



Information Management Assessment Overview

January 2008



The Case for Information Management

Information Management (IM) has for some time been seen as a core area that organisations have to address in order to achieve business success. However, many organisations which have invested heavily in IM initiatives such as data warehouses or Business Intelligence projects are frustrated by the relatively limited benefit which their investment is delivering.

Typical Issues:

- No clear understanding of whether IM as a whole is contributing to the business objectives or not
- Departments operating in isolation, effectively acting as standalone information factories
- Analysts who spend too much time every month 'cranking the handle' to get basic information delivered, frequently with significant manual intervention
- Multiple IM toolsets and platforms in use across the organisation
- Users who are struggling to get to grips with sophisticated products, and who don't know where to turn to for help
- Excessive use of MS Office products for information delivery (Excel, Access)
- Poor record of delivery of IM projects, or delivery of projects which are technical successes, but are not adopted by the end user community

There is growing awareness that effective IM deployment requires more than just delivery of a technical solution. To illustrate this, **Gartner** has already stated that "***Without an overall vision and road map, BI initiatives will flounder and remain disconnected.***"¹ Furthermore, according to **Knightsbridge**, IM Governance and linkage of IM with business objectives are the key areas of current focus for many organisations²

Acuma – The Information Management Specialist

Acuma Solutions Ltd has more than 20 years experience of delivering Information Management³ projects, and has successfully implemented hundreds of solutions, across the full spectrum of data integration, data quality, data warehousing and business intelligence. Acuma's **Information Value Model (IVM)** methodology has been developed to encapsulate all of our acquired knowledge and experience around IM solutions delivery. **IVM** recognises the importance of addressing both the **human** (process and organisation) factors as well as the **technical** (technology and data) factors. This ensures that a complete and sustainable solution is delivered, delivery teams are trained and mentored to be able to support and enhance the solution going forward, and end-users trained and mentored to ensure that the solution can be fully exploited.

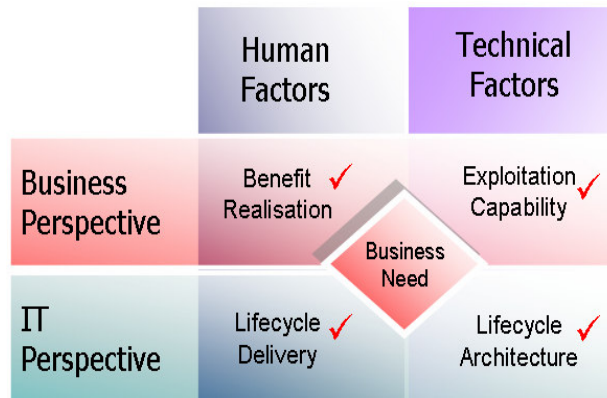
¹ "Making BI and Data Warehousing Strategic: The Key Issues". Gartner Research ID: LE-19-4691

² "Top Ten Trends in Business Intelligence for 2007". Knightsbridge

³ Acuma defines Information Management as the ability to deliver the right information, of the right quality, to the right people, in the right format, at the right time and at the right cost.

IVM provides a framework for evaluating an organisation's IM capability against four perspectives:

1. **Business Realisation:** focuses on the organisation's ability to realise real business value from its investment in IM
2. **Exploitation Capability:** focuses on the ability of the toolsets to provide access to the right information, at the right time, in the right format to allow the business to exploit its raw data
3. **Lifecycle Architecture:** focuses on the delivery of IM capability to the business through the appropriate use of IM methodologies, education, policy and process
4. **Lifecycle Delivery:** focuses on the supporting infrastructure required to maximise the business value of the investment in IM

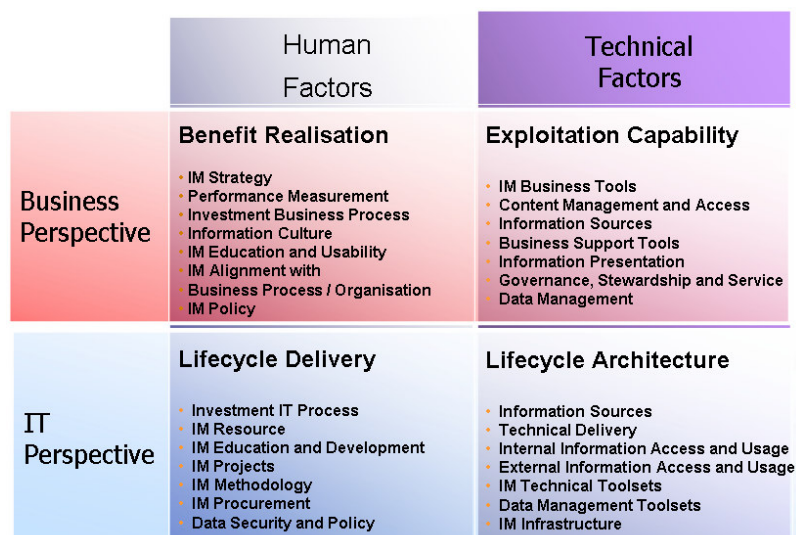


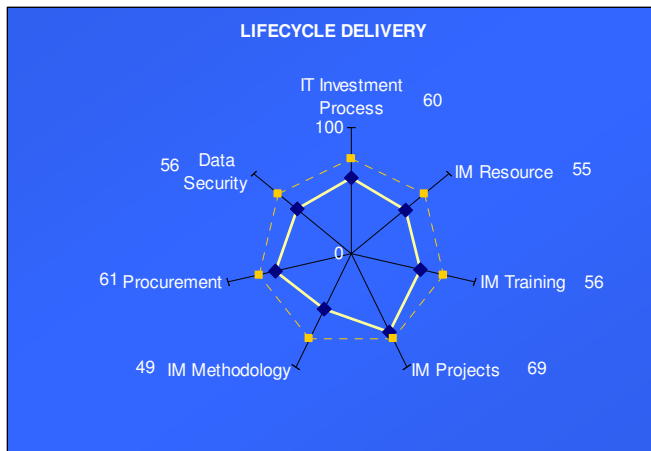
Acuma's Approach

Using IVM, Acuma is able to provide organisations with a rapid assessment of their IM environment, to answer a number of key questions:

- *What works well and is likely to be useful as the business progresses?*
- *What does not work well but can be improved to properly support the business?*
- *Which elements of the current IM environment should be decommissioned and over what timescale?*
- *What new IM environment elements should be introduced over what timescale?*

The assessment process itself is based around highly focussed, intensive interviews with a small number of key stakeholders from both the business and IT. The interviews use a structured questionnaire approach to walk through each of the four quadrants of IVM, to build up an overall understanding of the full IM environment.





From the individual responses, Acuma is able to calculate ratings for each element of the assessment, which are rolled up to give summary scores for each of the four quadrants. These summary scores give an overall indication of the organisation's capability in each quadrant, and can be used for comparison against what Acuma considers as leading practice in the respective areas. . An example of a quadrant's spidergram showing scores for each element is shown to the left.

Acuma's Delivery Capability

The output from an IM assessment is a comprehensive report covering all aspects of the work undertaken. For each detailed score, the report identifies a RAG status indicator (to identify the urgency with which action needs to be taken – a low score does not automatically indicate an area requiring priority attention), along with a narrative and specific recommendations and benefits. The scores, narratives and recommendations are summarised up to provide a higher-level view of the status of the organisation's IM environment, along with consolidated actions and benefits summaries.

The final element of the report is a high-level road map, which sets out a potential programme of work to address the recommendations in the report. The road map identifies the main areas of work within the IM programme, the interdependencies, and a potential timeline for delivery.

The Benefits of an IM Assessment

There are several reasons why an IM Assessment can be a valuable investment for an organisation:

- It is a **low-cost, high-value** way of understanding the current IM environment's **strengths** and **weaknesses**
- The assessment is completed as a short, sharp engagement, with a fast turnaround of the final report
- Using their industry-leading expertise, Acuma's consultants provide an objective and informed view of the organisation's IM capability
- All recommendations and resulting benefits are based on practical delivery experience in many commercial and public-sector environments
- The organisation is able to benchmark its current position against **industry leading practice**
- The assessment report provides an informed view of the overall scale of the work needed, and also identifies priorities and sequences of work

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