Shared Content Foundation for Company-wide Engagement

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Process used and survey demographics

The survey results quoted in this report are taken from a variety of industry reports released by AIIM, collected from individual members of the AIIM community surveyed using a web-based tool. Invitations to take the survey were sent via email to a selection of AIIM's 80,000 registered individuals.

About AIIM

AIIM has been an advocate and supporter of information professionals for nearly 70 years. The association mission is to ensure that information professionals understand the current and future challenges of managing information assets in an era of social, mobile, cloud and big data. AIIM builds on a strong heritage of research and member service. Today, AIIM is a global, non-profit organization that provides independent research, education and certification programs to information professionals. AIIM represents the entire information management community: practitioners, technology suppliers, integrators and consultants. AIIM runs training programs, which can be found at http://www.aiim.org/Training.

About the author

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Introduction

ECM (Enterprise Content Management) has historically been viewed to capture unstructured information – whether digitally born or paper-based using document scanners and multifunctional peripherals (MFPs) – to store, retrieve, and manage business content. While the concept of centrally stored content is sound, there are typically many content repositories across an enterprise, with different features and capabilities. Some repositories may be strong in collaboration, version control, and workflows. Others may provide automated ingestion, high compression, and long term archive capabilities. Some only do file sharing. Many of these content stores are typically siloed and disconnected from each other and from the line-of-business applications in use by the departments. The result, is content trapped, inaccessible to many, and serviced differently.

In this age of digital disruption – sometimes referred to as the consumerization of IT - mobile devices and cloud application use are permeating the corporate workplace by way of employees, partners and customers. Whether housed in file shares, CRM and ERP systems, or even SharePoint, content that is inaccessible, impedes the organization from engaging, sharing, and using content internally and externally.

Just as a house built on sand with a poor foundation cannot sustain growth and stand against the shifting sands around it, the information ecosystem of a business organization must be planned, and built upon a solid foundation or risk failure. It must be capable of sustaining and supporting growth, agility, productivity, compliance, and cost management.

Flexible and secure collaborative workplaces extending beyond the walls of the organization in support of a mobile workforce and enhanced customer experience are now a requirement. Mobile workers, partners, and suppliers must have a unified ability to capture, manage, and access vital business content. They must be enabled to interact with that content, and each other, regardless of time and location. As such, the information management ecosystem must be designed for, and provide, shared content foundation that support:

- Document and Team Collaboration
- Mobile Document Access
- Document Synchronization
- Distributed and Mobile Document Capture
- Secure Document Sharing inside and outside the enterprise
- Unified Content Access spanning enterprise-wide content stores
- Unified Content Viewing with optional redaction and annotation capabilities
- Output management and distribution for high volumes of statements and
- Capacity and scale to add on higher capabilities as the business needs emerge such as case management, information lifecycle governance.

Serving as the foundation upon which the information ecosystem is built, ECM provides the content strategy that span and support the enterprise. ECM enables faster time to market deployment cycles without losing any quality from its foundationally rich capabilities. According to AIIM's widely accepted definition, "ECM is 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".

ECM encompasses the entire lifecycle of content, from capture through to the end of its usefulness to the business. Content flows from creators to collaborators, to reviewers and editors, to approvers and publishers, with an end goal of being securely delivered to its readers and consumers inside or outside the organizational borders. ECM provides a unified approach to working with content, ensuring the right content is provided to the right consumers, when they need it, accurately and securely.

A strong information ecosystem, built with ECM, delivers shared content foundation that enable each department within the organization to carry out their work with confidence that the content they are accessing is the most up-to-date, and accurate content available. This confidence boosts employee productivity and shows itself in increased customer service quality and satisfaction.

# Opportunity for Shared Content Foundation and Unified Access

For many organizations, network drives, file-shares, hard drives, and other means of storage have become what AIIM's President, John Mancini, has termed the "Digital Landfill". Without a strategy, content is spread across an enterprise-wide dumping ground with no governance, no integration, no insight and left to user discretion as to what is saved, for how long, and where. The result is an inability to share information, effectively collaborate, impaired decision making, and lengthy customer response times.

One of a large US Telco's business lines had grown to $5.3 million, an increase of $3.6 million from the prior year. Because of this growth, that division was projecting a 200% increase in its workload as additional customers were being added to their service area. Yet, they could only increase staff by 50%. Since existing processes routed all work items through a manually operated Control Desk, departmental managers knew that even with the additional staff they could not handle the greater workload. Unless technology is embraced to assist, customer service would face hiring additional staff over the authorized level or risk alienating the customers in whom the company had already made a significant investment to acquire.

A very common scenario we have often seen to date is found in customer service. For this example, a customer of a bank sends a letter of complaint to the customer service department, which is then stored in a cloud-based file share application. The marketing department is preparing to launch a campaign to upsell this customer with new services, unaware there is an issue. The customer receives the campaign letter, and becomes frustrated because the complaint issue is still unresolved. This causes the client to turn to social media and post about the lack of responsiveness, and disconnect experienced. The end result being this customer leaves for a competitor, the bank's reputation and brand are damaged, and there is potential for other social media followers to reconsider their relationships with this bank.

In both cases, and the primary drivers for ECM are typically a combination of cost, productivity, compliance, and/or risk. One might think that organizations have realized the benefits of moving from file-shares and network drives to shared content foundation using ECM as their "official" way of managing content, yet 62% of those polled by AIIM indicated they are still strongly reliant on their shared network drives. Only 1% of those polled say they have turned it off, and 15% say they have "largely replaced it". (Figure 1) As the shared network drive concept has severe limitations in content access, collaboration, and mobility, there is an immediate urgency to make the move to shared content foundation via ECM to unleash organizational productivity, competitiveness, and agility.

Figure 1. How would you best describe the current status of your network file-share "repository" (X:Drive, G:Drive, Share drives)? [1]
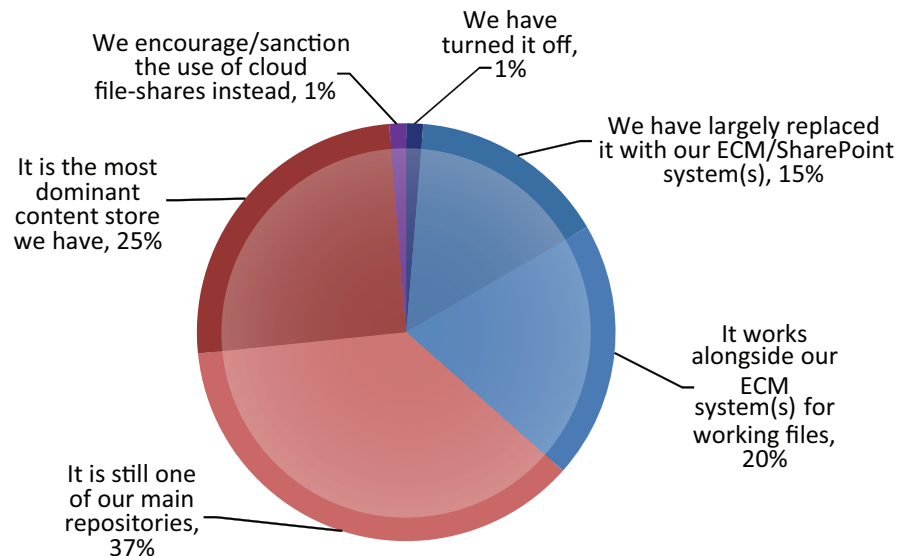
ECM Plays a Vital Role

Looking at the organization as a whole, it is not uncommon for several content stores to be in place across an enterprise as many do not have a content strategy to start with. This represents both a time cost spent searching and a potential risk that vital information is missed or lost. It is highly likely that most do not have unified access, collaboration, and mobility capabilities. Yet for 67% of organizations, ECM/DM is cited as being mission-critical with 54% indicating records management is mission critical, while for 40% say it is capture and workflow. (Figure 2) When asked what the impact of an outage or downtime of their ECM system would have for their organization, a third indicated they would suffer serious disruption after an outage of just 1 hour, 58% would struggle after half a day of downtime.

Figure 2. How long before a system outage or major slowdown of your most critical content application would cause serious business disruption? [1]
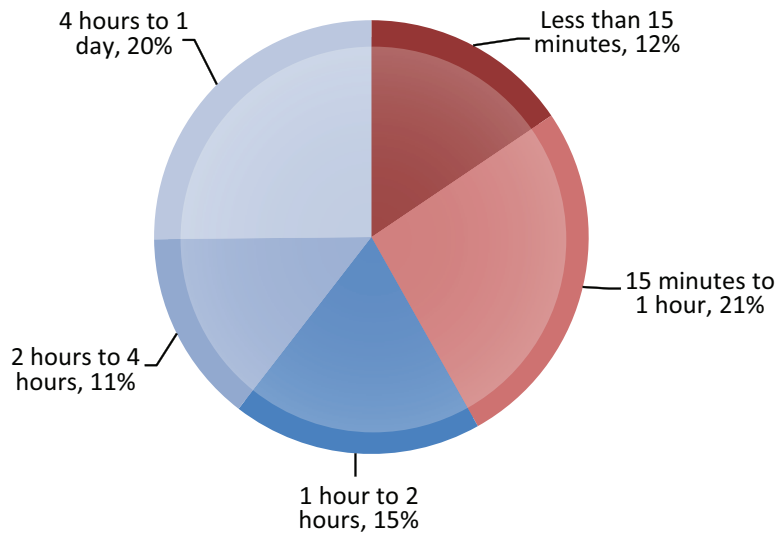
As part of an ECM strategy, managing content in the cloud is on the radar for the majority of organizations. Growing demands for flexibility by an ever-expanding mobile workforce and the extended enterprise is driving organizations to embrace cloud as part of their ECM environment. Of those surveyed, 22% indicate the use of cloud-based services while 25% indicate they are using a hybrid or combination of cloud and on-premise systems.37% of respondents indicate they are planning cloud use. (Figure 3)

This means organizations are adding other content stores in the cloud as they did on premises. Before it becomes another dumping ground, there is an opportunity for organizations to act and look for solutions that can link on-premises and the cloud, providing shared content foundation across the spectrum in hybrid mode, and aligned with the business needs.

Figure 3. Do you now or are you planning to use a cloud-based service for managing content? [2]
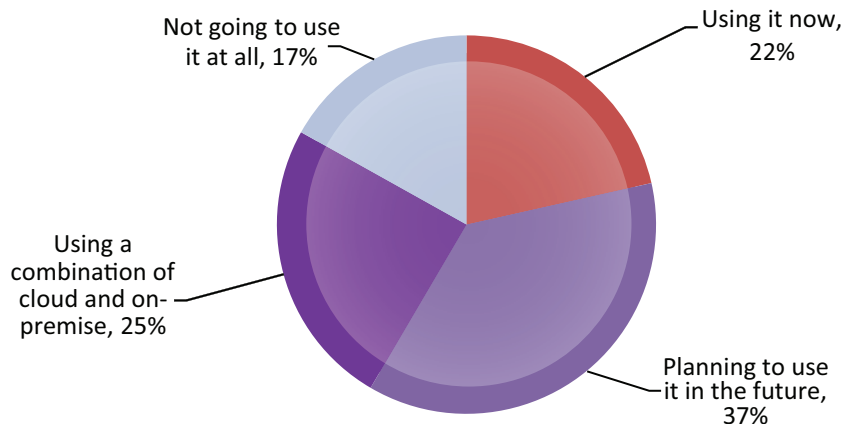
Unifying and Optimizing the Content Ecosystem

The combination of ECM and Cloud can make content access and collaboration both omnipresent and transparent to the user. Content should be available to those who require it, regardless of where it resides in the enterprise. Secure access, to the right users, should be device agnostic, with the ability to collaboratively edit and manage it with no duplication or local storage.

The rising generation of users, are increasingly expecting business organizations to function in similar ways to their personal lives. They want the ability to access information and collaborate from anywhere, at anytime. Users expect to have solid foundational elements that handle content governance, security, and compliance so they can still be agile without limiting their ability to act and without limiting content use.

From a line-of-business application integration perspective, when asked about the links between ECM and ERP systems, only 8% cite having two-way integration between systems and for the majority, there is still a lot of work ahead as 61% indicate no linkage between their ERP/finance and ECM/RM systems. (Figure 4)

Figure 4. How closely coupled is your ECM/DM/RM system to your ERP/Finance system? [1]
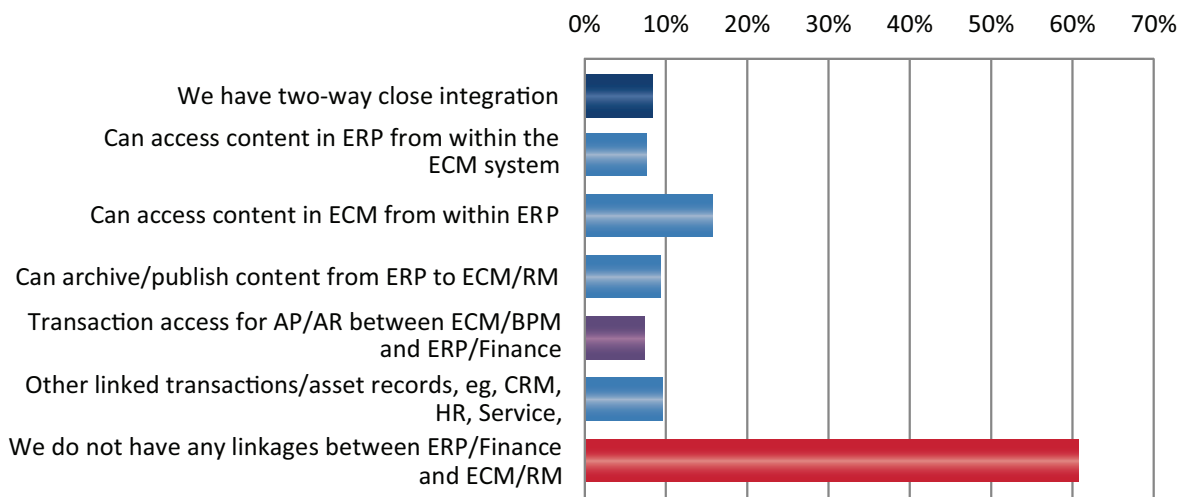

One of the key challenges for ECM, along with support for multiple content types by internal and external users, is accessing multiple content stores, with the same level of service capabilities. All of this should be managed within a secure scalable environment that meets legal, industry and regulatory compliance requirements. The hybrid approach to ECM systems comprising on-premise with cloud-based applications provides synchronization of content across the enterprise and between repositories ensuring accurate, findable content at the speed of the line-of-business meeting time to market needs. Use of cloud supports high availability and security management by the back end systems. In addition, the combination of cloud with on-premise enables integrations with business processes and interactive workflows.

Building Upon the ECM Foundation

With a strong foundation in place to capture, manage, store, preserve, and share vital business content – same as in constructing a building – additions can be made to expand the content ecosystem and accommodate increasing requirements to address records management, mobile device use, advanced search, eDiscovery and more.

AIIM research finds that when asked about additional ECM functionalities 35% of respondents cite enterprise search, records management, BPM/workflow, and metadata management, with a further 10% using integrated add-ons for these functions (most likely with SharePoint). When asked about inbound capture, 56% indicate they are using an add-on module, a third use an integrated add-on, and a third are implementing standalone inbound capture. (Figure 5)

Figure 5. Which of the following ECM functionalities do you have deployed, and in what way? [1]
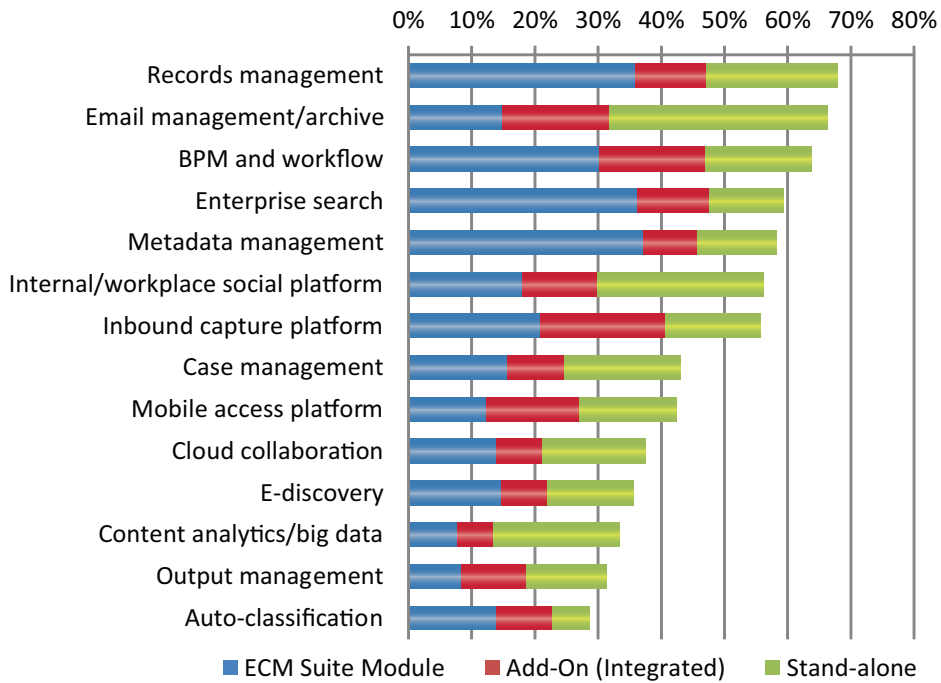
Looking at ECM from a mobile perspective, and what employees can actually do with content on their mobile devices, many are restricted to search and view access only. This may be due to use of a browser rather than a dedicated app, limiting offline capability. 17% support the much needed comment and edit capability using an app, and 19% allow interaction with processes and approval cycles, although only 12% have dedicated mobile e-forms for initiating or interacting with on-prem processes. 55% have no app-based capability.

Figure 6. Which of the following app-based capabilities do you have on mobile devices? [1]
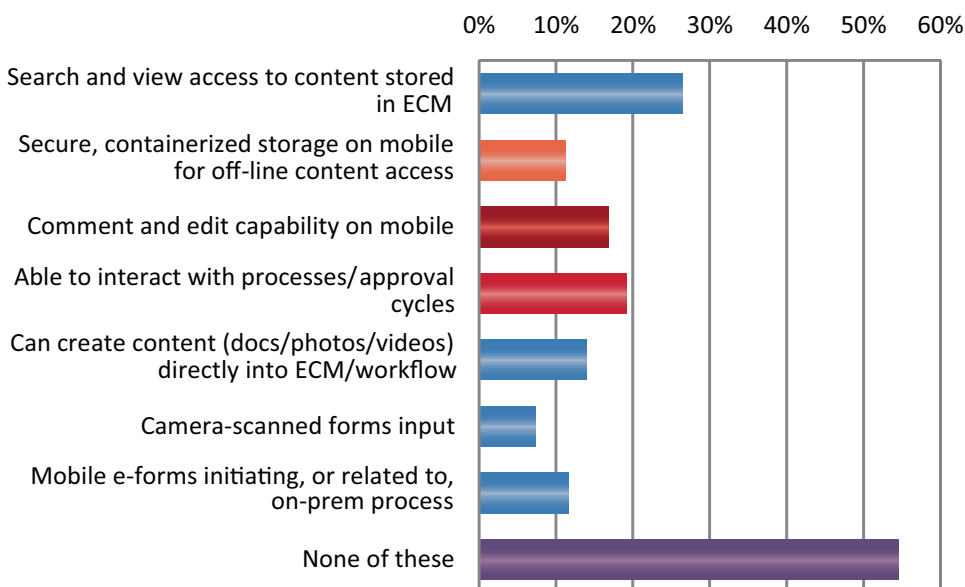
Benefits of ECM

Using the previous examples, and leveraging shared content foundation, the bank customer sends the letter of complaint to the customer service department. The letter is captured and using recognition technology the letter is identified as a customer complaint, data is extracted for indexing, and the document is stored in a cloud-based application. Simultaneously, a workflow is triggered notifying the marketing department of a pending issue, with a link to the letter. Marketing now works to help resolve this issue to retain the customer and offer new services as part of the discussion; the focus being on issue resolution and customer retention, rather than promotion. In much the way that plumbing and electrical wiring bring water and electricity throughout the house, through the use of shared content foundation, this information is made readily available and delivered to all departments affected by this letter. So now, the client turns to social media and posts about the great responsiveness, and customer experience with the end result being a strengthened position on the bank's reputation and protection of the brand.

In the case of the Telco, the division's shared content foundation went live on a Monday and by mid-week the customer's service consultants had emptied the queue of work. The team was so confident in their solution's ability to integrate their legacy systems, automatically present and track information, and provide management reports, that they declined to hire the additional headcount positions authorized. Witnessing their success, other departments asked technology assisted environment to automate their content heavy processes to spend less on what can be automated and spend more time on building customer satisfaction and relationship. The customer projected first year FTE cost avoidance of $2.5 million, and a 150% return on investment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As with building a house, a strong ECM environment providing shared content foundation that is capable of supporting today's operational requirement and is scalable to expand and meet tomorrow's needs, requires a clear strategy and design, setting the foundation upon which the content ecosystem is built.

Such content foundation provides a unified user experience that appears intuitive and seamless that boosts employee productivity. Use of file-shares, network drives, and random cloud-based applications without a strategy, is like building a house on sand with a weak foundation that limits expansion and at some point is likely to collapse.

Shared content foundation must be planned, designed, and should support governance, growth, security, flexibility, collaborative interaction, and unified access to all vital business content. Besides engaging and enabling the business with valued business content inside and outside the organizational boundaries, this approach provides standardization of tools, governance, and processes, unified content access across multiple applications, greater conformity to compliance requirements, and consistency in the way content is managed and serviced throughout its lifecycle.

As an Information Management professional or business leader, consider :

- **Mobility -** Use of multiple devices for unified access to any content type, anywhere, at anytime, on any device.
- **Optimization -** Content stores that are optimized for content and transaction types for optimized business results; all with unified content access and sharing.
- **Collaboration -** Collaborate, comment, share with versioning, editing, viewing, annotating, edacting both internally and externally.
- **Scalability -** Scalable deployment and capabilities from basic content management to high value solutions such as case, governance, and industry specific solutions.
- **Security -** Secure management with controlled access and audit capabilities that prevent unauthorized access with an ability to document and monitor all activities related to business content.

It is the user who must work with and be confident that the content they are accessing is the most relevant, up-to-date, accurate, and available. Shared content foundation that are planned, implemented, and continuously improved upon delivers this level of comfort and increased user adoption.

References

1 ECM Decisions – strategic options for managing, accessing and preserving content

2 ECM and the Cloud: My Documents or Our Documents?

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IBM enterprise information management solutions (EIM) improve and simplify how businesses manage documents and other information to become more productive, more efficient and stay compliant. IBM eliminates information silos and provides quick and easy access to the right content from any core business system and device. IBM achieves higher levels of user adoption resulting in faster ROI with a uniquely intuitive approach based on managing information by "what" it is versus "where" it's stored. With flexible on-premises, cloud and hybrid deployment options, IBM reduces demands on IT by enabling those closest to the business must access and control content based on their requirements.

Thousands of organizations in over 100 countries use IBM as a single platform for managing their critical business information, including companies such as SAS, Elekta and EADS. For more information, visit www.IBM.com.

The IBM Approach to a Shared Content Foundation for Company-wide Engagement

To tackle the challenges of providing consistent, secure and collaborative content for the enterprise, IBM developed an approach that is structured, proven, and sustainable for the long run. The success of implementing company-wide content sharing and management relies not only on the technology but equally important is the strategic transformation of how an organization interacts, categorizes, and manages its content.
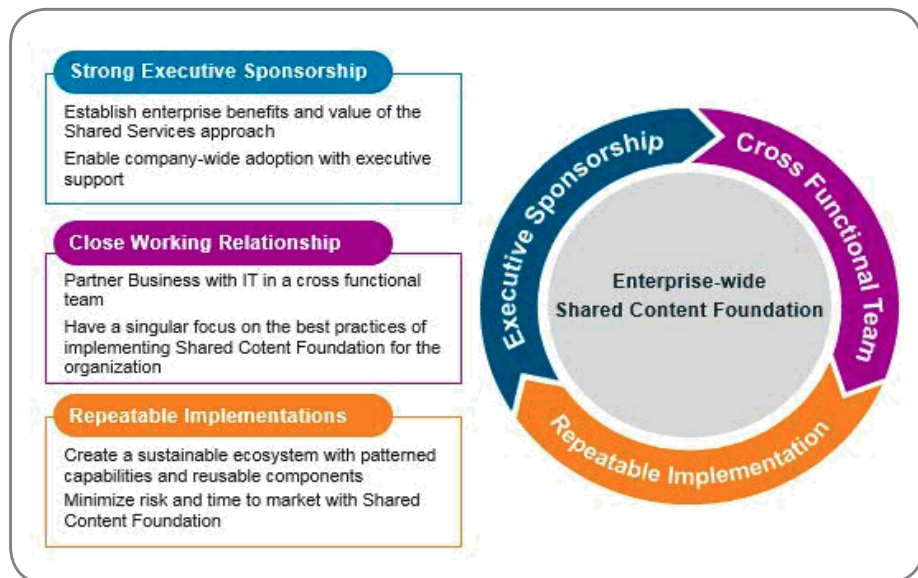
From IBM's experienced partnerships with many global customers, three key concepts emerge as critical success factors for establishing enterprise adoption of shared content foundation.

Strong Executive Sponsorship – Any strategy aimed at transforming an organization requires a clear vision and committed support from the leaders of the company. The importance of managing content assets and the value gained from shared content need to be established and recognized to ensure initiatives spanning mulitple business areas and locations are accepted and adopted. Leading organizations set up an ECM Program to lead and govern the strategic execution of the shared content mission.

Cross Functional Team – While an ECM Program spearheads the mission to execute the shared content services, a focused team in the form of a Competency Center is required to implement consistent ECM policies, procedures, and solutions within the organization. The Competency Center is a cross-functional team where business and technology resources work together to develop critical assets such as content management standards, best practices and guidelines for the enterprise. In addition, the Competency Center provides a set of processes and governing capabiltiies to ensure the shared content services executed properly.

Repeatable and Patterned Implementations – Enterprise adoption of shared content foundation requires a patterned approach to defining, designing, and implementing ECM capabilities. A shareable mindset ensures services created (i.e. policies, procedures, or solutions) can be standardized and reused across the enterprise, minimizing implementation risk and lowering time to market. Speedy realization of business value from shared foundation is fundamental to enterprise adoption and measurement of success.

With executive sponsorship, a dedicated cross-functional team, and common capabilities, organizations embarking on the shared content foundation journey provide readily available, trusted, and secured content to every corner of their organization. Shared content services encourages company-wide engagement, internally and externally, with increased end user adoption. Once the foundation is achieved based on ECM platform, higher-level capabilities can be added including case management, analytics and lifecycle management.

Strong Executive Sponsorship
Establish enterprise benefits and value of the Shared Services approach
Enable company-wide adoption with executive support

Close Working Relationship
Partner Business with IT in a cross functional team
Have a singular focus on the best practices of implementing Shared Cotent Foundation for the organization

Repeatable Implementations
Create a sustainable ecosystem with patterned capabilities and reusable components
Minimize risk and time to market with Shared Content Foundation

Executive Sponsorship — Cross Functional Team — Repeatable Implementation

Enterprise-wide Shared Content Foundation

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