



# Whitepaper: Creating an ECM Advisory Board and Program Charter



By: Ronda Ringo

November 2013

# The Problem

A year ago, Todd, an IT Director, and Melanie, a Director of Business Process Improvement, had been assigned by executive leadership to jointly lead the Enterprise Content Management initiative for their Company. Todd worked closely with his infrastructure and development teams and Melanie with her business users discussing potential projects that could leverage the new content management system. After presenting potential projects to leadership, a prioritization of the different projects was agreed to and the first two projects were initiated. Business requirements were gathered, infrastructure was established to contain the system, and eventually, the implementations were rolled out to the business. Quickly, both business groups became aware of new efficiencies of what their new content management system provided, and users quickly and easily adapted to the new business processes. Leadership was happy. Users were happy. Todd and Melanie were happy.

As additional ECM projects were launched, Todd and Melanie became more efficient at gathering requirements, implementing, and rolling out to the new business users. However, as effective as the team became on implementing new processes for each individual business group, Todd and Melanie quickly realized that often they were duplicating the same implementation that the other had already done, such as:

- Records management policies for one department were actually the same for another department.
- Role-based access controls for one group should actually have been extended to other groups who also needed access to the documents that were being managed by the new ECM system.
- One of their implementation teams had used one naming convention for security permissions, workflows, taxonomy for their project, and another had used another naming convention.

As much as Todd and Melanie had tried to keep each project team on track, the different teams ended up venturing down separate paths, which resulted in inconsistent documentation as well as duplicated artifacts and implementations. Todd and Melanie realized that although each group had successfully implemented their own solution, each group had ultimately developed in a silo and economies of scale for reuse had not been achieved as effectively as it could have.

# An Overview

AIIM (the Association for Information and Image Management) is the leading non-profit organization focused on helping users to understand the challenges associated with managing records, documents, content and business processes. For over sixty years they have provided education, research and best practices to help organizations find, control and optimize their information. They describe ECM as:

“...the strategies, methods and tools used to capture, manage, store, preserve, and deliver content and documents related to organizational processes. ECM tools and strategies allow the management of an organization’s unstructured information, wherever that information exists.”<sup>1</sup>

As Todd and Melanie realized, deploying ECM solutions can be complex without having a solid, holistic plan and set of standards in place to roll out to the entire enterprise. Most customers get anxious to start thinking about the big picture of the end results of increased efficiency and significant savings and are tempted to implement the ECM solution straightaway. But, research has shown that at the end of the day, the most successful ECM deployments are when customers:

- Carefully plan out their ECM deployment
- Start small - pick a departmental solution and get a quick win, then expand out to the enterprise once they get their feet wet and a successful project under their belt.

In the end, taking the time to think through as many details as possible will prove to be extremely beneficial when implementing an ECM solution.

When we asked other companies what they would have done differently in their ECM implementations, the majority stated that they wish that they would have spent more time establishing a common vision that includes a standards based implementation model and design. Instead, they ended up with departmental silos and few common elements across the enterprise.

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1 AIIM: What is Enterprise Content Management?  
<http://www.aiim.org/What-is-ECM-Enterprise-Content-Management>

In fact, AIIM defines the 10 most common reasons that ECM implementations fail to be:

- Scope creep and budget overruns
- Getting derailed by new budgeting cycles
- Failing to achieve full Return-on-Investment
- Failing to employ opportunities for reuse of technology standards across business units
- Overlooking process and organizational issues
- Failing to properly understand and address differentiated or “high-value” content
- Lacking proper consideration for taxonomy or metadata
- Including a poorly defined business case
- Underestimating the effort required to distil and migrate content
- Missing potential benefits associated with hardware and software consolidation

Needless to say, all of these common pitfalls can be completely avoided through awareness and proper planning.

So, how do you start out by establishing a common implementation model and design at the global level? How do you meet the needs of the department but also consider the enterprise? How do you not lock yourself into a corner and end up with a departmental silo application as others have? How do you think global and act local? How do you ensure that your ECM implementation will be able to bypass these common pitfalls?

The Good News.

The good news is that there are answers, and this white paper shall provide a process that has been followed by other corporations who have successfully navigated the waters of ECM and successfully rolled out to the enterprise.

So, let's get started.

# Getting Started

First and foremost, senior management's commitment to the company's ECM strategy, implementation, and vision must be established. Without that, the ECM project will fail. Senior Management provides crucial elements to the success of a project as they can present change to the company in a positive yet authoritative manner. This top-down methodology is crucial to the success of an ECM project implementation.

Next, hire an ECM consulting company, like Armedia, who has deployed hundreds of ECM solutions across multiple ECM platforms managing millions of documents. Armedians have over 11 years of deploying successful ECM implementations, and many Armedians have also been customers like Todd and Melanie. We know and understand what worked and what didn't. In other words, we have been there, done that.

Third, pick a department that has medium complexity and stick with that department as the focus for your first ECM deployment. As part of the content management needs for that department, identify initial, high-profile, high-payback processes that will be automated and/or improved by implementing ECM and stick with your original plan on what you want to accomplish.

Next, set up the success criteria and metrics to monitor the deployment to verify that the implementation is successful and there is a return on your investment. (Some examples, include: physical space savings, paper savings, time savings (throughput or searching for content, e.g.)).

And finally, and most important, establish an ECM Charter, Program, and ECM Advisory Board within your organization. An ECM Charter and Program will be your blueprint for ECM standards, policies, and procedures. An ECM Advisory Board will include all stakeholders from the inception of the ECM rollout through production level support and maintenance of your ECM system.

# First: Create an ECM Charter and Program

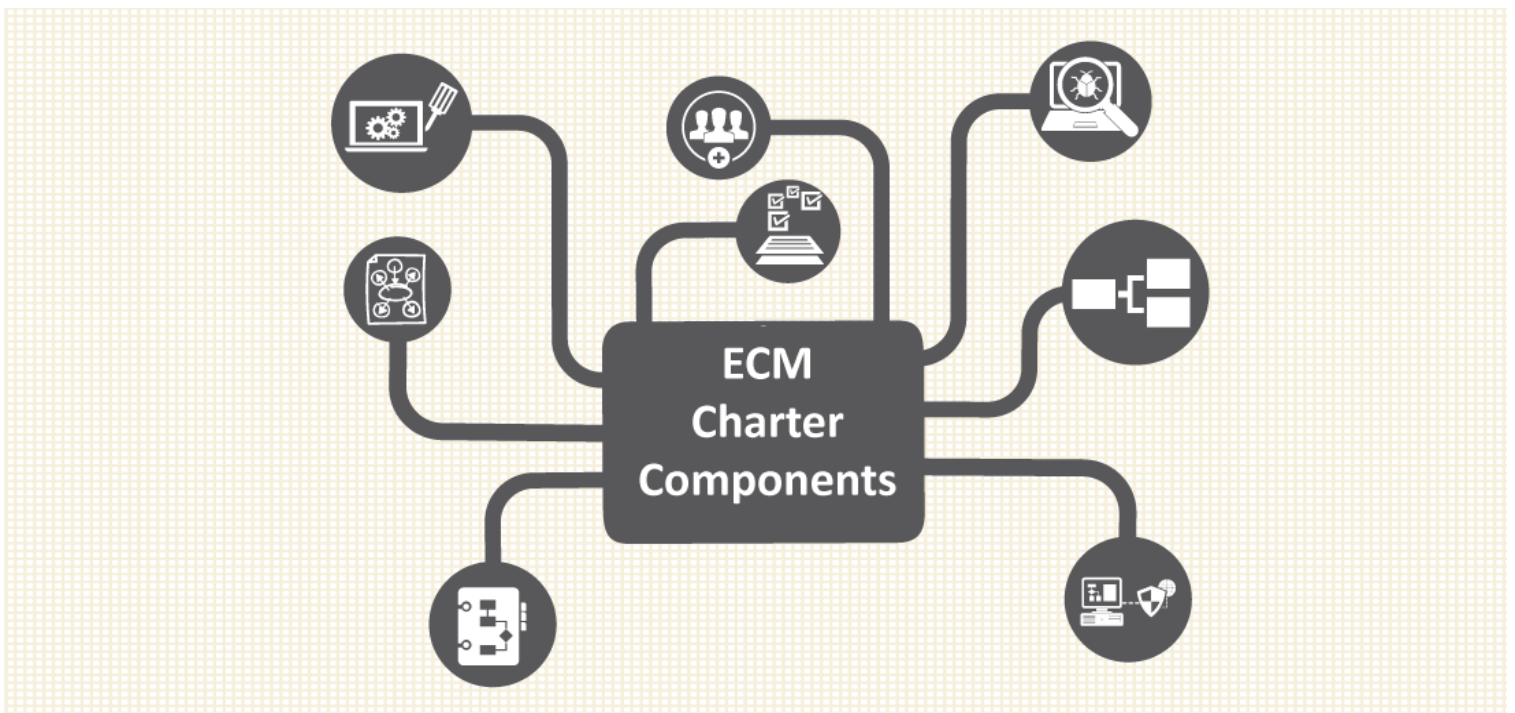
The first step is to map out the charter and program by which the ECM Advisory Board will follow. The format for the charter and program is up to you, but most organizations create and maintain versioned document(s), drawings, and presentations which represent and describe the program in detail. The ECM Charter has two purposes:

- Ensures that your organization is prepared for all aspects of the new solutions implementation
- Provides well-documented policies and procedures for leadership and all stakeholders to better understand how the new solution(s) will affect and impact existing business processes.

Now, don't fret. You won't have all of the details defined up front, but as the ECM Advisory Board/Core team comes together and project roadmap/rollout is agreed to, the pieces will all fall into place.

As mentioned earlier, the rule of thumb as you consider the suggested concepts below is to always think globally, implement locally. This means that for every decision made by the board, including the ECM charter, the enterprise and global view of the ECM program should be considered as you document and implement individual project and departmental solutions.

Below are some suggested items and artifacts to consider in your ECM Charter. (Note: under some of the bullets you'll see examples on the type of information you may want to include.)

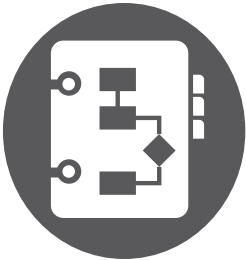




- **ECM Advisory Board Members selected – The Core Team**  
We will go into more details about this in the next section.



- **Platform Standard: Physical and Logical Architecture**
  - Disaster Recovery, High Availability Architecture, Standards.
  - As a recommend best practice, should include development, test, and production physical and logical architectures. In addition, Test environment should mimic Production environment, if possible.



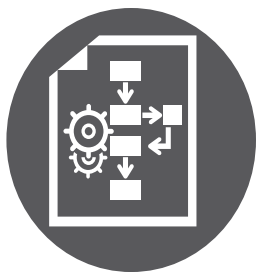
- **Enterprise object model, taxonomy**
  - From the inception of the ECM program, this should be considered a critical component of the ECM architecture. This document develops a cross-functional, common definition of various pieces of information.



- **Enterprise Security model**
  - Content Ownership (Individual, Group Level, Department, Division Level, e.g.)
  - Content Access Standards – Who Has Access to What?
  - Speak to your Active Directory or LDAP IT lead to get an understanding on what user groups and roles exist today. Incorporate those into a spreadsheet and use as a basis for defining RBAC (Role Based Access Controls) that are ECM-specific.  
Within the spreadsheet under each role include the following:  
View, Edit, Version, Delete, Workflow, Lifecycle e.g. ( note: (\*) RBAC are very specific to each ECM product. In addition, Lifecycle policy capabilities are not included in all ECM products).

ROLE	Process Roles	
XYZ Global	Workflow	Lifecycle *
	Appraisal_Approval_WF, Vacation_Approval_WF	Appraisal_LC
XYZ HR	Vacation_Approval_WF	
XYZ Managers	Appraisal_Approval_WF, Vacation_Approval_WF, Equipment_Request_WF	

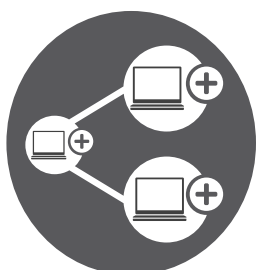
ROLE	Content Based RBAC *			
	View	Edit	Version	Delete
XYZ Global	Appraisal_Type;	Appraisal_Type;	Appraisal_Type;	Appraisal_Type;
	Vacation_Form_Type	Vacation_Form_Type	Vacation_Form_Type	Vacation_Form_Type
XYZ HR	Appraisal_Type; Vacation_Form_Type			
XYZ Managers	Appraisal_Type;	Equip_Type	Equip_Type	Equip_Type
	Vacation_Form_Type			
	Equip_Type			



- **Workflow/Lifecycle standards**

- Understand your business processes and what the current lifecycle standards are within your organization.

Having a thorough understanding of the current business processes and policies within your organization will allow you to be able to more effectively find inefficiencies or bottlenecks for potential change.



- **Deployment standards**

- Outline a plan for which departments you will roll the solution out to first, second and third. Identify a key plan for how each of these departments will change over to the new system, including references to training and migration of legacy data, if applicable.





### • **Regulatory compliance standards**

- Compliance standards vary by industry. Some ECM solutions can help track audit events, document publishing policies (e.g. ‘who should see what and when”). But, it’s easy to go overkill with audit events which can become expensive from a total cost of ownership perspective. Think through what is crucial to the business.



### • **Customization Standards**

- Any customization is a deviation from the base product and there are costs associated with doing customizations from upgrades, testing, and interoperability, to name a few. Customizations should be considered thoroughly and re-use should always be one of the key factors when determining if the system should be customized.



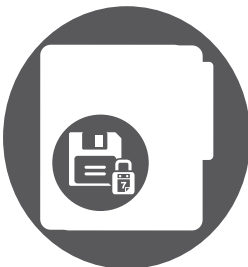
### • **Development Standards**

- Include well-documented procedures for moving configurations from development to test and from test to production. Other procedures should include an upgrade plan based on the ECM vendor’s product release timeline.



### • **Support Model**

- Include POC’s for first level departmental support and production support, e.g.



### • **Records retention standards (Bring on your Records Managers early in the process even if you aren’t going to be doing full-blown RM in the first project or two).**

- This is typically done per Content Type or sometimes at the folder level of multiple Content Types. A document created with Vacation\_Form\_Type may have a retention policy of Personnel\_Short\_Term\_Retention\_Policy. (And the retention policy may be 3 years after date of approval).
- In addition, a specific HR folder within the repository may have a retention policy of one year for vacation requests.



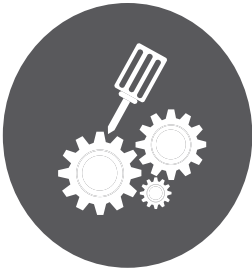
- **Training Plan/Standards**

- Employees are the most valuable asset to a company and ensuring that they are properly prepared to interact with the new ECM system on a day-to-day basis is the only way that deployment will be successful.



- **Quality Assurance standards**

- Quality Assurance standards are key to ensuring that the solution is performing at the optimal level prior to the solution going live. Not only does this save on immense headaches from discovering problems after the deployment, but it can be beneficial to helping your company achieve ROI on the solutions.



- **Change Management Process/Policies**

- For many in the organization, ECM means new behaviors, activities and skill sets. Managing the human component of “deploying change management” will be crucial to the success of the effort. Having well-documented changes and a formalized change request process will allow your organization to better track and review historical changes made across the deployment.

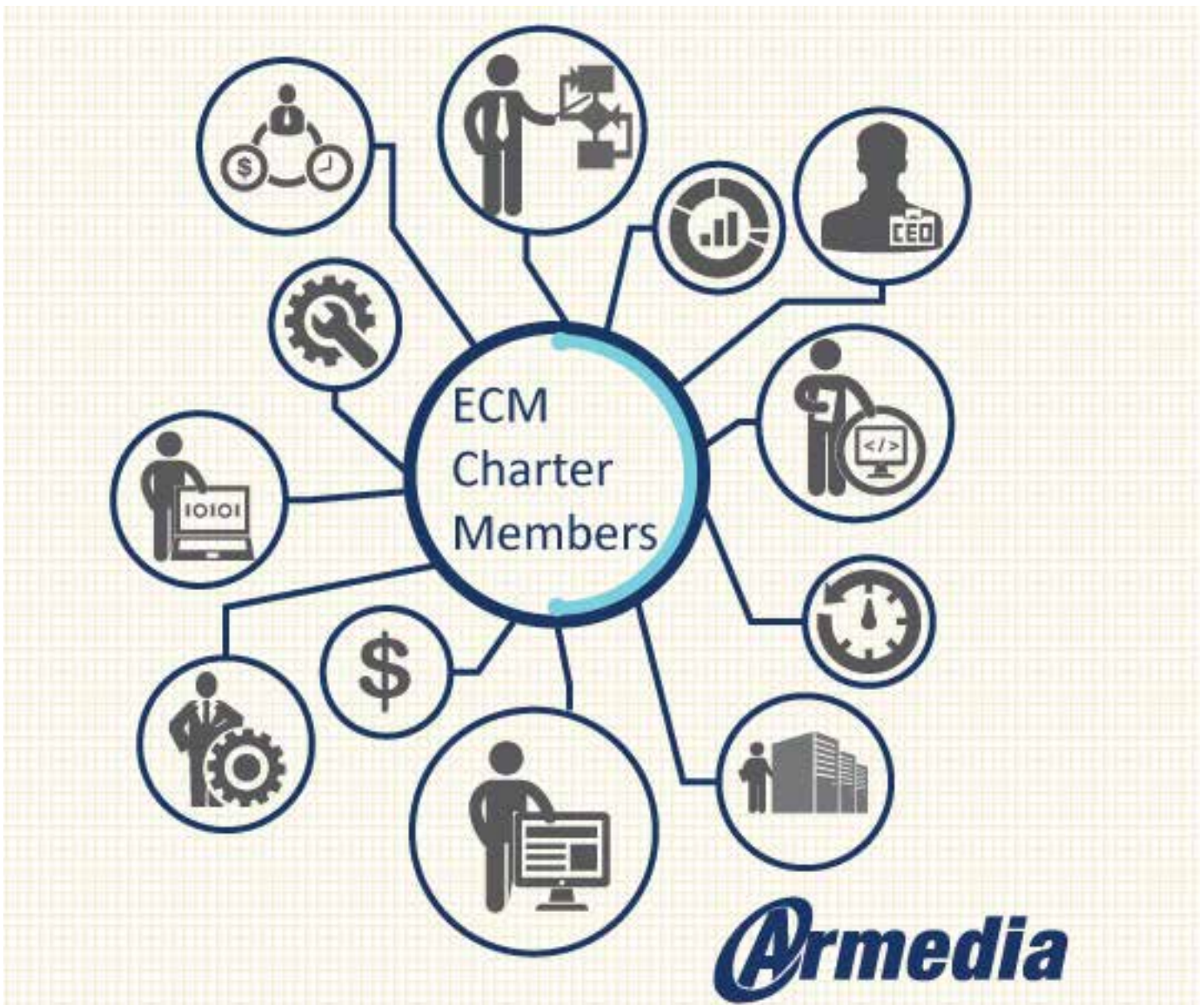
- **Web content standards and implementing Web Content Management (WCM) (if applicable)**

- **Application and Content migration strategy (if applicable)**

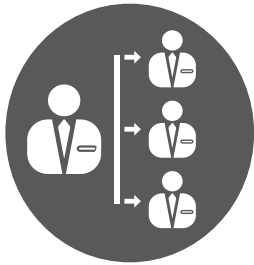
## Second: Build Your Team

A team is only as strong as its members, and the team members that represent the ECM Advisory Board should be chosen wisely. Both the business and technical departments should be represented as key stakeholders in the ECM enterprise solution. As the ECM roll-out becomes broader, the core team members should have consensus on the baseline configurations and standards, as well as deviations from those standards, on which all departmental deployments are developed from. In a subsequent section we'll discuss the topics and discussion points on which the ECM Advisory Board or core team should consider.

Core ECM resources will assist in building deep internal ECM resource expertise that can be leveraged as the system matures. Suggested resources are as follows:



# Business Members



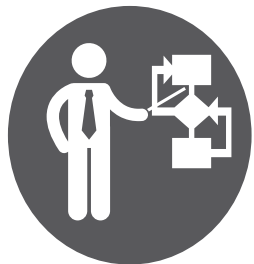
- **ECM Project Manager**

- Owns day-to-day management of the all ECM project, plans, team execution, issues/risks mitigation, resources, change management, and reporting.



- **ECM Functional Lead/ Subject Matter Experts**

- Representatives from the pilot department and other associated areas who can provide requirements for their respective areas and address questions.



- **ECM Business Analyst**

- Owns requirements gathering, test planning, testing, and system documentation. Typically is the key spokesperson for the users. Their advocate.



- **ECM End-User Support**

- From an end-user level, sometimes companies choose to handle ECM support within the department and designated key SME on the departmental application to handle the first line of user support.



- **Executive Sponsor**

- Is the key decision-maker who also owns scope and sign-off for each ECM project.  
This person is critical to ensuring that the change within the organization that is caused by the ECM system will have a top-down approach, thus giving employees a mandate rather than a request to alter their daily activities and habits.



- **ECM Consulting Representative**

- At the inception of the ECM Advisory Board, these participants should be involved, but as you become more self-sufficient, these members can attend ECM Advisory meetings less frequently.

# Technical Members



- **ECM Architect**

- Owns defining the system architecture and designs needed to support the Pilot operationally (hardware/software/network/VMs).



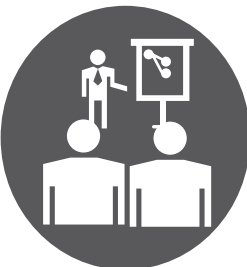
- **ECM System Administrator/ Technical Support**

- Owns maintenance and technical support of ECM Software. Collaborates with other IT personnel (database, network, etc.) to ensure that the system is up and operational.



- **ECM Developers**

- Owns installation/configuration of ECM software.



- **ECM Consulting Representative (Architect)**

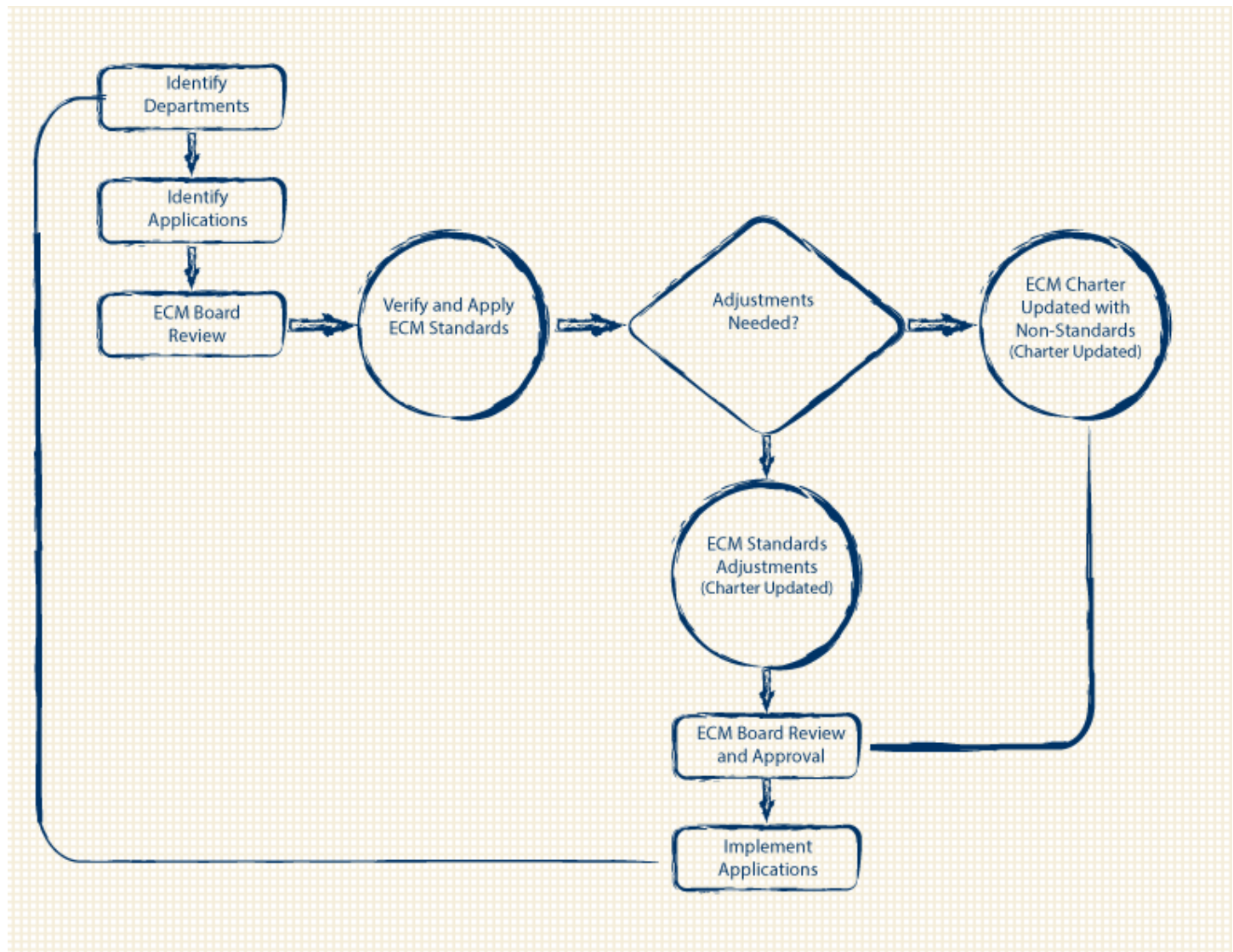
- At the inception of the ECM Advisory Board, the ECM expert/architect should be involved, but as you become more self-sufficient, this member could attend ECM Advisory meetings less frequently.

## Third: Establish a Shared Services Approach

Setting up your ECM charter and program, defining standards and creating an ECM Advisory board to manage and monitor the standards and ECM projects provides you with a shared services approach to deploying ECM. By consolidating and streamlining ECM capabilities across multiple groups, you should be able to re-use constructs that have already been well-documented, implemented, tested, and proved out in a production environment. There will be times, of course, that you may choose to deviate from the standards when and where it makes the most sense to the organization from a total cost of ownership perspective.

As you bring on new groups and new ECM projects consider the following:

- Have we done this before? Is there anything that we can re-use?
- Departmental deviations permitted only if approved by ECM Advisory Board.
- Ensure standards are followed and update ECM Program/Charter artifacts.



## Fourth: Schedule Meetings

Finally, you'll want to set up a recurring meeting time for all ECM Advisory Board members to meet, discuss, the timeline and rollout for future projects, review standards, and any proposed deviations from those standards.

In your ECM charter you should include a Purpose, Approach, and Deliverable (otherwise known as a PAD) for each of your meetings.

### Suggested Meeting Guidelines

- Repeating Meeting Scheduled (every two weeks or every month, e.g.)
- Mandatory participation by all ECM Advisor Board members
- Meeting Leader Designated
- Review previous meetings notes and action items
- Meeting Minutes taken and shared amongst team (in a central location - preferably in the ECM system in which you are deploying)—drink your own Kool-Aid

## Conclusion

While beginning an Enterprise Content Management project may seem like a daunting task at first, properly implemented solutions quickly evolve into a valuable contributor to business success for organizations.

As we have discussed, there are many forces to be considered when planning a new Enterprise Content Management project. Organizations which understand the complexities involved in undertaking an ECM project will be able to provide a holistic solution that is intuitive to users and is a reduced burden on IT. In considering the special needs of each ECM component, these guidelines will enable you to provide a holistic approach, thereby reducing the time it takes to see a return on investment.

## Contact Armedia

Kevin McFadden  
(866) 398 - 0323  
kmcfadden@armedia.com  
@ArmediaLLC

## About Armedia

Armedia is a technology firm, focusing on information and content management solutions. Armedia has industry-acclaimed expertise, services and products in business process, document, case and record management, mobile solutions as well as collaboration, content publishing and content migration. Armedia has experience providing these services on various platforms, including: Alfresco, Drupal, EMC Documentum, IBM FileNet, Microsoft SharePoint and the Apple iPad. Armedia's mission is to provide world-class solutions to its clients and assist them in achieving tangible returns on their technology investments.

Armedia is a GSA Schedule IT70 holder, and is CMMI Level 3 appraised. Armedia has offices in Atlanta, GA; Huntsville, AL; Newport News, VA; and Vienna, VA.

For more information visit Armedia's website at <http://www.armedia.com/>