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A PRACTICAL GUIDE

# Your First 90 Days of Information Governance



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## A Practical Guide to Reducing Risk and Building a Defensible IG Foundation

Information governance rarely fails because of a lack of intent stalls when efforts are fragmented, reactive, or never put into practice. Many organizations know they need stronger control over information risk but struggle to translate policies and priorities into consistent, defensible execution.

This guide is designed to close that gap by outlining what to focus on in your first 90 days so you can reduce risk, improve audit and cyber readiness, and establish a practical foundation you can build on.

## Who This Guide Is For

This guide is especially relevant if your organization:

- Relies heavily on manual processes to manage information
- Struggles to locate records during audits, investigations, or incidents
- Has policies that exist on paper but are inconsistently applied
- Is responding to increasing regulatory, cyber, or AI-related risk

> Most organizations at **Ad Hoc, Siloed, or early Defined** maturity levels will see the greatest impact from these first-90-day actions.

## What the First 90 Days Should Accomplish

By the end of 90 days, you should have:

- Clear ownership and accountability for IG
- Visibility into your highest-risk information
- Foundational policies that are documented and usable
- Reduced reliance on purely manual, reactive processes
- A roadmap for continued maturity

This is not about perfection. It's about stabilization and control.



PHASE 1

# Establish Control and Visibility

Days 1-30

**Primary goal:**
Reduce uncertainty and create basic governance structure.

## Focus Areas

- Ownership and accountability
- High-risk information visibility
- Baseline policy definition

## Key Actions

- Establish clear IG ownership and decision-making authority
- Identify where your highest-risk information resides (legal, regulated, sensitive data)
- Document or refresh foundational policies:
  - Retention
  - Classification
  - Access and handling
- Align Legal, IT, Records, and Security stakeholders on priorities

## Outcomes

- Reduced reliance on tribal knowledge
- Shared understanding of information risk
- A defensible starting point for governance efforts

## *Phase 1 Insight*

**For Corporate Legal Teams:**

This phase often exposes where retention, legal hold, and security responsibilities are unclear across Legal, IT, Records, and Security.

**For Law Firms:**

Early visibility typically highlights inconsistencies in how client matter data, records, and legacy repositories are managed across practice groups.

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PHASE 2

# Standardize and Operationalize

Days 31-60

**Primary goal:**
Move from ad hoc practices to repeatable execution.

## Focus Areas

- Consistency across teams and systems
- Policy awareness and application
- Reduced manual effort

## Key Actions

- Standardize how retention and classification policies are applied across key repositories
- Communicate IG policies and employee responsibilities
- Begin reducing obvious ROT in high-risk systems
- Improve coordination between IG and Cyber teams, especially for incident response

## Outcomes

- More consistent information handling
- Improved audit and investigation readiness
- Early risk and cost reduction wins

## *Phase 2 Insight*

**For Corporate Legal Teams:**

Standardization helps reduce audit pressure and reliance on manual effort during investigations, regulatory inquiries, or incident response.

**For Law Firms:**

This phase supports more consistent client data handling, improved defensibility, and better coordination between legal, IT, and risk teams.

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PHASE 3

# Strengthen Defensibility and Readiness

Days 61-90

**Primary goal:**
Build confidence and prepare for scale.

## Focus Areas

- Defensibility
- Measurement and repeatability
- Forward-looking maturity

## Key Actions

- Improve documentation and evidence for audits and investigations
- Strengthen enterprise search and inventory tracking
- Integrate IG considerations into cyber incident response workflows
- Define priority improvement tracks for the next 6–12 months (e.g., automation, lifecycle controls, reporting)

## Outcomes

- Faster, more confident response to audits and incidents
- Clear path from Defined to Integrated maturity
- Foundation for automation, analytics, and AI readiness

## *Phase 3 Insight*

**For Corporate Legal Teams:**

Stronger defensibility enables faster, more confident responses to audits, cyber incidents, and cross-border regulatory requirements.

**For Law Firms:**

Improved readiness supports client trust, reduces response time during incidents, and lays the groundwork for scalable governance as data volumes grow.

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## Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Treating IG as a documentation exercise only
- Focusing on tools before clarifying ownership and policy
- Attempting enterprise-wide automation too early
- Isolating IG from cybersecurity and compliance efforts

## What Comes After 90 Days

Organizations that successfully complete these first 90 days are positioned to:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Integrate lifecycle controls into systems of record | Expand automation and reporting | Use IG maturity to support AI, analytics, and innovation initiatives | Continuously optimize governance as regulations and business needs evolve |

## Next Steps

### Speak with an Information Governance Expert

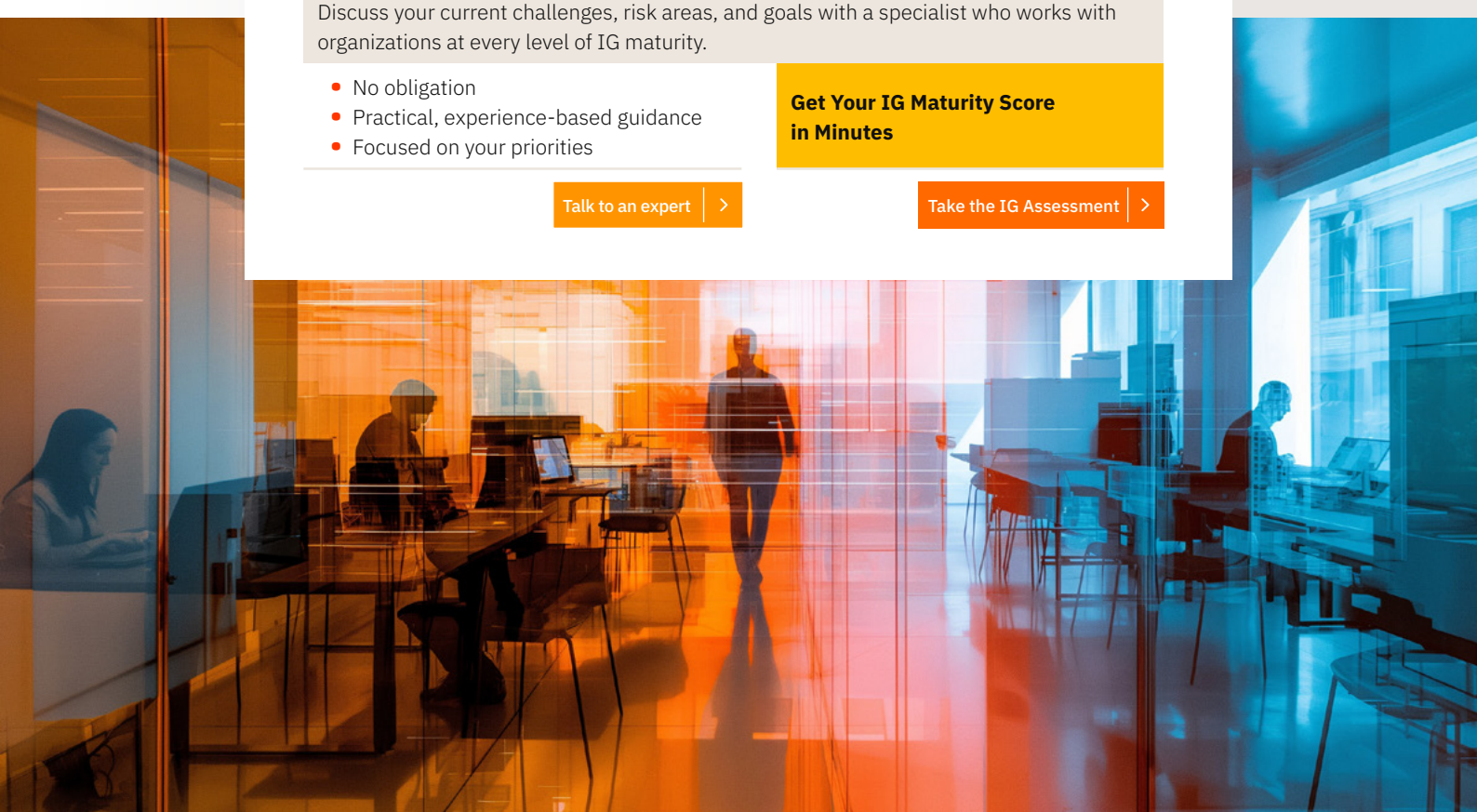
Discuss your current challenges, risk areas, and goals with a specialist who works with organizations at every level of IG maturity.

- No obligation
- Practical, experience-based guidance
- Focused on your priorities

Talk to an expert >

**Get Your IG Maturity Score in Minutes**

Take the IG Assessment >



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