

# Effective Information Management for Boards

**Storing, organising, retrieving, and retaining information relevant to governance is essential for all organisations and their boards.**

An organisation needs a solid information management framework to ensure that relevant information is captured, accessible, and, if necessary, meets **regulatory compliance**. One framework is the Business Activity Structure for Information Classification (BASIC). This BASIC structure helps manage the information assets that are passed between directors and management via the **company secretary**.

## The BASIC Framework

This framework identifies all major business activities, classify these activities as either corporate management, administration, or board operations, and organises the associated information assets.

The resulting schema includes three groupings of information assets related to:

1. Corporate management, including governance, management, and compliance
2. Administration management and support services, including finance, human resources, IT
3. Board operations, including board and committee meetings, and official proceedings

## Corporate Management

Within the corporate management grouping, the company secretary should identify any functions related to governance, corporate management, oversight, strategy, and external liaison. These functions often include information related to:

- Governance
- Legal
- Compliance
- Board of directors
- Strategic planning
- Participation in or delegations to outside forums or official bodies

## Administration

Generally speaking, the administration grouping encompasses the daily functions or business processes to enable governance operations.

Administration functions can include:

- Human resources
- Board evaluations and professional development
- Budgets, accounts, and director expenses
- Business planning

## Board Operations

This grouping relates to the information necessary for specific operations of the board, such as:

- Board and committee meetings
- Board books and material
- Documentation of official proceedings

## Information Management Life Cycle

After classifying the information by activity, it is also helpful to classify information by currency and necessity.

### Active Files

First, review the active records of the board of directors. This is the information actively in use for decision-making, to provide evidence of business activity, and to support near-term reference. As a rule of thumb, these active files account for about 25 per cent of a board's information assets. The remaining 75 per cent consists of inactive but necessary records (30 per cent), inactive and useless records (35 per cent), with a small portion being your vital or essential records (10 per cent).



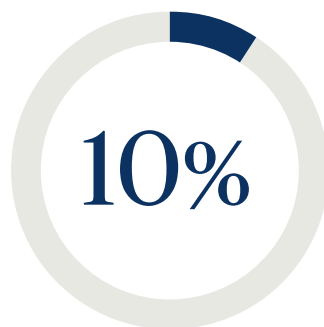
Active Files



Inactive Necessary Files



Inactive Useless Files



Essential records

### Inactive but Necessary Files

It is essential to identify the information assets that are necessary for day-to-day work, but ultimately have no ongoing value because they are useful for a limited time. They might support routine or time-limited actions, or be draft versions of a larger project. To make your job manageable, these information assets need to be used and then destroyed as quickly as possible.

### Inactive but Useless Files

Thirty-five per cent of your information assets, relate to the inactive but useless files, are necessary for long-term evidence of your organisation's business or governance activities – but you typically don't need to access them regularly.

### Essential Records

The final 10 per cent of your information assets should be part of your organisation's business continuity plan. These vital records play an essential role and allow the board of directors and your management team to continue functioning in the event of a disaster or crisis, such as a large-scale weather event or **cyber attack**.

In these situations, the board of directors and management team need immediate access to the essential information assets so they can continue their leadership and decision-making activities.

Vital records could include constating documents, legal and financial documents, copyrights, patents, copies of the **board bylaws**, and the most recent board books.

In such an event, a **board portal** can serve as a vital communication link – connecting the board members to the executive team and allowing both groups to access needed materials and documentation as quickly as possible.