WHITE PAPER

SIX REASONS WHY ORGANIZATIONS DON'T MANAGE EMAILS EFFECTIVELY

Why Don't Companies And Government Departments Manage Their Emails Effectively?

According to Ferris, 75% of companies have no systems in place to manage email records. Based on my own observations and dialog with Knowledgeone Corp's customers and prospects, I would say the percentage is far higher; say 85% or more. My guess is that the Ferris survey inadvertently included a number of email 'cleaning' systems as email management systems; thereby skewing the figures.

Given that there is now a variety of proven email management systems (like Knowledgeone Corp's GEM) available for most email servers (e.g., Exchange, GroupWise and Notes) and given the enormous danger of 'unmanaged' email it is, on the surface, difficult to explain the apparent reluctance of organizations to implement email management policies and systems.

My own experience leads me to believe that the following are the major reasons organizations do not take this critical step:

1. Lack Of Ownership And Leadership

Email management transects all of the traditional vertical organizational boundaries. There may well be an IT person in charge of the email servers but there is rarely a senior management person in charge of email organization wide. That is, no one person actually 'owns' the problem and no one person has the authority to implement an organizational wide solution.

2. Lack Of Understanding Of The Problem And Of The Solution

Most of the people who are senior enough in an organization to be aware of this problem do not comprehend the complexities of the problem. They have dialogs with IT people who explain the issues in technical terms, not in business or risk-management terms.

3. Lack Of Desire To Solve The Problem Plus Active Opposition To A Solution

There are a large number of IT people and others in every organization who simply do not want their emails managed, analyzed, scrutinized, indexed and saved.

4. Confusion Over What Is Involved In Complying With A Plethora Of Laws And Regulations

One hundred percent of what well meaning bureaucrats and politicians have done to 'solve' what they see as email privacy issues has been badly thought out, badly drafted and counter productive; simply ill-informed, knee-jerk reactions.

Every employer has to right to determine how its resources are used. Every employer has the right to protect itself. Every employer has the right to tell its employees if private emails are allowed or not. Every employer has the right to tell its employees what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in an email.

Solving the so called privacy policy is dead easy. Herewith is the McKenna solution.

Tell employees that:

1. Private emails are not allowed and all emails will be scrutinized for inappropriate content; or
2. Private emails are allowed (in moderation) but that all emails, including private emails, will be scrutinized for inappropriate content; or
3. Private emails are allowed (in moderation) but that they MUST be identified by the keyword "Private" in the subject line. All emails without the keyword "Private" in the subject line will be scrutinized for inappropriate content.

5. Confusing And Misleading Claims By Companies Marketing Email Management Systems

It is a complex problem (have you ever tried to set up a multi-server email system in a large organization?) often poorly understood and poorly explained by the sales person. Add to this the fact that the sales person is usually speaking to the IT person (who lives in a different universe) who then has to 'translate' what he thinks the sales person said to senior management. Too often, the harried sales person, under intense pressure from the IT interrogator, will simply say "Yes" without really understanding the question or its implications.

6. Multiple And Conflicting Objectives

Is your objective to simply be aware of everything that is in your email store or is it to also meet a plethora of complex and competing regulations and certification standards? Have you inadvertently set the goal post too high? Have you made the problem many times more complex than it should be? Has it become a "Wish List" instead of a requirement? Why don't you try 'Getting wet slowly' and review your needs again when the basic but critical email management problem is solved?

In the end it is about ownership, understanding and will. If just one senior person with the necessary authority understands the problem and commits to a solution then it will happen. The solutions are out there; they are just waiting for a committed purchaser.

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