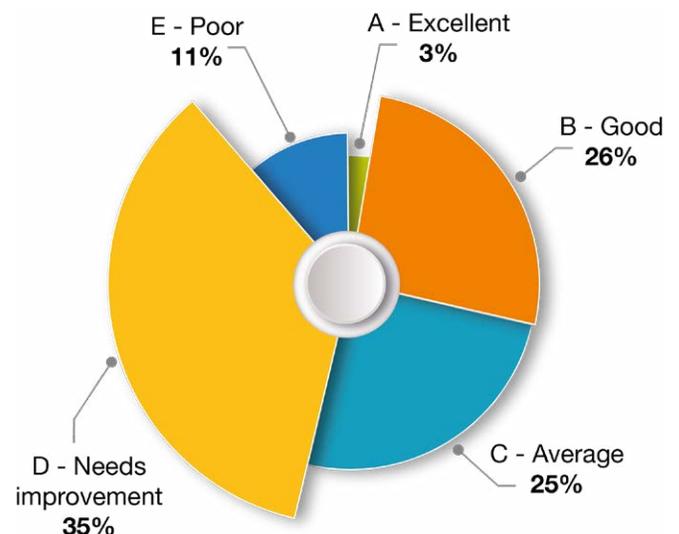


Will 2022 Bring a New Paradigm for Information Management?

The experience of the past 18 months has exposed the weak points in most organizations' Information Management (IM) strategies and practices. Facing increasing volumes of information, disparate workforces, and new customer demands, organizations can no longer view IM solely through a tactical cost-minimization filter, or from strictly a risk and compliance point of view. Now more than ever, organizations need to embrace disruption as a springboard for competitive advantage and adopt new ways of working that invigorate organizational performance.

But making the transition isn't just about the technology involved; success also requires the ability to actually innovate and productively adopt technologies and tactics that make a real difference. [AIIM research conducted this year](#) identified the key issues that organizations must address if they are to truly transform – and they can only transform if they align IM decisions with business decisions.

AIIM members point to a troubling misalignment that should be a wake-up call for information management and business executives everywhere. Nearly half the respondents we surveyed (46%) say that the alignment between IM and business strategy in their organization is either 'poor' or 'needs improvement.'



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Most IM professionals feel that what they do is not considered part of the bigger business strategy. “IM is mostly an afterthought,” said one member. “We haven’t been high on the priority list as it relates to being able to leverage data across the organization.” Another said, “Our leadership thinks of Information Management as a necessary evil and a cost center instead of a strategic imperative and a necessary prerequisite to sustainable growth.”

Process improvement and digital transformation are stymied as a result. “Our C-level still needs a lot of convincing to actually free up enough resources for intelligent IM” was a common complaint. Indeed, 66% say that it’s not a lack of technology that stops them from innovating, it’s getting the budget, resources, and leadership support that are their biggest challenges.

Leaders Should Seize the Opportunity

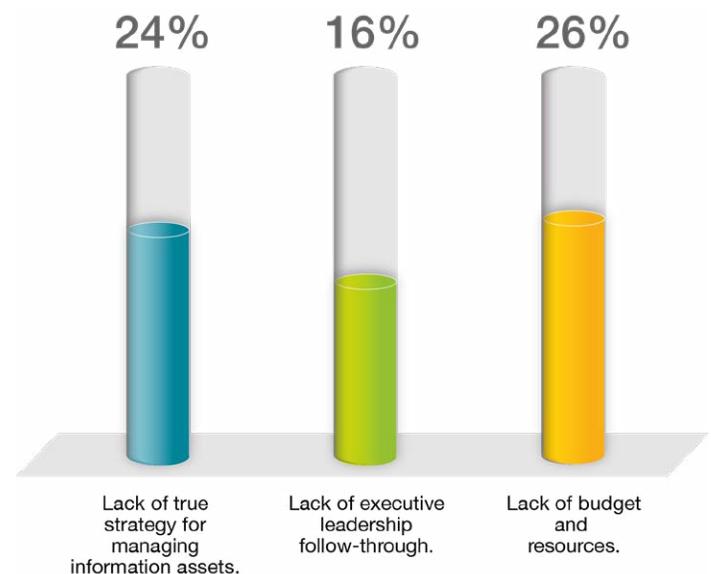
Happily, this challenge has also created opportunities for IM leaders to demonstrate their knowledge about what information should be created, captured, shared, and preserved and how to extract intelligence from it. This was the topic of a [recent AIIM webinar](#) hosted by AIIM CEO Peggy Winton, with guest Jed Cawthorne, Director, Product Management at [NetDocuments](#). Peggy and Jed took a look back at the most compelling IM issues over the past 18 months, how the misalignment of IM and business strategies can inhibit digital transformation, and how IM professionals can influence the strategic actions and decisions in their organizations, closing the strategic gap leading to real innovation and process improvement.

“There is immense opportunity for information management leaders today,” said Peggy. “We can no longer view our practice solely through a tactical lens, or by using only a cost minimization or risk minimization filter. If we continue to do that, I don’t think we’re ever going to change the status quo where the perception of information management is that it’s only a cost of doing business and not an enabler of better business performance.”

Overcoming the Gap

How can organizations begin to overcome this gap? Jed feels that one way is to establish IM as a formal part of the C-Level strategic mix. “Often, no senior leader is given the highest enterprise level responsibility for information. Chief Information Officers are really dealing with the technology side of things and often don’t have a good grip of the information side of their portfolio,” said Jed. “This has been the case for many years and we still haven’t moved on as an industry.”

The need for more connected C-Suite awareness and support is reflected in AIIM’s [2021 State of the Industry](#) report where members tell us the moving beyond business-as-usual is a challenge. We asked what factors were the biggest obstacle to becoming a truly digital organization and most pointed to a lack of alignment between executive strategies and IM strategies.



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Becoming a Change Agent

What can everyday IM practitioners do to “get a seat at the table” and become an agent of change? Peggy suggests that it will take a change in our own perceptions of our industry and our strategic value to get there. “We in this industry, for way too long, have wrongly focused exclusively on things like cost reduction, risk reduction, and the compliance with regulations. We speak the language of fear, uncertainty, and doubt really well. But we need to get over this and start focusing on how to be part of a more strategic business conversation, and learn to speak a different language that will resonate with executives and decision-makers.”

Jed suggests one way to build that new perception is for IM practitioners to become well-versed in the measures and metrics that executives use to gauge organizational performance. “Generate a good understanding of the pain points and the issues your business colleagues are dealing with,” explains Jed. “It’s important to understand what their key drivers and KPIs are, and to speak in those terms, and not just talk about regulatory-driven efficiencies.”

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Moving Forward in 2022

These obstacles will be front-and-center for AIIM in 2022. In the webinar, Peggy previewed some research that AIIM will perform by the end of 2021, and how findings will inform AIIM’s educational programming in 2022.

“We will be talking a lot about data literacy and organizational agility in the coming year,” explains Peggy. “The two go hand in hand and the topics will be a big part of our focus in 2022. Our annual conference being held in April in Denver – in person – will carry the idea forward that as organizations put more effort into data literacy and business intelligence to gain strategic advantage, there is an equal strategic importance to establishing similar linkage to what we do in Information Management. Without this strategic connection, it will be harder to really move the needle in terms of organizational performance and innovation.”

To learn more [click here to view the full webinar](#) with AIIM’s Peggy Winton and Jed Cawthorne, Director, Product Management at [NetDocuments](#).

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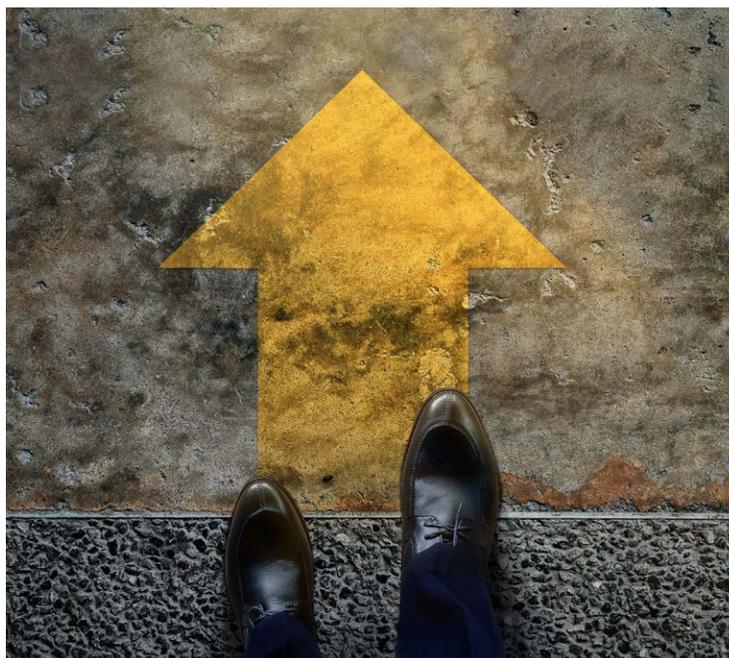
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