

Enterprise Information Management 2010 Conference

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The 2010 Enterprise Information Management (EIM) conference took place in Toronto, Canada September 21-23, 2010. The conference brought together leading practitioners of EIM from across North America. Much of the conference was focused on networking and building best practices. EIM is still new enough that everyone is learning by leaps and bounds. The following are our notes from the conference.

EIM Defined

[David Marco](#) of [EW Solutions](#) gave the wrap up presentation and in many ways he provided a context and overview of the entire breadth and depth of EIM. He started with this definition of EIM:

Information = Data (content) + Meta Data (context)

For example, the number 2,765 taken by itself has no context. If we tell you that 2,765 represents sales in 000's for the last quarter, we have a context to take the content, 2,765, and turn it into information -- sales.

David pointed out that data does not manage itself. In order to tie together applications, business processes, key stakeholders, data, and technology there has to be a systematic process and governance procedures from an enterprise perspective.

EIM is not a technology -- it's a "program". EIM starts with a way of thinking and goes from there to encompass an entire Enterprise. EIM first requires discipline, which must be supported by technologies that manage information assets throughout the organization.

The Cost of Redundancy

There are many reasons for introducing EIM to an organization, the sheer size and scale of data duplication alone can often justify an entire EIM program. David shared an example from a client of his. A large health care insurance company has a \$1.8B IT budget. The following facts are true for the organization:

- It costs \$2/gigabyte per year for storage
- When that storage is redundant and managed, the cost is \$8/gigabyte/year
- They estimate they have 1.6 petabytes of **redundant** data
- \$8 X 12 months X 1 million (1.6 petabytes rounded) =

\$153 Million in redundant data

Focus Areas

David provides this framework for thinking about EIM. There are eight focus areas:

1. Data Management
2. Process Management
3. Data Architecture (Data Blue Print)
4. Information Quality (Data Quality or DQ)
5. IT Portfolio Management
6. Master Data Management (MDM)
7. Information Delivery
8. Information Security

Data Management is the foundation piece for all eight of these areas. At MB Foster, we work with organizations who can tell us to the day each step in the management of a piece of paper, including when it will be shredded and thrown away forever. These same organizations seem to have an infinite supply of data and no policies or procedures to define the management of data over time, including when it will be deleted forever.

Without a Data Management policy in place organizations are drowning in a sea of data.

EIM Is Outside IT

While approximately 70% of the people attending EIM 2010 were in IT we heard time and again that EIM is an enterprise function. In fact, many of the IT people attending were uncomfortable giving up control of the data. It is the enterprise and business users who have to take ownership of the data and its meaning.

Successful EIM programs are driven top down in an organization. Leaders must have the vision to hold everyone accountable and stay focused on the critical subjects that make an organization succeed. David Marco calls these the nouns of an organization. Examples include customers, products, and services. No matter the size of an organization there are never more than 20 critical nouns in an enterprise.

In fact, large organizations such as, eBay, ING, and BMO that have EIM programs in place, also have leaders of EIM that include employees that have a business as well as an IT background.

Long Term Objective

EIM is a long term program that takes sustained effort to achieve. The results can include:

- Lowering costs, starting with eliminating redundant data
- Increasing revenue by helping the entire enterprise be more customer focused
- Long term sustainable competitive advantage

Achieving these results takes both vision and patience. The way to sell EIM to the rest of the organization is to focus on the measurable and achievable results (KPI's) that EIM does deliver when done well. As David Marco points out:

1. Understand
2. Measure

3. Manage

Managing Information

John Ladley of [IMCue Solutions](#) gave the opening presentation of the conference. His presentation on managing information asks us:

“Is information fuel or lubricant to your organization?”

John also offered the following: Fuel runs the company. Lubricant keeps it running smoothly and “enterprises run on the fuel of data”.

John suggests that in the past we in IT have been focused on information as lubricant making systems easier to use than previous manual or first and second generation application solutions. In the 21st century, the enterprises that will win their markets are those that treat information as fuel to drive their business.

John also asks “what is the value of data?” in an organization. Is it just spinning discs? Or is data used to make critical decisions to propel the organization forward. To realize the full value of data, information management must be moved outside of IT. John also reminds us:

“One person’s information is just another person’s data”

Social Media

Stephanie Lemieux of [Yellow Pages Canada](#) and Reza Kopaei of [Deloitte Canada](#) both gave presentations that showed the challenges of social media and information management. At Yellow Pages, their information is now shared across multiple web sites. In the back end, their information is gathered from these web sites and other information sources. The challenge of integrating all of these data sources into a single cohesive view automatically is a huge one.

Meta data, data information, and data integration are all issues when dealing with social media. There are solutions. Starbucks, who is viewed as a social media leader in their market space, has five full-time people running their social media program. They are very scientific about what they do and process driven. At Starbucks, they are expected to deliver tangible results in relationship building.

At Yellow Pages, people are allowed to experiment under the expectation that they will produce a report or other tangible product as part of the experimentation. With 11.5 million unique monthly visitors, Yellow Pages challenge is to leverage this into new opportunities, while meeting their existing KPIs, including auditing requirements, for their business customers. Stephanie is focused on improving the user experience, while still looking after the business owners who generate the revenue for Yellow Pages.

Cloud Computing

Various speakers talked about Cloud Computing. In many cases, cloud computing has slipped under, around, or behind IT. In the past, when a business unit wanted a new application, IT could refuse to install it. Today, those same business users get around IT by purchasing their

own server time in the cloud for less than \$20/month and installing the applications on the cloud computers.

This introduces new risks to an organization. Data is outside of the organization's control. It is duplicated. The quality of the data is not monitored. Cloud computing is here today. Organizations need to integrate cloud computing into their overall enterprise information management.

Culture and Change

Enterprise information requires new ways of thinking and managing data, information, and applications in an organization. Change is always hard. Successful EIM starts at the top and works its way outwards. For EIM to work, people need to be focused on subject matter areas (the 10-20 critical nouns of an organization) and not the applications or data.

Justify each project by showing the ROI in terms of increased revenue, customer retention, market share, or lower costs. At the conference we heard how EIM programs are providing:

- Innovation
- Efficiency

If you are getting stuck getting adoption of EIM in your organization, keep everyone focused on “what happens if we keep doing things the way we are doing them today?” Clearly lay out the vision for the new regime and how it will help the enterprise. This is the way to keep the change happening.

Governance

For information management to work it must be:

- Trustworthy
- Meaningful

There must be senior management visibility into the process, with reporting done by data stewards who are responsible for specific subject areas. Proof of concept, feedback loops, and continuous measurement provide oversight and governance. Demonstrating ROI on the stated EIM goals, which must be written down, keeps everyone aligned.

EIM Implementation – Real Life Cases

We attended presentations by Farmers Insurance, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare, and BMO (Bank of Montreal). BMO's presentation was all about governance and data control. Spencer Hertler, the Director of EDM (Enterprise Data Management) at Farmers Insurance, has an IT and Accounting background. He worked on a small business centric model that has grown into a full EIM program over a three year period. Spencer's presentation and others took dead aim at how to get buy-in at the senior management level. The trend from all the presenters and recommendation was to head towards the “pain” analyze the pain, determine the gap and then fill it. Spencer's presentation offered clear benefits to an EIM program. They include:

- Single Sourcing
- Audited, Balanced, Control (ABC) meaning traceable data
- Retirement of legacy systems
- Improved comprehension of data via Meta Data (MD)
- Extraordinary customer insight
- Enable agency (departmental and/or partner) support
- Innovative product services

The Last Frontier

The last untapped area for improvement in enterprises is their data. Enterprises with single entities and multi-nationals, have reduced staff, consolidated applications, chosen ERP solutions that are used by every level of the company, hence, there are limited ways to reduce costs. The one area where savings, profitability, competitiveness can be obtained is in leveraging data.

Summary

The EIM 2010 Conference opened our eyes to the great strides that EIM has made in the last few years. While MB Foster has been working in at least four of the seven focus areas of EIM for many years, we still have more to learn about the best way we can help our customers derive more value from their information.

We would be happy to facilitate an introduction to any of the people mentioned in this article. The [EIM Institute](#) is a great source of information. You can sign up for free and gain access to numerous publications on EIM.

In his presentation *Establishing an EIM Program*, Herschel Chandler told us:

“The value of information isn’t realized until it is used”.

EIM is poised to define leaders who embrace the challenge of changing their organizations to be information focused. What are you doing to help your enterprise with the change to EIM today?