BFMA

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

DRAFT VERSION: v6, April 28, 2017

Committee Chair: Margaret Tassin, CFC, CFSP

Committee Members: Ray Killam, CFC, CFSP

Louise Laperrière

Lisa Lee, CEBS, FMLI

Bet Morash

Leslie Peterson, CFSP

Jim Pritchard

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Skill or Function	Description
A. Governance	Return to Table of Contents
1. Forms Management Program Strategy	
a. Forms Mandate, Policy and Strategy	A forms mandate, policy, strategy, mission, vision and objectives are imperative for a well-run FM department. They help define roles, authority, responsibilities and are part of the organization's governance. Their absence results in lack of senior management understanding and support, FM departmental outsourcing, undefined roles, poorly implemented policies, inefficient and undocumented processes and forms, lack of regulatory compliance, etc.
b. Communicate the mandate, policy and strategy	Communicate the day to day impact of the mandate, policy, strategy, governance, etc. to employees. Communicating the mandate via the Program Manual and other avenues ensures that roles and responsibilities are understood. For example, communications can target the need to establish form owners and who can request, approve or obsolete forms.
c. FM compliance with corporate policies	FM policies must be consistent with other corporate policies such as security, privacy, accessibility. There is a statement of compliance within the Program Manual.
d. How FM implements its compliance with corporate policies	To ensure the forms and templates developed and deployed remain compliant to corporate policies, the Forms Management Program needs to establish procedures that include a review of the policies, establish a compliance review checklist to use during design analysis and serve as an audit trail, maintain contacts for each policy owner, and establish a cycle of periodic reviews for compliance. The Program also needs to educate form owners on issues associated with lack of compliance. Exceptions to compliance need approval and detailed supporting documentation.
e. Create policies	Create policies for signatures, accessibility, database access, supported languages, etc. In all cases, departmental procedures must support the policies. Example: Know differences between digital signature and electronic signature. Understand legislative requirements such as USA's E-sign and UETA or Canada's PIPEDA. Establish signature requirements (challenge need, examine business process/rules, risk assessment, concurrent or consecutive needs, type, authority levels, etc.) Define signature technology to be supported (wet, digital, electronic, appropriate authentication, etc.).

	Example: Establish a multiple language policy: what languages to support (including Braille and sign language), multi-lingual forms or uni-lingual based on deployment and audience and exceptions, what forms to translate and meeting all legal requirements.
f. Definitions within Forms Management	FM drives the organization to agree to the terms being used in order to establish strategy. Organizations define these terms and obtain acceptance and agreement within the organization because without that there can be disputes. Suggested terms include form, record, document, form edition, form version, form history file, forms management, forms analysis, design analysis, forms design, forms development, forms programming, business process analysis, business rules, electronic form, virtual form, mobile form, webform, printer-resident form, input screen
g. Establish role of FM and its head	Every organization needs to establish the role of the Forms Management Program and determine the role of its head within the organization, and with external organizations
2. Forms Management Structure	
a. Relationship with Management at all levels	In the course of its project operations, FM maintains and nurtures relationships with all levels of management, including senior and executive. Turnover with management can be an issue. If there is a well-defined policy, strategy, mandate, governance structure, this will ease transition to a new manager or new organization structure for the FM department. Absent the above, a well thought out plan to educate and nurture new management is imperative.
b. Relationship with Other Functional Areas or External Organizations	FM maintains and nurtures relationships with other organizations as a partner in service or in project delivery and are often called to sit on cross-functional teams and committees. It is important to establish relationships with other departments or professional peers to share knowledge on forms, strategy, resources.
i. Form Owners	Form owners authorize what information is required on the form and are responsible for approving the creation, revision, suspension and discontinuation of the form.
ii. Forms Coordinators	Forms Coordinators are the liaison within each functional area for initiating new forms projects, forms analysis coordination, answering forms-related questions, and training of new employees on how to obtain forms. As liaisons, they work to ensure that all forms development activities in their department conform to established forms policies and procedures.

	The forms coordinator will "own" forms within the area that do not have another, specific owner within that functional area.
iii. Forms Committees	The forms committee exists by mandate of the forms policy. The committee develops a mission statement which is approved by senior management. Purpose: Each organization needs to define its committee's purpose. For example, the committee provides a venue to resolve differences between stakeholders and provides a level of review for all interested parties for cross-functional forms. Another purpose could be to assist FM to resolve any departmental concerns about implementation of FM policy or mandate. Governance and Authority: Individuals assigned to the committee by senior management are empowered to make decisions on behalf of the department or project that they represent. The governance structure should include an escalation process to resolve disputes.
3. Forms Management Program within the organization	Forms Management Program fits into an organization in many different locations e.g., IT, communications, legal, administration, shared services. Regardless of reporting location, forms management must have access to all portions of the organization as an enterprise-wide function and maintain relationships with key partners. The senior level executive that FM reports to must be supportive of the FM policy. FM is recognized as the authority within the organization for forms.
4. Program manual	To support and promote its services to the organization, the Forms Management Program needs to develop, establish and maintain a Program Manual. It describes to users how to interact with the Forms Management Program, how to get services, answers questions, describes the Forms Management policies, gives an organization chart for the Forms Management Program and contacts, and provides other information. The Program Manual should be available to all employees.
5. Forms style guide	To support its forms design and development services to the organization, the Forms Management Program needs to develop, establish and maintain a Forms Style Guide. It provides an authoritative reference that documents the organization's decisions that pertain to forms design standards, conventions and best practices. Topics include forms design and development standards, guidelines and best practices (e.g. unique identifier protocol and location, branding, layout, spacing, type size, fonts, etc.)

	It is necessary to ensure all relevant standards and style guides related to forms production and development are kept up-to-date, well communicated and promoted to all interested parties. This will help ensure every party understands their roles, clarify the reason why certain standards need be applied and for what purpose, eliminate misunderstandings and foster better relations with customers while ensuring the organization's business information needs and corporate image are met The style guide should be available to all employees and to any party producing forms for the organization (including external partners and external resources on contract).
a. Standards on forms development	It is the responsibility of the forms management program to develop and implement policies and practices that produce effective forms efficiently. Obtaining active support of senior management, obtaining buy-in from stakeholders, and assuring that FM directives align with other organizational directives will go a long way toward reaching acceptance of and compliance with the forms management directives. Develop/establish/obtain enterprise agreement on any new required standards or revised standards or deviations/exceptions relating to forms development and management as required. Approval is often obtained via the forms committee.
b. Standards and policies external to FM	Apply and ensure compliance with standards (e.g. branding, writing style, industry) and policies (e.g. privacy, security, and accessibility) developed external to FM. Forms are a primary interface for the organization. Forms must reflect the organization's branding, style and policy decisions (which may be specified by other internal organizational units), as well as comply with regulatory requirements or industry standards (such as ISO or manufacturers). Compliance should be reflected in the Program Manual or Forms Style Guide. Often a statement of compliance to the specific policies and links to the policies are all that is required. Policies that mandate a design style, such as the ISO date standard, are often illustrated with examples in the Program Manual or Forms Style Guide.
6. Ethics	Consistently doing what is appropriate and fair reflects a strong sense of ethics within the program and enhances the level of respect it earns from Forms Management Program users. Given that process or forms analysis may give rise to some resistance or questioning, ensure meetings and dealings with requesters, partners, stakeholders and service providers are conducted with respect~~,~~ and

	politeness, allowing everyone to express their needs, point of view or reasoning for consideration in the project at hand. In forms management showing respect extends to earning trust of the person filling the form, the form owner and the form program head. All must concur that the final data collection tool is an ethical instrument so that all parties achieve the best results. For example a person filling a form may not trust the government form they are completing thus the form should not be deceptive in any way to get true answers (e.g., asking a question that is not relevant and the data not needed). This applies to form creators too; they cannot simply believe that a person will fill out the question truthfully on the form just because it is asked. Ethics plays a role on both sides of the form.
B. Communication Skills and Functions	Return to Table of Contents (Forms as a key interface with requesters, domestic and international publics)
1. Customer Service Techniques	Forms management uses customer service techniques such as responsiveness, accuracy, timeliness, sound advice and respect for the requirements and needs of the organization. Positive helpful image of the department, all staff participate Print Prod and Contracting: timeliness and pressures
2. Counsel and guidance	Counsel and guidance to management, project teams, internal and external stakeholders on best practices, forms, forms management program, service, etc. are important to well-run organization. The role of the Forms Management Program is one of consultative service to improve business processes within the organization. The Forms Manager should offer advice and counsel to those who need forms developed or revised to ensure that assumptions are not made and the optimal solution is developed. Such consultation helps to guarantee that the solution (may be a form or not) meets the real need of the business process it serves.
3. Influencing and Persuasion	Persuasiveness in supporting recommended options is an asset to all FM employees. When presenting options, it may be necessary to use persuasiveness by providing additional information, clearly explaining the reasoning, justifying the recommended option in order for requesters, customers and management to buy into the solution and agree to the process or solution.
4. Negotiator	Negotiate timelines, products, terms and conditions, resource allocation.

	A number of different elements of the Forms Management program need to be negotiated and agreed upon: - with the requester or project team, agree on -- a timeline to realize the business analysis, process and form development schedule -- a deployment schedule -- resources and partners required to work on the project and the HR cost - in the case of printed forms, negotiate cost and timeline with print vendors for the form production and delivery schedule. Be sure to include clear production specifications as well as any remedial measure in case of non-compliance of the product at time of delivery or missed deadlines. Note: Depending on the contracting amount and size of the procurement order, contracts may fall under the provisions of existing trade agreements such as NAFTA, WTO. As a rule, these are managed by the organization's contracting experts as deemed necessary.
5. Facilitator	Lead/facilitate information or fact finding sessions, informal discussions on forms or processes. Forms professionals are often called upon to facilitate discussions to gather information and requirements to map a business process or determine gaps or obtain feedback or change an existing form, etc.
6. Interviewing –gathering requirements	The technique of gathering business process facts from individuals that actually do the work of the process FM is trying to map out to create or revise a form or forms. No one knows better how the form should perform and what it must accomplish than those who use it.
7. Participation in cross-functional teams	When the functionality of a form crosses departmental or operational lines within the business environment, it is essential for all stake-holders to participate and buy-in to the final form. This work group should not attempt to execute the design layout itself, but they do need to participate actively in the workflow discussion to ensure the form's effectiveness. A cross-functional team is a group of subject matter experts working toward a common goal or project. It may include people from the forms department, policy/procedures, IT, finance, marketing, operations, and human resources departments. Typically, it includes employees from all levels of an organization. Members may also come from outside an organization (in particular, from suppliers, key customers, or consultants).

8. Work group development	In order to pull a work group together, FM needs to effectively communicate the requirements, deliverables, vision, specifications, etc. for the project assignment. The work group may include FM employees only or others in the organization and or external resources.
9. Presentations / demos	When the analysis is completed and the next step is forms design, it is often appropriate to present the results of the analysis and the proposed layout for the form to the work group that collaborated on the content and function of the form. Such presentations should be short and to the point.
10. Communicate compliance standards	Communication tools support the Forms Management experts to explain to requesters why such standards exist and obtain their support in maintaining the organization's brand and image. Standards developed by FM and other departments (such as corporate communications, branding, marketing or IT for screen layout, etc.) may be included in the FM communications. Communication tools can include a forms style guide, training classes, web pages, new hire orientation, etc.
11. Establish requester, partner, stakeholder relationships and liaison, etc.	Establishing and maintaining good relationships with all of the people involved in a forms lifecycle is a responsibility of the FM function.
a. Program and requester service areas	Create and maintain relationships directly with key program staff and requester services staff that are involved with the form, including the technical support groups who help requesters fill, use and understand the form's functionality.
b. Records Management and Information Management	Create and maintain relationships with the records and information management department/sections. This relationship is particularly important in establishing the FM program record system for all its forms and management activities. The IM department Is also a key partner is helping the FM group establish all the rules of its electronic forms management record system yet maintain its specific record needs.
c. IT, data administrators	Create and maintain relationships with the IT department directly with key people that are or will be involved with the forms process. They are key in - ensuring similar captions, field names and terms are used in forms and related data systems for consistency, - adding programmed intelligence to form data fields. - mapping and programming of external automated processes linked to forms such as automated email, web look-ups, databases, user verification - In some organizations, they also remain responsible for the server deployment and distribution of forms.

d. Security and Privacy areas	Establish liaisons with the privacy officer and the IT security area for secure and privacy-compliant forms and form data. Ensure that all organizational privacy policies are implemented in forms development and that only the appropriate users access a form or a form section.
e. Purchasing/procurement	Establish relationships and liaisons with the purchasing/procurement section to achieve best quality, cost and delivery timelines for forms purchasing, printing and distribution or forms services.
h. Communications and Marketing	Establish relationships and liaisons with the communications and marketing department to: - achieve the promotion of the forms management program - ensure compliance with established brand standards for logo, colors, fonts, and marketing messages.
i. Legislation and/or Policy	Establish relationships and liaisons with the legal department to assure regulatory compliance and review of forms for legality questions, terms. Establish relationships with audit or policy compliance.
j. All other departments and functional areas	A form can involve many departments and/or functional areas. Maintain good relationships and support with all of these areas.
12. Interpret/translate technical language or jargon into non-technical terms for non-expert audiences	The forms program must bring disparate disciplines together during meetings, demos or presentations by being able to use plain language translation so that those disciplines will be able understand what is being said. Plain language is language that your audience/customer can understand.
13. Listening skills	Although not unique to FM, listening skills are necessary by the FM team in order to work on projects and deliver desired results. The active listening method is particularly useful: listen, reflect, question to confirm intent or need.
14. Writing Skills	
a. Forms development	Writing skills apply to forms text, captions, instructions, etc., including plain language awareness for clarity and ease of comprehension for the target audience. All text should be carefully evaluated and FM should make recommendations for better wording to be validated by Owner/Communications Advisor/Editor/Translator.
b. Forms-related announcements	New, revised or canceled forms are the result of process changes which often require behavior changes. Process changes remain unknown to users unless communicated. It is essential to notify requesters or users of such changes to ensure they are made aware of the change, begin using new or recently changed forms and stop using older versions, even destroy old stock. Such changes can be communicated to staff or

	requesters through bulletins, targeted emails, web notices, automated system messages, letters, etc. and should include instructions on what to do and direct users to the new or revised form.
k. Print specifications, technical/ user requirements, proposals for tender	Technical writing is any written form of technical communication used in a variety of technical and occupational fields. Technical communication is a means to document or convey scientific, engineering, or other technical information. In the case of forms, it can refer to: - specifications related to the physical construction or production of the form - specific user requirements documented to help defining the form process and use - specific terms and conditions included in a proposal for tender e.g. RFP, RFQ, RFI - a knowledge database of typical forms and help desk problems to answer questions consistently
l. Clear business writing	Clear business writing combined with FM knowledge is needed to create FM program manual, style guide, web pages, procedures, standards, policies, best practices related to FM.
m. Respond to enquiries	Enquiries may come from the public, private or public organizations, legal services, users, senior management, customers, employees, any area internal to the organization. For technical support: Skills include careful listening to the problem, asking appropriate questions, responding directly to the questions asked, being helpful, calm and empathic. This may include establishing service level agreements with the organization's IT service or help desk. On all matters relating to forms and FM: Skills include careful understanding of the enquiry, asking appropriate questions to validate the task at hand. This may include investigating or searching through files, documents, databases or systems to collate relevant information and data in order to draft or prepare a response. This may include collaborating with other partners in the organization. Although many enquiries may be responded to verbally at first, most will require a written solution report, a formal written response, at times even a published notice with details.

15. Promote FM program	A forms program must continually promote itself to its customers and management in order to be a successful program. Messages should include the value of FM to the organization such as: "Well-designed forms meet the needs of the customer as well as the organization. A form is often the first point of contact between the customer and an organization. When forms are poorly designed, the customer is left with a negative impression of that organization." Methods include management reporting skills, metrics management, presentations, new employee orientation, new supervisor/manager orientation, executive orientation, open houses, conference attendance, partnerships, publicize accomplishments. DEFINING MOMENT: promotion is raising general awareness
16. Deliver reports and briefings to senior management	A successful Forms Program will record the data for all metrics relating to the forms program and will be able to report those metrics to senior management to keep, gain and receive their support. Reports may be written or delivered in person, each requiring separate skill sets.
C. Project Management Skills	Return to Table of Contents
1. Understand how project management is handled	Project management provides a methodical approach to planning and guiding project processes from start to finish in order to achieve specific goals. The larger the project, the more important it is to use formal processes and techniques. Methodologies vary by organization, and sometimes vary within an organization depending on the size and nature of projects. Project management concepts, roles, tools, and practices can be applied within any organization's framework. An understanding of the methodologies supported by their organization enables FM to work within that specific framework.
2. Roles	
a. FM as the Project Manager (Lead forms/template development projects)	FM typically performs the project manager role for forms-centric projects. These projects may be medium to large in size, and staffed by one to multiple team members, possibly from across the organization. Project management principles, practices and tools are used, with activities adapted and scaled as appropriate.
b. FM as a subject matter expert	FM may participate in enterprise or cross-functional projects. FM's roles in projects are variable, in comparison to other positions like systems analysts.

	FM is the subject matter expert on forms. FM's role is to provide guidance on forms matters, to ensure that forms comply with FM policy, to lead the forms components of the project and to provide forms-related deliverables. It may include leading other resources in Forms Management to produce project deliverables. It includes ensuring that, before completion, the project creates the assets that will be needed for maintenance of the resulting solution over time.
3. Define the work	The goals and objectives of a project are established in the initiation phase. The project charter is used to define the expectations of the project in terms of objectives, deliverables, scope, risks, costs, deadlines and roles, and gain management authorization of the project. This upfront planning is important to ensure that all parties (sponsor, stakeholders, project team members, form owner) share common perceptions. It helps prevent problems caused by differing viewpoints on the basic terms of the project.
4. Plan the work	The result of the planning phase is a comprehensive outline of the steps necessary to accomplish the project objectives (with milestones and interim deliverables), identification of the resources (people, tools, money and time) needed and a workable schedule. It is critical to gain agreement of the stakeholders on deliverables, resources and schedule.
5. Manage the work plan	Work plans must be evaluated and adjusted on an ongoing basis to incorporate current information, evaluate remaining work, determine the current state of the project and keep it on track.
6. Manage resources	All resources must be managed throughout the project. This includes the project team, sponsor, stakeholders, tools, budget and schedule *(see Manage the work plan)*. Managing the team requires all the usual people management skills, including training, motivating, establishing expectations, monitoring performance, removing obstacles etc. Project challenges may include the constraint of time for team members with both project and daily forms work (common with forms resources); daily forms work typically takes priority. Managing sponsors and management stakeholders requires good communication and an awareness of their social styles, goals and interests. They need to be kept informed of project status and issues to perform their roles. Managing the tools for the project team include making available any tools that contribute to the overall efficiency of the project, including

	shared drives, the right software for the project (project management software, form design software, bar code software, etc.), access to information and more. Managing the budget requires planning, monitoring, action and communication. Managing the time is essential else resources may be lost to other commitments. Resources are also at risk when management changes, interest wanes, or disagreement among stakeholders arises.
7. Manage communication	
a. Team Communications	Actively communicating on a project is critical for maintaining common expectations and avoiding surprises. Project status must meet the needs of the organization and is communicated as appropriate for each audience. Communications typically report accomplishments from the last reporting period, planned accomplishments for the next period, current issues, new risks, current scope change requests, adherence to the project's budget and schedule. Project team status meetings include discussions at a detailed level. Status reports for sponsor and management stakeholders may be brief and high-level.
b. Communication Plan	A communication plan identifies the audience(s) affected by the project, what they need to know, when they need to know it, frequency of contact, and the methods to use. Examples include: Email, informational and/or training meetings (in person or virtual); links to web sites; service bulletin notification via email, with link to web page for ongoing reference; involve representatives from all departments; letters to external customers. The communication plan may provide extended information for people with a need to know more. Examples include a document library, frequently asked questions (FAQ), and a project web site.
8. Manage change	Organizational change management (OCM) addresses the people side of change. It is a framework for managing the effect of implementing new or changed business processes and/or roles. Effective application of change management is critical to the success of a project. Organizational change management engages individuals and groups in the change process and encourages them to take ownership for their new roles and responsibilities such as learning new behaviors and skills. FM needs to ensure that the organizational change management framework is applied to forms-specific issues of the project.

D. Work Simplification, Process Improvement, Business Analysis	Return to Table of Contents
1. Understand your organization	Understanding the business structure of your organization is imperative to ensure that the Forms Management Program makes forms flow throughout your organization effectively and efficiently. Most organizations are structured in a hierarchical arrangement of systems, functions, processes, procedures and tasks. There are many business models to help you understand your organization. For example, one model divides business into two major cycles that cover buying/paying and producing/collecting. Another breaks systems into value generating systems and support systems. The US Bureau of Labor and Statistics uses a different model.
2. Define and evaluate the project request	Before beginning any in-depth work on the development or production of the form, it is crucial to ensure the form owner and the ~~forms~~ Forms Management Program areas define and agree on the intended purpose, business requirements, desired outcome ~~and~~ scope and timeline of the project. This will help ensure funding, time and resources are available from all parties. To achieve this, the Forms Management Program will assign a forms analyst or business process analyst to evaluate the project request regarding resources, feasibility, priority, risk, timeline, and alignment with organization priorities. A decision will be made on whether a request is receivable or not, respond to the requestor and assign the projects accordingly.
3. Obtain information on the 5 Ws: "Who What When Why Where" as they relate to the project	The **"5 Ws"** is an easy formula to help Form areas remember what information is required to support requestors' needs in developing their forms. **Who** - Who needs access to blank forms for completion? - Who fills out the form? Example: age, education level, access to a computer/device. Are multiple users filling different sections of the one form? - Who needs access to, uses or processes completed forms with information provided by requestors for business transactions or activities? (All players or intervening parties?) **What** - What information or data elements are requested or required on the form in order for the requester, organization or users to conduct business activities? - Is there any sensitive or personal information required? (important to

	know what information security measures to take on the form and in systems). - What is the purpose of the form, information collected? - What is the context in which the form is used? - *What* tools are available to fill and submit the form? - *What* is the expected usage volume expected for the form (e.g. multiple times daily, weekly, monthly, annually)? - What process is this form linked to or part of? - What happens to the form when completed? - What happens to the information provided on the form? - What are the policies, procedures, rules related to this form? - What instructions or user procedures will be needed for this form? **When** - When is the form filled out (e.g. multiple times daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, annually, for a special recurring event)? - When is the information requested on the form required in the process? - When is the form made available and how, by what means? - When is the process complete? - When is the form record (completed form) archived and for how long? **Why** - Why is the form required? Is the information requested already available through other forms or means? Does a similar form already exist? - Why is the information required? - Why a form? Could the information be obtained through other means or mechanism? **Where** - Where are the users completing the form? - Where is the form being sent once completed, by what means? - Where is the information collected on the form stored (in file record, e-records, entered or uploaded to databases or systems, etc.) and for how long? - Where will the form be deployed and in what format and media?
4. Promote work simplification and process improvement	Make simplification of end-to-end processes the focus of the service priorities and ongoing objectives, making it the value added service by the organization. Promoting work simplification and process improvement remains the focus and a priority of any efficient Forms Management Program in an organization. The purpose of the program is not to create more forms, but rather ensure that those forms required by the organization to conduct its business are simple, clear, effective, well integrated to the organization's business processes and cost-effective.

5. Collect and document user / requestor requirements	Consideration and attention is to be given to ALL requestors, users, intervening parties, related legislation, rules and regulations, systems, applications or technical equipment linked to ensure all criteria, needs, requirements or specifications are documented and taken into account **before** determining the form solution and begin development.
6. Determine and apply business rules	Business rules control and limit processes and are generally implemented in the form container. Business rules applied at a form level implement the organization's policies, strategies and governance. Examples: signature requirements over or under a certain amount, delay of approvals and automatic routing within a workflow.
7. Perform process analysis techniques	It is highly recommended that the Forms Management Program validate the information provided through other techniques such as observing process or users in action, time and motion studies. Documenting end-to-end processes and roles via flow charting, error analysis, statistical analysis, recurring data analysis and fact-finding sessions are also very useful in eliciting requirements, not only to ensure the current process is well documented and mapped, but also to elicit potential simplification opportunities for future improvements. Each data element on the form is documented for its caption, content, format during process analysis.
8. Develop viable alternative solutions through process design, process redesign	Once the process and form elements details are collected, mapped and well documented, business analysts can review and develop any number of possible avenues and processes, including either full or partial automation, to satisfy the requestor and organization business information needs and requirements. At least 2 or 3 options should be developed wherever possible.
9. Perform cost-benefit analysis and other financial analyses of alternative solutions	Each solution developed should provide its pros and cons, a clear cost-benefit analysis, other financial analysis such as payback or return on investment, issues and anticipated benefits. This is to provide the requestor and ~~o~~rganization with the necessary information to make an informed decision on which solution to choose and implement.
10. Risk analysis on proposed solutions	It is essential for the Forms Management Program to perform a risk analysis that Identifies potential risks, the likelihood of the risk occurring, the severity if it does occur and mitigation factors. Examples of risk factors can include legal, financial, vendor performance, technical complexity and organization reputation. Rating and understanding the risk factor of key forms in the organization will ensure the Forms Management Program can effectively communicate potential risks to senior management as well as prepare

	better work plans to include corresponding timelines for procurement, development, deployment, training and communication strategies.
11. Propose and recommend solutions	Proposed or recommended solutions could be presented in a variety of ways to requestors and the organization, e.g., - using sample form designs - using sample applications to demonstrate workflow and electronic automated fill-ins that may help user completion - producing a proposal outlining the solutions with all the details (pros and cons of each solution, cost-benefit analysis, return on investment, samples) In all cases, it is crucial to obtain approval on the chosen solution and document any changes agreed upon between the requestor, interested parties, ~~/customer/~~organization and the Forms Management Program.
12. Edit existing or write new procedures related to the solution	In the case of a new form, instructions or new procedures explaining how the form is to be used may be required depending on its complexity. In the case of an existing form where procedures already exist, they may need to be edited and updated.
13. Prepare or coordinate training plan and materials for solution	When the form has a significant impact on users, there may be a need to prepare or coordinate/collaborate with training resources and communication experts to develop training material to explain and document the new solution. This is required to ensure that staff are prepared to use the new solution when put into production and avoid an overload of help calls to the technical or business help support.
E. Information Management function within Forms Management ~~Function~~ Program	Return to Table of Contents FM is the owner/custodian of organization forms and templates and forms related information) Information Management, including records management, is an essential function of the Forms Management program in the name of the organization. The head of the Forms Management program ensures their staff is fully trained to understand the relevance of IM in their function and how to assume their roles and responsibilities with respect to maintaining form records. The Forms Management Program is the custodian of the organization's forms and templates, and forms related information. Additionally, it is the owner of the forms for the forms management processes and operations as well as a few organization-wide forms.

Managing Information
Information management and forms
Information management within FM refers to standardization of words, information elements contained in forms, applications or systems to ensure consistency of use and that requesters and users understand the same term to have the same definition.

It also includes reference to the enterprise electronic document and content management systems/processes implemented in organizations for the governance and management of their records, including form files as records. Forms Management needs to adapt their form recordkeeping practices to an electronic system. As the business owner, FM works with Records Management to determine unique business needs (such as data types, document status, criteria, file formats, form identifiers) and retention schedules managed by Records Management in the electronic environment.

Form files Are Records
Source files (blank) of every edition of any given form or template used in the conduct of business in the organization are to be kept as official records. Forms Management is the organization's mandated custodian of official form records for legal or historical purposes during the entire lifecycle of the form. At any time, Forms Management may be called upon to produce one, several or any edition of an official form or template at any point in time during the organization's business activities to serve as proof. Examples of documentation to keep in form records are business requirements, requester approvals, user testing results, technical specifications, file naming convention used, official translation to another language, revision requests and rationale, legislative changes or requirements, print and production specifications, copy of each official form edition published or released, procurement or purchase orders, invoices, proofs, samples, etc.

These record files are created and managed by Forms Management. As the business owner, FM works with Records Management to determine retention schedules managed by Records Management.

Completed Forms are Records
Completed forms or templates with requesters /user information become records that organizations/businesses retain as official records of business activities, transactions or even legal transactions.

Completed forms are managed by the business owner, who works with Records Management to determine retention schedules.

1. Manage information displayed on forms	Information management and forms information management within forms management refers to standardization of words, information elements contained in forms, applications or systems to ensure consistency of use and that requestors and users understand the same term to have the same definition.
2. Implement form identifiers, form lists and catalogs	A Forms Program must establish a system where each form is given a unique identifier in order to organize them, to prevent duplication and for ease of maintaining them. This will involve the use of a list/catalog of all the organization's forms.
3. Manage and maintain version control / file naming conventions for different output versions	When assigning form numbers and form identifiers, it is important to consider their use on the actual form, on working file names, on deployed form file names, their archive file names in directories for officially retained versions, etc. Technology has made it essential to establish a system to use consistent file naming conventions for files of various types, such as source files, deployment files and archive files. The file naming conventions also need to include a methodology to display additional information on the form such as language, item series, and software or edition date.
4. Maintain and provide back-up copies of source files and forms records for business continuity and disaster recovery	The Forms Management Program is responsible for ensuring that forms can be deployed to end-users and for disaster recovery. This may include maintaining back-up copies of forms by the Forms Management Program or working with the Information and Technology area to ensure it is done. The Forms Management Program must communicate its requirements to those administering the business recovery plan for the organization.
5. Manage and maintain digital assets	Using the consistent naming convention, forms database and records protection policy, manage digital assets and develop a system for updating and protecting those assets. Digital assets include the official source file formats, electronic history file for each form, copies of every edition and every version of forms or templates whether in production, archived or discontinued, as well as logos, scripts, fragments, and more.
6. Maintain a forms database	Maintaining information and data about forms in a database within the Forms Management Program is essential in the management and delivery of its activities and services. It should include all metadata for each form and transactional data for each form project. It should also include form production and construction specifications, relationships to other forms, legislation, policy, and procedure. Operationally, the Forms Management Program can leverage the data using queries and reports. When establishing the database, it is useful to implement the use of keywords, standard terms, standard database record set up, and to develop queries and reports. It can also help implement systems to automate forms management processes.

7. Implement and maintain a retention plan for records and data	The records and data retention plan should be based on the organization's established record keeping practices and retention schedule. Records include documentation on the form's lifecycle from initial development to discontinuation, including storing earlier editions and versions of the forms/templates. Further, there are records of general operations and processes of the Forms Management program. Additional guidance is required for Forms Management Program staff to be aware specifically of what supporting documentation is included in a form history file that are unique to the business of information gathering and form production which occur over the course of the form's existence, use and lifecycle.
8. Maintain general record keeping and filing systems	As a rule, a Forms Management Program area will hold the following types of records and filing systems: i. an approved filing system agreed upon by Forms Management and the organization's Information Management or Records Management areas. ii. a file series dedicated to the Administration of the Forms Management Program itself (Administration, Corporate image or Branding, Human Resources, Contracting/Procurement, Reporting, Presentations, Style Guide, Form reviews, Inventory system, warehouse and distribution reports, Forms request and development processes, etc.) ii. one official record for every single form in the organization (usually numerically by form number sequence or alphabetically by title), usually called the Forms History File v. additional official record files as required, namely one for every multi-form project (e.g. Legislative change X in year Y which will impact a large number of forms, special forms review or consolidation project, call for forms, etc.) and non-form projects (e.g. software upgrade).
9. Document organization-wide special projects and scheduled reviews	At times, organizations launch major organization-wide projects to address a specific situation such as new branding, the implementation of new legislation, the merge of two or more organizations into one, etc. These large organization-wide projects often impact many forms and require more planning. The Forms Management Program needs to keep a record file on such major initiatives, whatever the nature, in addition to filing relevant documentation in form history files. For example, the project file record should include key documents like

	the organization's project plan, including its rationale and the portion detailing the impact on forms, resources and financial requirements, tenders, progress reports and results from the project implementation, reports to executive management. Scheduled reviews are established for obsolescence/discontinuation, compliance, consolidation, changes, etc.) Scheduled reviews allow the Forms Management Program to reaffirm the usefulness of active forms for the organization and determine which forms are no longer in use. They are also useful in finding streamlining or consolidation opportunities. Those forms no longer in use should be discontinued and their records modified according to results of review. When well conducted, they result in improved and more cost-effective business processes for the organization. Reviews are recommended every 12 to 18 months. For every form affected by a review, either revised or discontinued, the supporting documentation and rationale is to be included in the individual form's official record. Overall results of the entire review including the review's report are to be added to the record file dedicated to the review (generally also identified by date) likely to be part of the Forms Management Program administration record series.
10. The Forms Management Program is responsible for the forms container	The Forms Management Program is ultimately responsible for the forms **container** and for applying the program manual, **forms** style guide and organization standards. Requesters /customers who know their business well, on the other hand, are responsible for the **content**. They need to communicate, to the best of their ability, their information requirements, business needs and specifications to the forms analyst or developer with respect to a form or process being developed or modified. The Forms Management Program area is responsible to satisfy the requestors /clients' needs and requirements. They must ensure they obtain enough information to effectively conduct their business. As such, forms developers are responsible to convey the information required in a form design that is user-friendly, efficient and cost-effective.
F. Forms/template Design and Development	Return to Table of Contents
1. Forms analysis	Forms analysis consists in determining and evaluating the intended use

	of the form, its relation to other already existing forms within the process, the manner in which all data will be captured, displayed and processed and the utility and effectiveness of the form as an information-processing tool. (per the CGSB) This can be a view of the subject form within the larger group of forms and processes. It also can occur during form reviews, a call for forms, or improvement projects.
2. Design analysis	An integral step in the forms analysis process, design analysis is performed by the forms analyst and/or developer to convert the rules, logic, business and style guide requirements into objects on the form container. One reviews language quality and consistency, assesses usability and ensures designs are appropriate for the intended final output format such as printed forms vs. eForms, iForms, online applications or screen design, or mobile applications. The intent is to reduce errors, facilitate the use of information and enhance the organization's image.
3. Industry standards	A number of existing industry standards impact forms whether these are printed or electronic. Forms Developers need to be aware of the various print industry standards, electronic and Web standards when planning to develop or update forms. a. Paper standards (paper industry: standard paper, envelopes, size, thickness, weight, color) b. Printing methods, printer drivers, ink colors and color systems, binding, packaging. c. Electronic forms and Standards (Web standards (HTML, XML, Common Look and Feel, Accessibility, W3C, etc.) d. Scripting and programming languages.
4. Layout Standards	In addition to industry, Web or accessibility standards, there exist a number of other relevant standards such as: - the international standard for date (YYYY-MM-DD) and time (HH:MM:SS) or organization's standards and when to apply each; - postal standards (specific to countries or regions) - standard and conventions for the display and writing of telephone numbers (varies depending on what continent: e.g. the standard for North America is different than that in Europe) - industry standard for barcodes, MICR, OCR - industry standard for checks - and others. As a rule, Forms Developers are to adhere to: - international standards, industry standards, and conventions.

	- the geographical area's national standards of where the form will be used - their respective organization design and layout standards. All standards are to be included and referenced to in the organization's Forms Style Guide and updated as necessary and applied on every project.
5. Form design standards, guidelines and best practices	Form developers implement design elements and layout principles as specified in the Forms Style Guide. For example, naming conventions, zoning, balance, graphics, color, spacing, grouping, sequencing, typography (determined at the organization level).
6. Branding	Most businesses and organizations, whether public or in the private sector will have some type of branding. The branding (logo, color, font, etc.) is to be included on forms, and Forms Management Program areas are encouraged to produce a style guide to communicate how they include the organization's brand or corporate image in their forms design.
7. Peripheral equipment used with forms	With more and more technology advances, more equipment, applications or systems are also used in conjunction with forms. For example: - high speed printers merging system requesters' data to a letter template and folder/inserters for mass mailings; - specialized printers and readers such as Magnetic Ink Character Recognition (MICR). - data systems to upload or exchange information data submitted on e-forms; - scanners to image completed forms for archival purposes; - bar code systems for data capture or output - information management or e-record systems. Such peripheral equipment or systems need to be fully documented by the Business or Forms Analyst for the Forms Developer to ensure their technical requirements are met and included in the solution to be developed and implemented.
8. Specification writing	Forms developers must understand form requirements in order to properly develop specifications for the desired form product. Knowledge of physical forms products, software and programming capabilities, handling equipment and manufacturing capabilities is necessary for this skill. It may require product research.
9. Design and develop forms for your audience and user base	Know your audience and user base. Depending on the user situation, age group, context where forms are used or deployed, consideration should be given to form design elements such as the text typography size, additional instructions, accessibility for persons with disabilities, alternate output formats, etc. to ensure the form is accessible to all.

10. Usability	Usability (or ease of use) needs to remain a priority focus of every forms developer when developing forms or templates. No one likes to fill out complicated forms, and badly designed forms only result in disorderly and inaccurate information received. Keep in mind the importance and relevance of a good design. Consider the design and layout of information elements, white space, clear captions and instructions, plain language, correct education level. Usability begins with the requestors meeting to see how to improve the form, clarify and perhaps reduce the information, and outline the importance of a good design supported by reference to your organization's style guide.
11. Accessibility	The Forms Management Program staff knows and applies applicable legislation, regulations and policies within the relevant jurisdiction and organization regarding designing and constructing a form to make it "accessible" (usable) to persons with disabilities such as visual or hearing impairments, learning disorders or illiteracy. This process employs design techniques that, coupled with the use of assistive technology such as Braille, screen readers, enhanced display devices, audio devices, and more, enable challenged users to interact with the form.
12. Laws and regulations	The Forms Management Program staff must be familiar with, and act as an advisor regarding, specific laws or group of laws, rules, regulations or other orders prescribed by an authority (internally and externally) that impact business forms and processes. These laws and regulations can be federal, by state, provincial, municipal, even organization specific. For example: • Privacy laws (Freedom of Information Act in the US, Access to Information and Regulations and Privacy Act and Regulations in Canada, Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Act in Ontario) • Health laws (National Provider Identifier (NPI) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the US, the Canada Health Act). • Archives (Library and Archives in the US, Library and Archives of Canada Act). • Federal, state, provincial or municipal licensing.

	• Advertising, insurance, and banking laws. • Security (passwords, encryption, protecting, redaction, masking, etc.)
13. Forms object libraries	A collection of self-contained identifiable components of a software system or form design (logo and address block, workflow, standard coding, programmed functions, elements, fragments, components, scripts, master templates) that have well-defined usage, design and function. Each is saved separately as an object and can be invoked or re-used to ensure consistency of data and appearance. The Forms Management Program must ensure the object library is used, organized, maintained, easily accessible, communicated to and shared by all forms analysts and developers.
14. Source files	The form source file is the single digital design file that is used to create all output versions of that form. The Forms Management Program is responsible for the development of form source files and of each potential output version (XML, HTML, pdf, paper), their maintenance, update, storage and archiving. For each source file and output version, the program staff must have knowledge of the firewall issues, target audience, laws and regulations, specific usage application, additional supporting files (logos, images, attachments), etc.
15. Clear layout communication	The Forms Management Program applies plain language principles, using familiar words, considering reading levels, and using consistent vocabulary for data label names, captions, instructions. Plain language puts the reader first and foremost. It organizes information in ways that make sense to the reader and uses language that is appropriate for the audience's reading skills. The objective is to ensure the audience can understand the form the first time they read it.
16. Translation to other languages	The Forms Management Program applies general rules and processes for translation, such as always beginning with the primary form instead of another translation. Translations convey the "meaning" and "sense" of form content instead of giving a word-for-word literal translation. The Program maintains and updates translated forms to keep in synch with primary forms. If forms are to be produced in more than one language, then the forms analyst should provide instructions as to how this is to be achieved, what language and keyboard layout to use, specific details with respect to filenames and the form's unique identifiers.

17. Create and refine the form container	Develop the form container using an iterative design process with various drafts. Check and correct errors in composition such as spelling, grammar, trademarks, branding and punctuation. Compare the requestor's draft with the newly developed draft. Obtain stakeholders' review and approval of content and design.
18. Knowledge of electronic features during development	Apply features such as field help, masks, formatting, data object type, buttons, menus, ribbons, actions, macros, tabbing order, dynamic form, information suppression, interface formatting, access rights, accessibility, data source and output, and others. How electronic features are applied to forms affects how the form works and behaves, how the user and other actors in the business process (e.g., systems, databases, peripheral equipment) interact with it.
19. Testing and Quality Management	Thorough testing of forms is performed before deployment to ensure the form is functioning to the form owner's satisfaction. Testing generally covers content clarity and accuracy, functionality, usability, accessibility, data exchange, and performance in all workflows. There exist different testing scenarios. They can vary depending on the form's complexity and size of the organization. As a rule, the forms developer first performs tests during the development phase. These aim to validate features, functions and scripts applied to the form as it evolves. Users, the form owner, training areas, and a specialized team also perform testing and quality management.
20. Drafts, proofs, prototypes and approvals	A rough layout or mock-up, a precise layout with exact wording and spacing, a list of data fields or form elements, a conceptual design showing workflows and dynamic elements, a construction mock-up or sample, a visual or a functional prototype of an eform, a printer's proof, test samples showing the resulting outcome, all represent a form's evolving state and iterations produced during the different stages of the form's development and production process. Their design varies depending on the complexity of the form, the media and output format of its different delivery channels. They are shared with stakeholders as part of the iterative process to reach an approved form solution. They are used to obtain approval of form solutions; of form content, design layout, functionality and features during development; and to obtain approval of form final output versions before printing or deployment.

21. Deployment and implementation	The Forms Management Program coordinates with stakeholders to determine when, where and how the form is to be deployed for use. Where a form is to be deployed varies depending on the intended user base and delivery channels. It could include enterprise systems and Websites, specific user groups, warehouse, catalog, library, portal, repository, and third party sites. It is essential to apply security and access rights for each form output version and keep a record of all deployments. In the case of printed forms, it is necessary to determine the disposition of stock on hand when a form is modified or replaced. At the very least, deployments require some type of notification or communication to staff or client base. A successful implementation may require the creation or update of policies, business procedures, user procedures, training, and documentation to support technical support staff.
22. Environmental and Safety Awareness	The Forms Management Program is aware of and complies with organizational policies related to environmental footprint. As much as possible, it uses eco-friendly products such as recycled papers, soy-based ink, glues, and other recycled or recyclable products. It aims to limit the production of toxic waste by-products from forms. Whenever feasible, the Program encourages the use of electronic forms.
23. Signatures	The Forms Management Program performs risk assessment to determine if a signature is needed. It uses knowledge of the different types of signatures and their application, such as wet signatures, digital signatures and electronic signatures. The Forms Management Program implements signature process flows, including deadlines and the designation of alternates for routing, tracking and approving forms or form-related tasks, as required. The Program is aware of the legislation and regulations of their jurisdiction with respect to signatures and understands their obligations. It also applies the organization's established signing authority delegation instrument, and with internal and external security and audit standards. This ensures the appropriate delegated authority signs and approves forms in the correct form process context and that the signature process is traceable, repeatable, auditable and tamper-proof.
24. Barcodes	The Forms Management Program ~~FM~~ uses general knowledge of two and three-dimensional barcodes (e.g., QR codes, PDF417, 2 of 5, etc.),

	how they work, and when best to use them. It also knows their symbology, and associated reader technology to apply specific requirements such as size, font, unique placement and others.
25. MICR technology	The Forms Management Program uses general knowledge of how MICR (Magnetic Ink Character Recognition) technology works and how to use it on forms, including placement, spacing, specialized fonts, specialized inks or toners, and other requirements and standards.
26. Other Recognition Technology	The Forms Management Program uses general knowledge of other types of recognition technology such radio frequency identification (RFID), voice recognition, biometric, handwriting recognition, optical character recognition (OCR), optical mark recognition (OMR), intelligent character recognition (ICR).
G. Forms Print Production	Return to Table of Contents
1. Form Production	While printed form products such as envelopes, tags and labels are more common, other forms products may still need to be manufactured for specific uses. Those include cut sheet, unit sets, continuous, sales books, register forms, check, electronic, mailers, pegboard.
2. Form Material	Form materials include various substrates (paper and its varieties such as bond, ledger, offset card as well as carbonless paper, vinyl, Tyvek, film), other materials such as ink, carbon paper, glassine/cellophane, etc.
3. Production Method: Manufactured	Conventional static forms can be produced via the standard manufacturing process.
a. Pre-press	Digital and conventional plates, rubber plates
b. Press	Methods of conventional printing for forms include offset lithography, relief printing (letterpress, rubber stamp), intaglio process (gravure), embossing, laser, inkjet, ion deposition, screen printing, thermography.
4. Production Method: Print Output	Forms are often produced as the static form plus variable information printed simultaneously on one digital electronic printer.
a. Desktop	Low volume forms are often printed this way at desktop or local area printers.
b. High speed electronic print	High volume forms such as statements and invoices often are printed on blank paper or paper with a static color blocks. The pass through the high speed printer images both the static form and the variable information at the same time.

5. Additional production processes	In-line or off-line operations to perform various functions associated with forms production: binding, numbering, collating, stitching, stapling, wrapping, cutting, drilling, folding.
6. Post-processing	After the form is printed, various actions can occur that require inserting, folding and imprinting. Less often used today are bursters, decollators, cutters.
H. Procurement and Contracting	Return to Table of Contents
1. Supplier/Vendor Relationships	Suppliers are those who are outside the department but furnish products and/or services needed by the organization. Maintaining cordial supplier relationships helps to assure that the information available from each supplier is complete and accurate and that the best interests of your organization are served.
2. Product and Service Evaluation	When a new requirement is identified that may be able to take advantage of a product that is also new, or is currently unused by the organization, it is prudent to conduct a product evaluation to confirm the appropriateness of the product, whether physical or electronic, as a solution for the environment where it is proposed. If a technology evaluation, FM must coordinate with other departments such as IT, mail room, print shop, scanning department to ensure compatibility, architecture fit, etc.
3. Quotations and Proposals	Prior to placing a manufacturing contract or purchasing software or services, it is wise and sometimes mandated to request a quotation or proposal from potential vendors. Even when the vendors are known and have provided products and/or services in the past, each new requirement should be handled the same way. Formalizing the quotation and/or proposal process ensures that nothing is assumed or left to chance and that all legal bases are covered adequately. It is a good practice to consult with the procurement professionals within your organization.
4. Contract Negotiating and Trade Customs	Trade Customs codify the standard terms and conditions under which the relationship between the customer and the vendor operate. Many topics are included. Exceptions, if any, must be individually negotiated between the parties. Long term relationships with vendors (beyond a single order) are common in the forms industry. Negotiating contracts should spell out price levels, manufacturing locations and delivery times, manufacturing specifications for products, vendor warehousing and storage costs, on-site services (such as periodic inventory counts), other services available, software support and training, upgrades, confidentiality requirements, associated legal agreements such as maintenance agreements or end-

	user license agreement (EULA), and any other routine interface that may be involved. These components encourage a strong and equitable vendor relationship.
J. Inventory Management and Warehousing	Return to Table of Contents
Inventory Management	Activities performed by the Forms Management Program to assure a constant access, availability and supply of forms to meet an organization's business needs. For printed forms, inventory management consists in maintaining the optimal quantity of every form stocked in the inventory and providing uninterrupted supply, production and provision of forms in a cost-efficient manner while taking up minimum warehouse space. For eforms, inventory management is achieved by maintaining portals, online catalogs, and lists. The Forms Management Program works closely with purchasing, warehousing and inventory management to ensure that physical form products are available or can be ordered when needed by users. It also works closely with the Web team and Information and Technology area to establish form portals and Web sites to host form catalogs and lists for user access. Business and form owners may be involved with inventory management but only via the Forms Management Program, primarily relating to replenishment, cyclical usage, transition from paper to electronic forms, and disposition of obsolete inventory.
1. General Requirements	Inventory Management processes include determining the fine lines between replenishment lead time, carrying costs of inventory, asset management, inventory forecasting, inventory valuation, inventory visibility, future inventory price forecasting, physical inventory, available physical space for inventory, quality management, replenishment, returns and defective goods, and demand forecasting. Balancing these competing requirements leads to optimal inventory levels, which is an on-going process as the business needs shift and react to the wider environment. Depending on the organization, these responsibilities may be shared or handled by the Forms Management Program or Inventory Management (internal or contracted). The Forms Management Program works closely with purchasing, warehousing, and inventory management to ensure that physical form products are available or orderable when needed by users while taking up minimum warehouse space. In the maintenance of stock and supply levels, the inventory management are considers the following:

	• Volume or usage (including trends). • Lead-time for vendors to produce and ship. • Internal receiving, processing, shipping and fulfillment. • The item's criticality to business. Business and form owners may be involved with inventory management but only via the Forms Management Program, primarily relating to replenishment, cyclical usage, transition from paper to electronic forms, and disposition of obsolete inventory.
2. Fulfillment Options a. General forms warehousing, b. Print on demand c. Electronic	General forms warehousing is either provided by the organization or contracted. Warehousing is one or several locations that receive, store and maintain supplies, pick, pack, and ship orders to customers. Purchasing or automated ordering systems begin the fulfillment process of customer orders. The warehouse completes fulfillment. Print on Demand: A process of printing documents electronically when (and possibly where) needed. Typically not stored in warehousing. They can be printed desk side or ordered from a print shop or warehouse where the forms are printed at the time of order because there is no inventory. This includes print & fill and fill & print electronic forms. Electronic fulfillment is a process of fulfilling user/consumer needs electronically using business rules and workflow built into a form. For example, enterprise-enabled forms are paperless end to end and can be fulfilled electronically.
3. Forms Shipping and Billing Options	Forms shipping and billing options include bill as shipped, bill upon completion, ship all to user, ship all to third party, pick and pack program and are often related to billing. Awareness of inventory shipping options can impact how billing and payment should be handled, who owns inventory, when does inventory ownership transfer take place, when do you count usage. Options relating to organization accounting, purchasing, and vendor relations and contracts should be considered.
4. Replenishment a. Reorder point b. Periodic review	Reorder point. A reorder point (low stock point) is calculated for each item. When inventory levels drop to the reorder point, a notice is sent to FM to trigger a decision to replenish inventory or not, usually in consultation with the form owner. The reorder point is equal to the expected demand during lead time plus safety stock to cover demand in excess of expectations. Safety stock for items protects against fluctuations in customer demand. Safety stock calculations use statistics to mitigate the risk of stockout. A service criterion measures risk as the probability of not stocking out

	during the order cycle. The fill rate criterion measures risk as a function of the expected percentage of demand met. Periodic review. A periodic review occurs when inventory is ordered at fixed intervals, such as weekly. Examples of this are when vendors make routine visits to customers and take orders for a complete line of products or when buyers want to combine orders to save transportation costs. The order quantity is determined by subtracting the current inventory position from a maximum quantity calculated to protect against stockouts during the review period and lead time.
5. Deployment Management	Establish the methods to deploy forms for paper and electronic, such as catalogs, repositories, portals or warehouses, to meet all user points of access. Establish a method to check for activity (usage, downloads) for online forms. Establish policies to implement permanent URLs for forms, communications for deployment, for disposition of inventory, access and security rights.
6. Automated Systems	Automated systems such as bar coding, RFID, freight optimization, just in time are typically used for forms warehousing. Form information or metadata for warehousing may be collected to aid these systems. For example: item units of issue and or bulk packaging size, item unit and or bulk weight. Item number, edition date and version, purchase order number are often included on labels and stored in automated systems used to calculate both warehousing and freight and shipping needs.
General Forms Warehousing Operations and Relationship to FM	
7. Receiving	FM is responsible for checking quality of forms received and approving forms for stocking and release by the warehouse. FM must coordinate with the warehouse and have an understanding of receiving activities such as accepting shipments, accounting for and matching quantities listed on shipping documents from the shipper, decisions regarding where stock is to be located, stock rotation activities where appropriate, and filling of existing back orders, and verifying unit of issue.
8. Shipping/distribution:	FM is responsible to determine unit of issue, to establish delivery time requirements, and to direct distributions as required. Forms shipping/distribution methods should be flexible enough to satisfy enterprise business needs, both routine and special situations. FM must coordinate with the warehouse for other activities: 1) shipments to users

	to fill requisitions, 2) shipments between warehouse locations to balance stock levels, 3) return-to-vendor shipment when an error is discovered or for some other reason stock must be returned and 4) shipments from suppliers. Accurate records must be kept of each transaction and inventory levels adjusted accordingly.
9. Inventory control	FM is responsible to determine an annual usage, set a low stock point and calculate an economic order quantity (EOQ). FM reviews inventory usage reports and ensures there is enough stock of the form to do business. FM can set order limits to be sure there is no hoarding or over-ordering. FM coordinates with inventory control or warehousing on physical inventory reconciliation to the perpetual inventory, managing metadata on forms used by inventory, inventory usage cycles, determining types of reports required, restrictions (who can order a form and in what quantities), old stock and superseding precedence. Larger organizations may have separate inventory management departments and low stock notices, EOQ, etc. are managed there.
10. Invoicing options	Terms of payment are often addressed in contract negotiation or purchase order. Other invoicing issues include agreeing on remedial action if goods or services received are unsatisfactory. Depending on the organization's needs, internal invoicing (chargeback) can be established.
K. Administration of Forms Management Program	Return to Table of Contents
1. Human Resources Management	
a. Determine staffing levels	Using metrics, determine activity requirements and resources to accomplish departmental objectives. Factors to consider include industry type, number of forms in the organization, use of forms coordinators, level of services provided, level of authority (clerical, professional), etc.
b. Identify responsibilities of various roles	Roles include business analysis, forms analysis, forms design, forms programming, forms technicians (forms control workers), system coordinator, and administrative assistants. Depending on the size of the program, a senior level position may be needed for each role and perhaps supervisors for the three main functions: analysis, design and support.
c. Recruiting and hiring	Qualified and experienced forms management employees are difficult to locate. A new employee generally requires a 1 year ramp-up period.

	Finding suitable candidates usually means looking for the person with the best set of aptitudes to learn the field or that would hold some key information in the field and that you can train in the other areas and on FM principles. Examples of other relevant pertinent experiences include graphic or web designer, business analyst, programmer, print expert, information management specialist.
d. Succession planning	Proper departmental-level succession planning is critical, as development of expertise in FM tends to have a long ramp up period. After an individual is identified in the succession plan, identify missing skills and provide experience to meet the plan.
e. Employee development	Although training is ultimately the responsibility of each individual, the organization has a vested interest in helping employees continue their education and training. Each forms management employee, working with the department manager, should develop an individualized training plan.
f. Locate and use outside expert resources for the FM function	Many times, outside help can provide a major boost to get a project done, such as a call for forms, or a large multi-form project, an analysis project or program evaluation. There are a few independent contractors with the necessary expertise available. Finding them and making a contact list is helpful.
g. Specialized training for the FM staff	Development of expertise in forms management takes time and experience. New employees will become productive more quickly if a structured training process is in place to cover all the basics for most roles. Training typically occurs on a one to one basis. It is very difficult to find specialized training in forms management in the general marketplace. Expert forms management training is very specific. Obtain management approval of non-standard training approach that cannot always be planned long-term in advance. The opportunity is to be taken when it presents itself. Issues include delivering generalized business training as well as deep training on forms management topics and the specific software tools used. Generalized software may not have training available for forms needs, and a specialized provider is needed. Value-added resellers for a product often sell the product and provide training. Self-teaching via research or networking and professional associations are other resources. Local community colleges are an excellent source for training on standard software tools such as MS-Office, SharePoint. Adobe Designer, Photoshop, Web design, and more. Many tutorials are available on the web. Build custom designed courses or training sessions.

2. Financial Management	
a. Budgeting	Budget for forms department financial resources is an ongoing challenge. In addition to the standard budgeting process where dollars are allocated to each expense category, consider activity-based budgeting.
b. Work planning	Beyond budgeting, work planning and associated finances includes ongoing activities vs. large scope projects, financial considerations for HR (internal resources vs. contracted resources), timelines and expenditures. Large projects often are received outside of the budgeting timeframe and must be addressed for resources for time, budgets and feasibility
c. Remediation for non-compliance	Financial compensation or remedial arrangement for deliveries non-compliant to specifications or other services provided: For forms expenditures either in the FM department or other department's budgets, when a project goes wrong, most vendors are cooperative and are willing to work through any problems. When disputes arise, the contract or purchase order will govern. Absent such documents, Trade Customs may help provide resolution.
d. Financial analysis	A FM program has the fiduciary responsibility to contain and reduce costs and to provide cost comparison on FM department project options and asset acquisition. Understanding the mechanics and application of cost benefit analysis techniques is essential to that end, e.g. payback, cost of current method versus cost of future method, activity based costing. Return on Investment (ROI) may be required on large projects. Working with your financial services group to determine your organization's time value of money and internal rate of return are required.
3. Technological Architecture and Infrastructure	Many of our current processes rely on IT support, including access to databases, access to the network infrastructure, access to programming and scripting assistances, and more. Remain up-to-date on organization's technological architecture and infrastructure
a. Software Distribution and Management	Being proactive on software distribution and management and understanding its impact on the organization, knowing about upcoming desktop changes and their consequence are important areas for the FM department. Understanding the organization and user/ requester software strategy is a part of strategic planning. Your IT department probably has specific plans and policies for desktop upgrades and software support. Continuous, open dialogue is essential to maintaining continuity and service. Forms developers are not typical users and IT needs to be aware that their desktop configuration and software will not

	be standard or typical.
b. File Distribution and Management	File distribution and management is concerned with the development of policies and procedures relating to deployment, versioning and access and includes determining security and access levels, deployment methodology and implementation, naming conventions and communication strategies. Typical methods of distribution include forms repositories, forms catalogs and forms portals.
c. Forms developer software and technical requirements	Forms developer software and technical requirements implementation starts with your forms management strategy. This requires collaboration and agreement with the IT area to ensure that FM requirements are met. Proper software selection for design, mapping, deployment and metrics management is essential and the software capabilities must meet the requirements of the strategy. Generally, software for forms must be specific for forms development and not general purpose software. Create a standard desktop configuration if necessary. Signature support, workflow support, productivity tools, full forms product design capabilities, and more are required.
d. Technical help and support	Technical help and support for forms developers using form-specific software are often not available or established nor is more in depth support for all tools that may be used within the forms management processes. Once a specific product has been selected, make sure your chosen vendor offers full software maintenance and support agreement and provides ongoing training.
e. License and maintenance agreements	For all products used and supported by FM, obtain vendor's end-user license agreement(s) and maintenance agreement to understand and be able to enforce the levels of support, upgrades, fixes, training, etc.
f. Strategic relationships	Develop and maintain strategic relationships with organization IM/IT groups regarding enterprise architecture, software, future direction and understand FM operations for best support. This is an essential element of an enterprise-wide forms management strategy.
4. Information Management	
a. Multiple Languages	Develop a process for initial translations, for small changes to existing translations, keeping various editions and versions in synch, using a translation memory (glossary of standard terminology used throughout documents that have already been properly translated), ensuring that your technical environment supports multiple languages.
b. Form Identifiers	Plan identification method and develop policy to identify a form throughout its lifecycle. Establish standards for unique identifiers (for example, form numbers concatenated with language version or state

	version) and enter this into your Style Guide. Best practice is to not re-use a form identifier after the form becomes obsolete.
c. Form Titles	Establish standards for form titles such as striving for short titles, using subtitles, subject then action style, not using "form" in the title, etc. Enter this into your Style Guide. Titles often need to be abbreviated based on technical restrictions, such as databases or web pages. Establish a standard for this.
d. File naming conventions	Plan for file naming conventions for different outputs (on actual form, working filename, deployed form filename, archiving directories for officially retained versions, etc.) to account for varying versions and editions in order to have a unique file name. This information should be stored in your forms management database (or form file) for each form in your population. Your style guide provides a sample of each format.
e. Protect FM assets	As Owner/Custodian of organization forms and templates and forms related information, FM is responsible to safeguard all forms assets. There must be an ongoing process to ensure the optimum availability of critical business functions within a required time frame. The objective is to reduce the level of risk and cost, and the impact on staff, customers and suppliers. FM assets include forms/templates, source files, mission critical forms, forms history data, databases, policy, program manual, forms style guide, etc. Work with your print vendors and other suppliers, IT department and Records Management department to understand and document such specific backup that affects the forms management department. Problems often arise from data stored on an individual desktop. Specific backup plans and polices need to be developed for such instances.
f. Form records	Working with your Records Management department, develop a plan for form records (databases, form history files, form designs/templates, project details, communications, software), determining what needs to be retained, stored and protected for legal, historical, functional and reference purposes, considering paper or e-records format, aligned with records management and IM requirements and/or policies.
g. Keywords and standard terms	Develop a plan for keywords and standard terms used in electronic records, database, etc. Establishing a system of key words and a glossary of terms is a part of the Style Guide development.

	A data dictionary is necessary for any specific database utilized within Forms Management.
h. Forms management database	Plan and establish a forms management relational database: information about the form, its specifications, its usage, its revision history, etc. A comprehensive forms management database is an essential tool for a forms management department. It should contain detailed data about each form and a complete record of each form project associated with each form. FM staff must have a high level understanding of relational database development.
i. Database management	Governance of enterprise databases is usually established by the IT/IM department, to assure a supportable environment, security of data, and back up. All databases, including those owned and used by the FM program, must comply with these practices. Assuring the accuracy of data entered in the database is the responsibility of the FM program. Measures may include establishing a data dictionary and formalizing operational practices.
j. Relationship tracking	Establish forms relationship tracking – why it is important and what it covers such as parent/child, kits, form/envelope pairs, etc. Forms can be related, such as one form that is derived from another or forms that are intended to be used together. Any change, replacement or elimination of one may have implications for the other. A forms database can be used to record relationships and to identify related forms on demand.
k. Digital asset management	Develop a plan for digital asset management – library of form elements, form templates, form designs, logos, standard code/scripts, etc. An organized and secure method for storing, accessing and using specialized form assets, such as logos, templates and fragments/elements, other graphics, is necessary for consistency and efficiency. It helps with both ongoing forms layout and mass changes. Possible plans include managing these assets as part of the FM library or a shared library.
5. Program Work Planning	
a. Service level agreement	Establish a standard for delivery of service expectations via a service level agreement, for services provided by FM to others and used by FM but provided by others. A service level agreement helps to set shared expectations for timeframes and quality. It also provides an objective reference for reporting on program performance.

b. Strategic alignment of FM resources	Schedule, develop priorities and timelines, negotiate and allocate resources to align service priorities with organization's objectives and priorities. Projects are assigned priority based on the organization's priorities and other factors such as complexity, risk to the organization, size, cost, age of the request and the resources available.
c. Program work distribution	Determine a method to evaluate whether there are enough resources in FM to handle the anticipated workload.
d. Program risk management	Anticipating risks and preparing mitigation strategies regarding FM resources (e.g. unable to complete workload with current staff), software availability (e.g. unable to provide a good solution, unable to deliver solution to all users).
e. Program Business Continuity Plan	Forms Management program business continuity plan should be included in the corporate plan and regularly updated. Ensure that the service of the department can continue by having workspace, computers and software, access to files, etc. so that FM employees may continue working. COOP: continuation of operations plan may include an offsite location with access to necessary resources so that businesses that must continue may do so.
6. Project Management in FM	
	Good project management assures that all the appropriate steps in the process, from the initial investigation phase through deployment, are successfully completed by the responsible individuals in a logical sequence and in a timely fashion. Projects in FM can be new forms, revised forms, multi-forms project, call for forms or obsolescence, and non-form projects such as training or software evaluation.
a. Establish structure for project management	Establish structure for project management to define projects such as level, type, category, procedures for different project types and a method to track and report them. For example, all projects from the project management office (PMO) are complex, strategic projects and generally require specific negotiation on timelines, tools, reporting, etc.
b. Project resources	Balance FM resources, expertise, timelines, and activities across all projects and communicate any gaps to the appropriate management.
c. Lead forms/template development projects	The forms management resource facilitates the development, review and implementation of new and revised forms and templates. This includes identifying and resolving possible impacts on related forms, developing the design, coordinating stakeholders, facilitating resolution of issues,

	and coordinating implementation and communication.
d. Lead forms components of enterprise or cross-functional projects	FM, as the recognized enterprise or organization authority and subject matter expert on forms, leads components of enterprise or cross-functional projects or initiatives with respect to forms and template service delivery in co-operation with other partners and stakeholders (i.e. legal requirements, rebranding, legislative changes, software migration, corporate initiative). The forms management resource may serve as a project team member on larger initiatives, responsible for addressing forms related issues and activities, and working in partnership with other project team members. This includes representing the FM function, providing consultation and enlisting other resources within FM to provide forms services.
e. Plan and report	Projects must be planned, managed and monitored in order to accomplish their objectives. Determine the interval, tools and methodology for planning and reporting for all projects.
7. Intellectual property and copyright	(of branding, corporate image, on developed products – i.e. forms, templates – may be different for software application). Depending on the size of the organization, the Forms area may be the custodian of the corporate image and branding
a. Ensure integrity of corporate image on all forms and templates.	When using a corporate image on any work produced by the department, ensure that the image is correct color, size, placement with respect to other objects and margins and that it is not distorted. It is the responsibility of the department to ensure that this is correct on source files, artwork and on final product, regardless of media or who produces it. Images may be trademarked or not.
b. Intellectual property rights and copyright of forms	Secure and ensure intellectual property rights and copyright of the organization when contracting for external resources to do forms development or for consulting services for forms projects. The department must specify with procurement and all vendors/suppliers that produce work for the department that the intellectual property right and copyright resides with the organization and almost never with the vendor/supplier. This language must be a part of every contract and order.
8. Ongoing Activities	
a. Scheduled reviews of forms	A review of forms to determine that the form is in use, needs no modification, the owner is correctly identified, and it complies with legal and policy requirements. Each form in the population is touched in this manner at least once every 12-18 months. Modify form records according to results of review.
b. Obsolescence / Form	The department routinely must obsolete or discontinue forms that are no

Discontinuation	longer being used. This is completed through an inquiry procedure to learn if a form is actively being used (the systematic review of forms is one way) or via a unilateral decision by FM because the form has had no usage or requests for change. The obsolescence criteria are defined within each FM program. Once identified as obsolete, a separate procedure begins to remove the form from the system, including for example, a status change in the form number register and the database, the form file removed or archived, deployment location update, a notice on a web page, perhaps a notice to users, or reports sent to coordinators. Even though a form becomes obsolete, its form number should never be reused and it history records should not be destroyed, since it is always possible the form may be reactivated at some future date. As a rule, procedures related to the obsolescence/discontinuation of a form include the following: i. Add the supporting documentation to the individual official form record (i.e. why discontinued, indicate if form consolidated with or replaced by another form, include relevant references to other records, legislation, etc.) ii. Remove form printed copies from circulation (i.e. deactivate in form inventory and store, determine whether remaining stock is to be used until depleted or destroyed immediately, obtain requester cost recovery of stock destruction if applicable) ii. Remove user access to now discontinued form by removing every deployed eform file versions from servers, directories, as applicable. v. Archive last form edition of every version issued to an archive directory where all source files are kept for historical and legal reference as well as determine retention period before archived form files can be formally destroyed according to agreed upon retention schedule. v. Remove form from active form directory, update forms inventory, catalogues, any listings and include cross references as applicable. vi. The unique form number of the discontinued form should never be reused and its history records not be destroyed until prescribed retention period following the form's discontinuation runs out as it is always possible the form may be reactivated at some future date. ii. Publish communication message to staff, requester and user base of form discontinuation and removal from access as well as instructions as to how to destroy remaining stock on hand, if applicable, and any other relevant instruction (i.e. new or other form to use instead, new business procedures, who to call for more information, etc.)

	ii. As required, produce a report on discontinued forms in a given period.
c. Unofficial forms	Find "rogue" or "bootleg" forms via ad hoc monitoring (listservs/forums/news feed, newsletter, bulletins, social media) and a formal call for forms. Bring these forms into compliance. The call for forms is often required after an acquisition or expansion but should be done at least every three to five years.
d. Recurring operational events	Some operations are recurring events that affect forms, such as annual tax preparation, regular mailouts, seasonal business requirements such as harvests or holiday sales, annual conferences, etc. The department must have knowledge and advance planning to meet forms requirements for recurring events. Generally such events are documented with dates, project type, specific tasks and more for event planning. FM may own and/or initiate all or part of the events and tasks.
e. Maintenance of forms index or catalog and database	Perpetually maintain primary recordkeeping systems (forms number register, catalog, database, portal, etc.). It is imperative to have the most current and accurate information at your fingertips and a procedure to make it happen.
f. Ongoing forms improvement	Ongoing forms improvement (fewer forms, make those we use more efficient, less expensive) on every project is an opportunity to be of service to form owners and to show value to management. Every change or improvement, no matter how small or routine it seems to forms professionals, has a value to the organization that should be documented and reported.
g. FM Internet/intranet presence	A web presence is a prime method of communication with your organization, form owners and users. Detailing the services the department offers, how-to use the services, FAQ, contact information, etc. are only a few of the items that should be documented on the web. It may be a way to access the forms catalog. Ongoing maintenance of web information is vital.
h. Links to and on forms and documents	Many departments make third-party forms, such as government forms, available to their form users via web links. It is imperative for the department to regularly check and maintain the web links or use automatic broken link reporting by the web tool used to ensure that the links are active and not broken. Once a month is not too often. In addition, there are links on forms and forms documentation (procedures, policies, etc.) to maintain. Automated software that checks web links will not check links on forms and other documents.

i. Forms industry research	Keeping up with technology for software, other tools and best practices in standards, benchmarking and procedures is a hallmark of a well-run professional FM organization. This can include involvement in a professional association, peer interaction, attending vendor shows, reading industry publications.
j. FM Documentation	Forms management has very detailed processes (new forms, revised forms, obsolete/discontinued forms) that must be documented for two audiences: FM and users. Ongoing maintenance of documentation is vital. Internal to FM, job aids or how-to perform the processes are needed for the FM employees to accomplish their work in a consistent manner. There is much less room for variation (and error) when operational procedures are formalized and documented in writing. Documentation is extremely helpful with workers new to the department. User-centric documentation tells users how to interact with the FM department. This language should be clear, simple and step by step on how to accomplish a task involving the department, such as how to request a new form or how to locate a form or how to order an additional supply of forms. The FM web page can have the user-centric information. Documentation of form systems managed by the forms program includes information about the form system such as system architecture diagrams and process flowcharts, roles and responsibilities of the system (who is responsible for what part of the system (FM or other party), how changes are released, who does testing, who accepts the fix, etc.)
k. Project control and tracking	Tracking is an essential part of “managing” forms. Tracking includes monitoring the progress, resources, dates, tasks, requirements of various analysis projects, of vendor manufacturing orders, of warehouse inventories, of the forms portal database, of the various FM databases, of strategic management reporting metrics and many other on-going processes.
l. Educating forms users	Educating the other employees about forms management’s role and responsibilities can be broken to three areas. (1)Education for new hires at orientation to understand FM capabilities and role. (2)Establishing and educating a forms coordinator program gets form-centric helpers throughout the organization. (3)Educating management at all levels about the value and goals of forms management helps ensure FM viability. Each of these three require planning, specific materials, scheduled, on-going training. Education is a process, not an event.

m. Marketing FM	Developing a marketing strategy includes products, programs, services and plans for FM. The strategy fosters acceptance by the organization to comply with the FM policy, senior management endorsement and ensure the program's viability. Marketing channels include web, brochures, presentation, newsletters, events, person to person contacts, etc. DEFINING MOMENT: marketing targeted to many but primarily senior management, we are not selling
9. Forms Management Program Reporting	On-going support for a forms management program often depends largely upon upper management's comfort level that the program is worthwhile and that the return on investment is adequate. One way to maintain firm trust in the program is to provide management reports on a regular basis. Various performance metrics, such as number of forms in the system, new forms vs. revisions, number of requisition per period, costs expended vs. costs saved, etc., are typical reporting areas.
a. Reporting requirements for management	Management reporting is an essential part of every professional FM program. Reporting the right information to your management can only be determined via extensive conversation with your management to learn what they view as valuable and important. This can include various levels of reporting in addition to exactly what to report.
b. Framework for management reporting	Once management requirements are understood, develop a method to capture the data to obtain that information. It can include value of projects and the FM contribution. It can include value of tasks/activities/expenditures of the organization that are improved in some way by FM activities. The value of savings or contribution to the organization is compared to the cost of the FM department, showing the ongoing value of FM to the organization.
c. FM Reports	Using the management requirements and FM reporting framework, statistical information is gathered to create planned and ad hoc reports for the organization. Reporting audiences may include: **FM operational activities:** Reports assist FM to manage inventory, staff allocation, find improvement opportunities, determining priorities, etc. Examples include statistical reports on forms usage, number of obsolete forms, similar functions for strategic direction, metrics, web usage, web versus paper usage of the same form, etc. **Departmental management** (directly above FM): The management level one above the forms manager is interested in departmental statistics but more importantly in reports that can affect strategy and resources. This information helps the department head support FM viability by knowing

	what FM does and how it contributes to the success of the organization. Examples include savings, efficiencies gained, strategic direction, cost-saving opportunities, process improvement opportunities, resource utilization, recommended approach, service levels. Similar information is often useful to form owners and business partners. **Executive management:** Turning the daily work that the FM department accomplishes to terms that are understood and supported by executive management is a vital part of FM reporting. Examples include contribution to profit or revenue, service levels, cost control, regulation compliance.
d. Benchmark variances	Knowing how other companies perform the FM function is found in a benchmark study. A gap analysis shows how your program varies with the points in the study to determine improvement opportunities and to show management where the program is leading others.

Return to Table of Contents