

Whitepaper

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## Records Management Program Maturity Model

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**Improving the Way Work Gets Done™**

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## **Executive Summary**

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As organizations struggle with the task of managing the masses of electronic and paper-based business content generated on a daily basis, they need to ensure that the strategy in place efficiently manages records without putting the organization at risk.

This white paper outlines how Paragon's Records Management Program Maturity Model can be applied to help companies evaluate how proactively and effectively they are managing records and the steps they can take to reach a higher level of maturity that will result in optimal efficiency, reduced risk and greater compliance across the enterprise.

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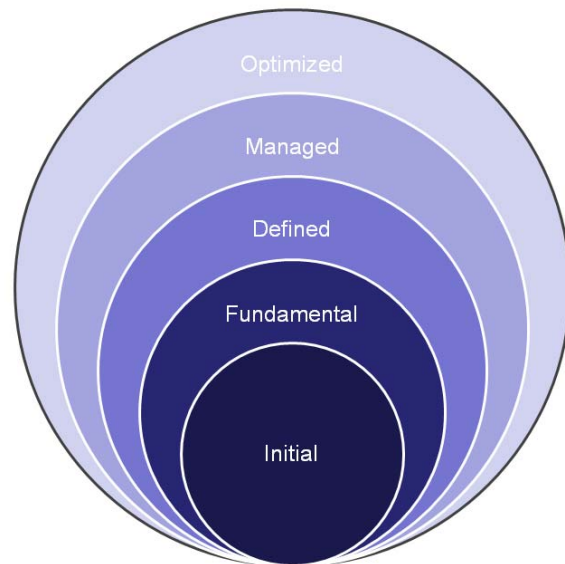
## Paragon's Records Management Maturity Model

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The Paragon Records Management Program Maturity Model defines a company's Records Management Program's growth process based on organization, processes, tools & services and risk & compliance. This maturity model helps our clients identify and quantify their respective phases of maturity as well as aims to help an organization understand the processes and benefits associated with a move to the next phase. By understanding the maturity phase of your records management program an organization can better realize the risks associated with undervalued practices.

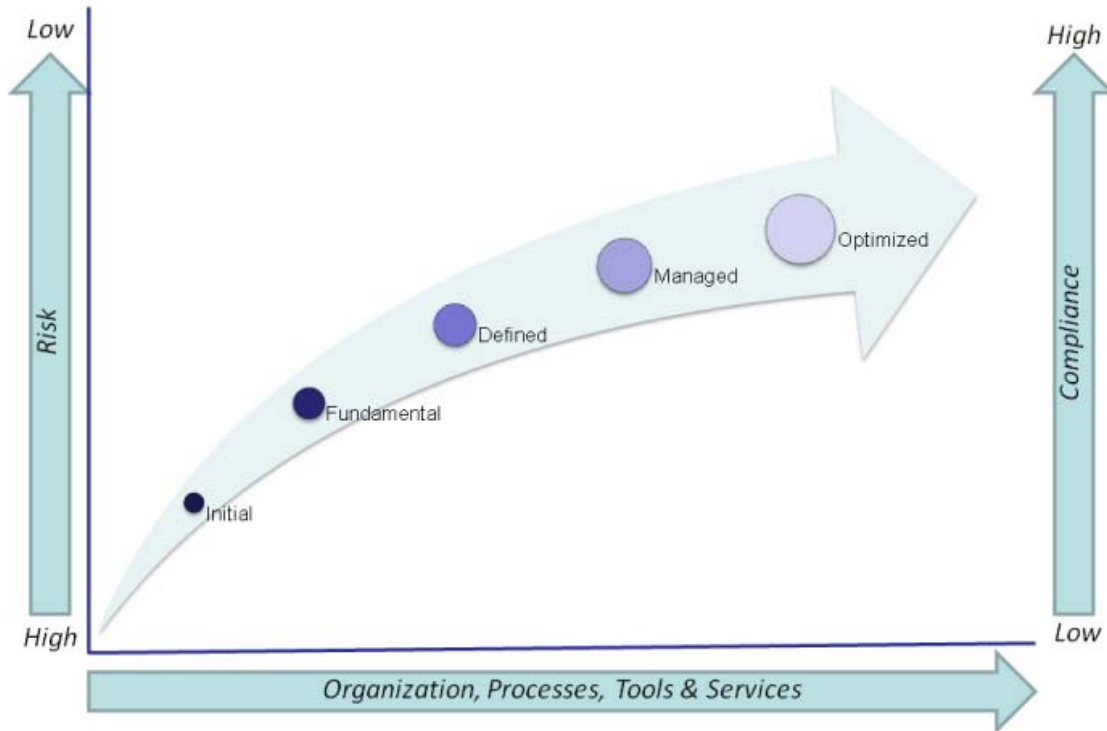
Organizations must understand the advantages of improving and strengthening their records management program. Those that recognize their current state can then effectively plan to advance their program on their own terms and not forced based upon outside issues or challenges. The following phases provide you an evolutionary look at how your organization can go from your current state through each phase:

- Phase 1: Initial
- Phase 2: Fundamental
- Phase 3: Defined
- Phase 4: Managed
- Phase 5: Optimized



Assessing your current state of records management is only the start of your journey to a comprehensive and compliant program. Organization must also determine the tolerable amount of risk and to what Phase of this maturity model is acceptable.

The maturity of an organization is based upon the following components:



**Figure 1:** *Records Management Maturity Model*

**Organization** – What are the components of the record management strategy and how comprehensively are they defined; what sort of team and organizational infrastructure is available to carry out the record management initiative; how widely are record management practices actually adopted by management and the overall organization.

**Processes** – How well are record management processes defined?

**Tools & Services** – What tools and technologies are available to carry out its record management initiative?

**Risk & Compliance** – How will risk and compliance be addressed and enforced?

## Records Management Maturity Model Phases

### Phase 1 - Initial

In the Initial Phase of the Records Management Maturity Model, an organization has no defined processes and policies regarding Records Management (RM). Although responsibilities such as storage, retrieval and destruction may be occurring, it is at the expense of creating overhead responsibilities for business areas. The records are managed in an ad hoc manner by individual business units. Different business areas follow different paths to reconcile RM issues creating redundant systems. Business areas will inevitably operate in a reactive manner attempting to demonstrate “control” over their records. Records Management may be defined in this level as an end in itself, with limited understanding beyond the immediate business or project context. This situation puts organizations in an extremely high level of risk for any litigation or compliance challenges they encounter.

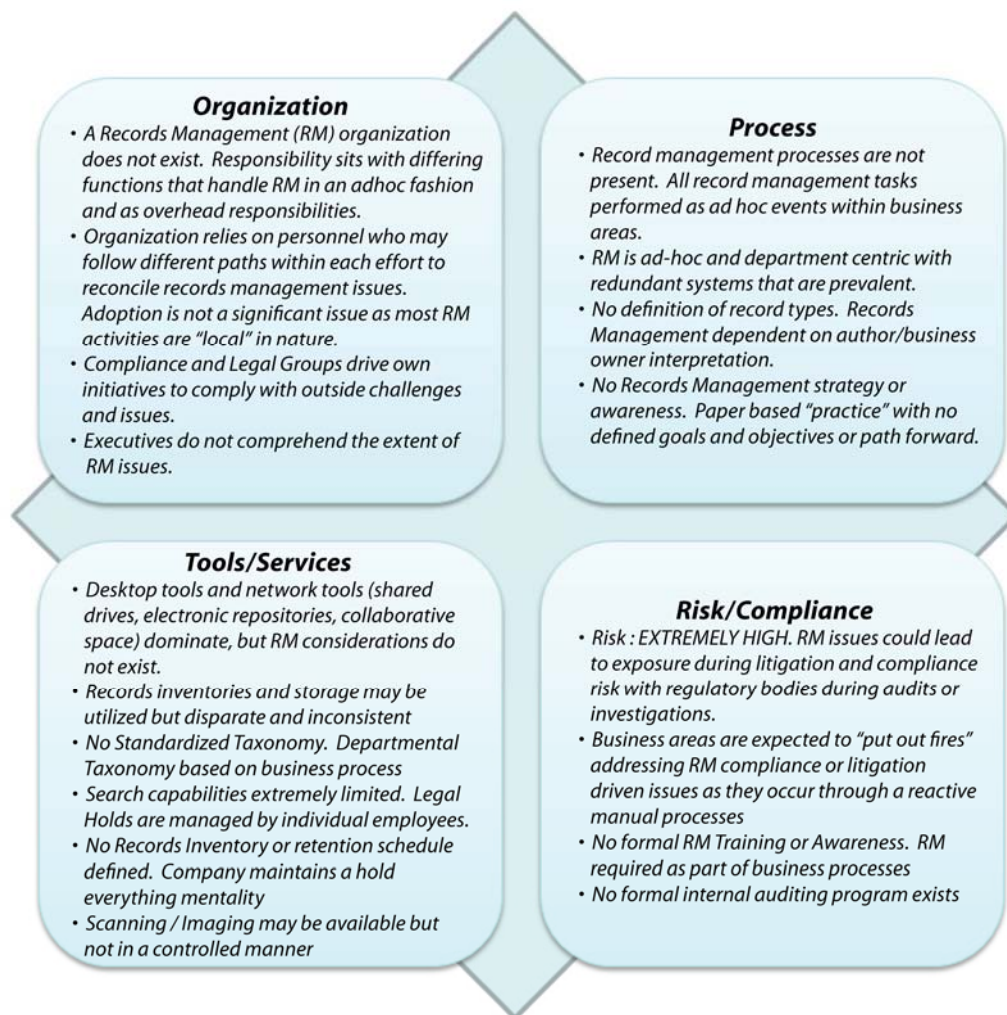


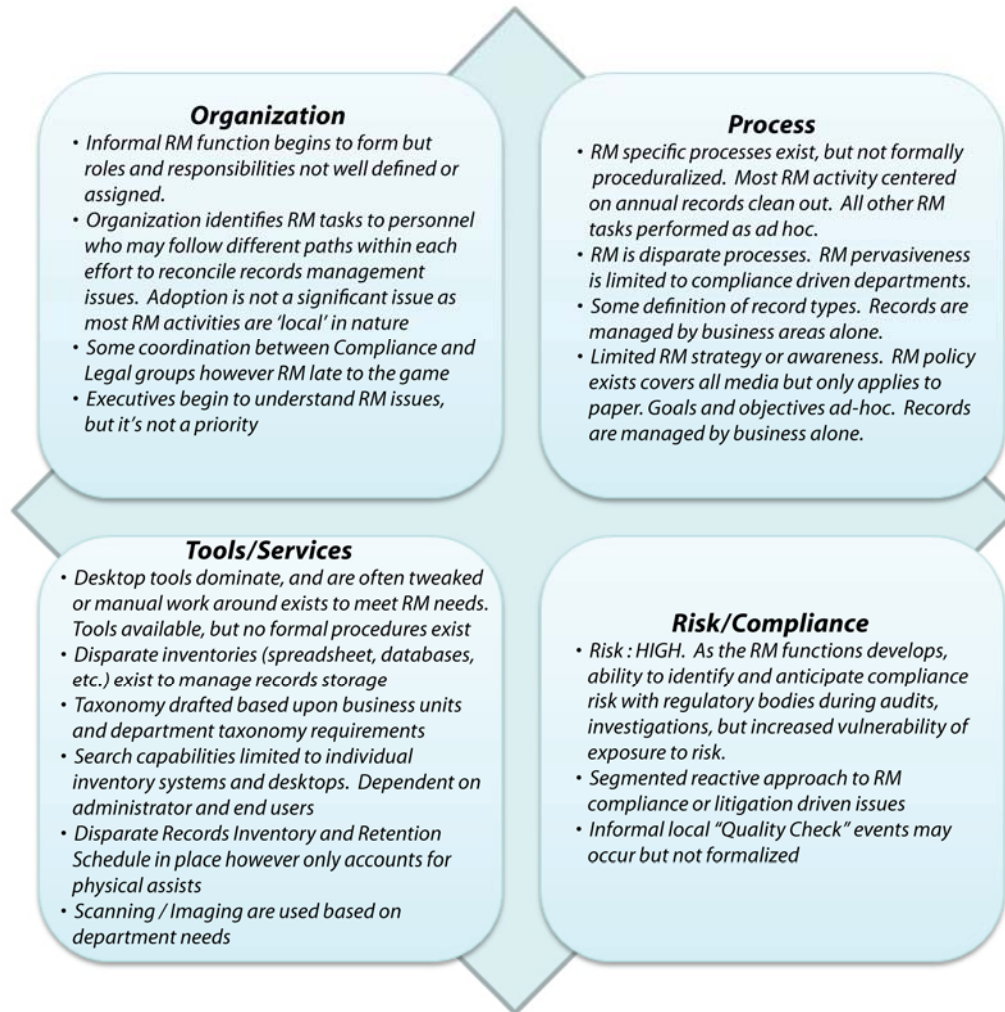
Figure 2: Phase 1 - Initial

***Actions to progress to Phase 2:***

Due to the risks of Phase 1, actions to mitigate those risks often translate to being the key drivers to progress to the next level. Companies need to begin to evaluate current business practices around managing records, assessing the needs and identifying the gaps. Educating executive levels of the potential or realized risk at this level will help to gain sponsorship.

**Phase 2 - Fundamental**

When an organization is in *Phase 2 – Fundamental*, it begins to recognize and understand the records management issues as they occur. Additionally, the organization comprehends that records management is critical to its success. Records Management issues are only addressed as major challenges arise. The organization relies on the business areas with the hope that reacting to the litigation and/or compliance challenges is enough. Departments required to manage records due to regulatory requirements implement departmental inventories and taxonomies. Records Management attitudes can shift from a hold everything mentality, to managing departmental records to retention, as well as conducting Records Cleanouts. Compliance risk remains high due to limited coordination between Compliance, Legal and RM groups, and the organization is in a reactive mode with regard to compliance and outside challenges.



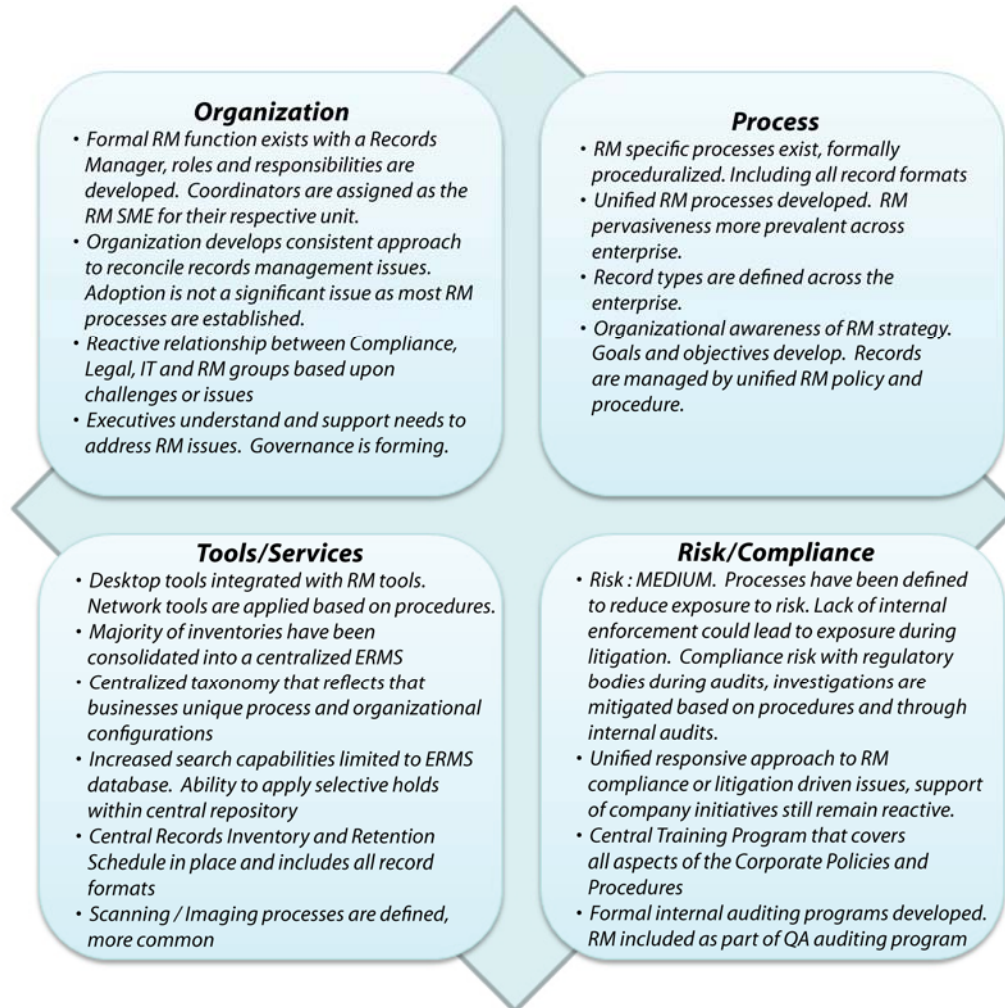
**Figure 3: Phase 2 - Fundamental**

**Actions to move to Level 3:**

At maturity *Phase 2 – Fundamental*, records management solutions are disconnected and disparate. The catalyst for progressing to *Phase 3 – Defined*, is often a strategic vision by certain executives that better recognize that records management processes can lead to tangible business results and better compliance. The key for this successful transition is that organizations must determine how the Records Management program will be resourced and supported as well as companies have to integrate processes and systems that are intuitive and comprehensive. Organization must also begin to formally establish and enforce records management policies and procedures at an enterprise level. To ensure that policies are promulgating within the business areas, some level of compliance enforcement is necessary. To perpetuate the enterprise wide adoption of Records Management, business areas need to identify Records Coordinators/Subject Matter Experts to facilitate core RM programs in their areas.

## Phase 3 - Defined

Reaching *Phase 3 – Defined*, is a shift from looking at Records Management as a series of tactical projects and moving to a comprehensive, enterprise-wide program. Endorsement from executive management and buy-in from all business area functions will propel the program in creating more consistent and reliable support for the enterprise.



**Figure 4:** Phase 3 – Defined

### **Actions to move to Phase 4:**

Advancing to the *Managed Phase* is as much a culture shift as it is an evolution of people, process and technology. The culture shift starts to change people’s behavior, while new and better processes and technologies give them a better framework for managing their records.

## Phase 4 - Managed

Reaching *Phase 4 – Managed* of the maturity model gives companies the ability to avoid risk and respond to litigation or compliance challenges. At this level, Records Management starts to play a critical role with an organization, as company records management programs facilitate in helping organization conduct business more efficiently and effectively. As a company matures, they receive more tangible value from consistent, unified, accurate and reliable policies to manage records. Additionally, the Records Management Program is a key component to the eDiscovery lifecycle by maintaining current and accurate eRecords and systems inventory, as well as managing company records to retention.

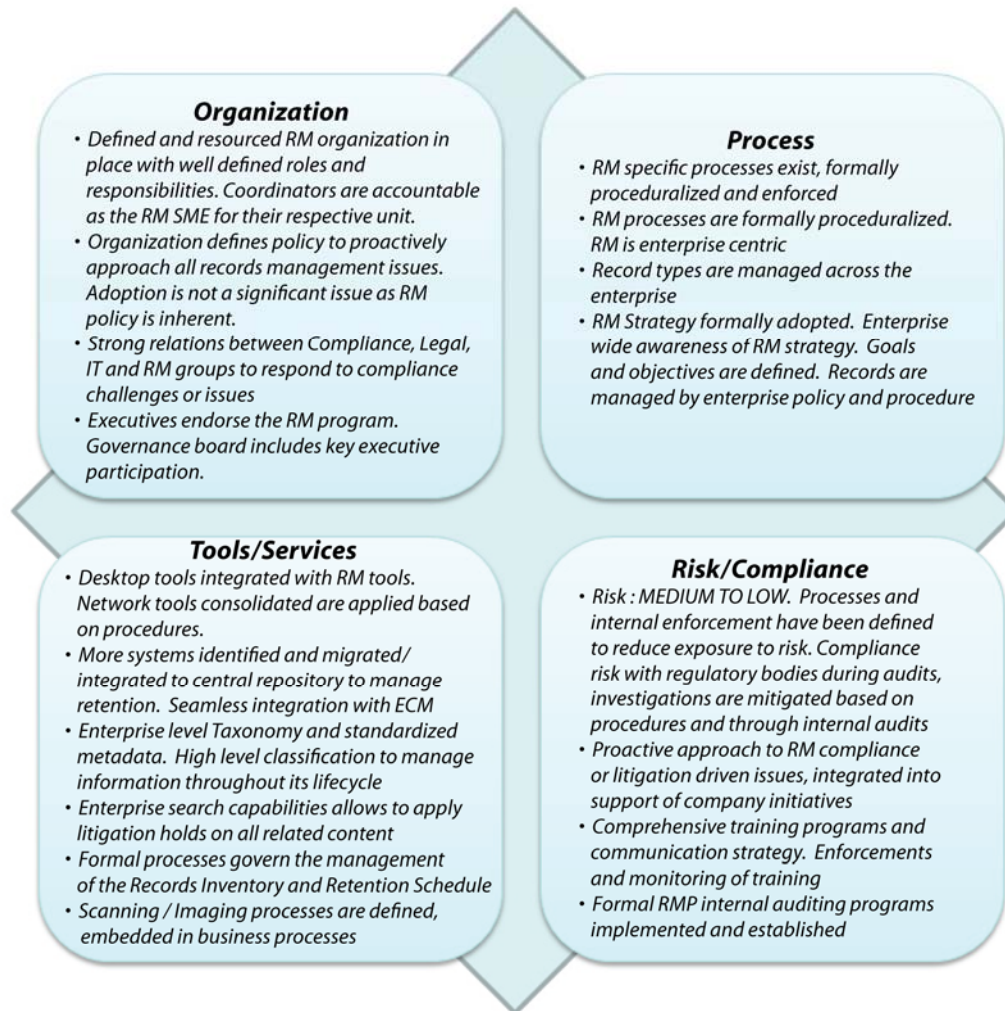


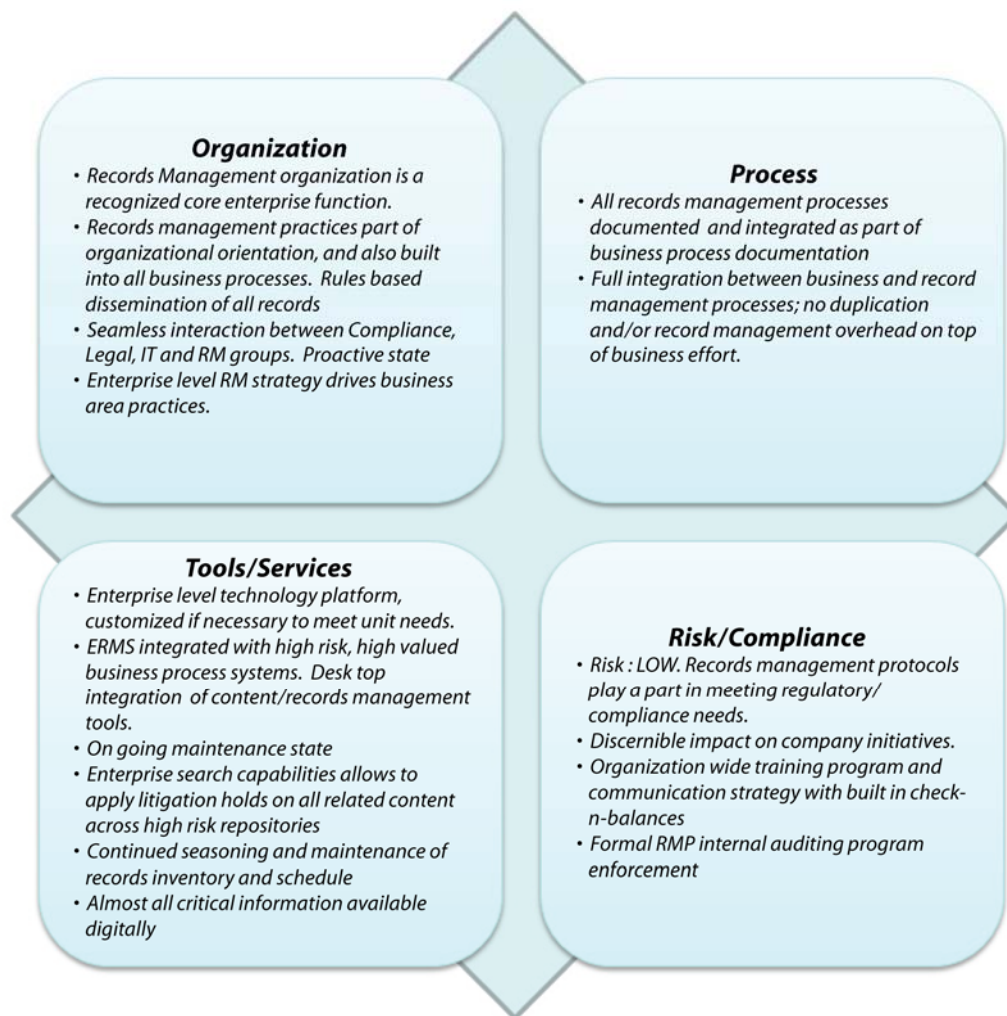
Figure 5: Phase 4 - Managed

**Actions to move to Level 5:**

To reach *Phase 5 – Optimized*, the Records Management Program foundation was built in the previous levels. Reaching Optimization of the program comes with the evolution of the people in the organization. Implementation of the program must be continuous and consistent, primarily by documenting and replicating best practices throughout the enterprise to reach the pinnacle of the Records Management Maturity Model.

**Phase 5 - Optimized**

In *Phase 5 – Optimized*, records management is an integral part of all business processes and is promulgated throughout the enterprise. Continuous validation efforts will ensure that the Record Management Program remains flexible to the changing needs of the company and industry.



**Figure 6: Phase 5 - Optimized**

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## In Conclusion

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Firms need an actionable plan to meet demands for corporate accountability. Paragon's Records Management Maturity Model aligns the business to where it needs to be and moves toward protecting the organization from exposure for non-compliance.

By examining all four aspects: organization, process, tools/services and risk/compliance through five phases, the organization gets a holistic and managed approach that delivers compliance and cost management.

### About the Author – Douglas J. Vargo

Douglas J. Vargo has more than ten years experience in the information technology (IT) and life sciences industries specializing in applying FDA compliance and validation requirements to IT solutions, quality assurance and control evaluation, and document management processes, including developing methodologies for the planning, design development and deployment of Records Management Systems. He has lectured for various educational institutions on FDA regulatory requirements and procedures for establishing good documentation and records management practices. Mr. Vargo is currently principal consultant responsible for leading Paragon Solutions' records management offering within the life sciences vertical.

### About Paragon's Life Sciences Records Management

Paragon's Life Sciences Enterprise Content Management practice established a records management team in 2007 to assist firms in finding solutions to efficiently and systematically handle the identification, classification, retrieval, archiving, preservation and destruction of both paper and electronically generated business records to effectively respond to corporate initiatives and compliance mandates.

For more information, please visit the Paragon Web site at [www.consultparagon.com](http://www.consultparagon.com) or call, 1.800.462.5582.