

# *Guide to Information Security*

Information security made easy for  
small to mid-size businesses



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# Overview

This brief guidebook was created to assist small to mid-size companies with implementing a business information security program.

Whether you need to get started today, need to brush up on information, or just want to learn about the **6 strategies** that will keep your information secure, you will find our “go-to” guidebook easy to read and understand.

## Short on time?

Feel free to get started by reading  
*“A Message from the Owners”* on page 22.

*“Team Citadel”*

# 6 Strategies to Secure Your Business Information Environment

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# ***Business Information Security Provider Relationship***



When selecting a provider for information security and management, one might find the market to be saturated with vendors. However, not all of them will be qualified to handle the vast responsibilities and security requirements that your business needs. Ultimately, any information management service is designed to minimize risk. The following page will list what you should be looking for.

## **Accommodation and Responsiveness**

Information management is truly a cradle to grave service, which requires collaboration from both parties. This is why the relationship is so important. When choosing your partner it's important to evaluate their accommodation and responsiveness. Your service provider should be willing to meet with your team to review your specific service requirements at the beginning of the service relationship and ongoing as required. Face to face site visits should also help provide assurance in the service and help build a strong ongoing business relationship. The provider should be able to meet deadlines and expedite processes.

## **Locality**

The chosen provider should have a strong local presence. It's okay to have a large national presence, but understand that this might sacrifice other important factors like customer service and responsiveness.

*\* IMPORTANT: The ability to accommodate urgent service requests may not be met as quickly as desired with a larger national service company.*

# ***Business Information Security Provider Relationship***

## **Customer Service**

When a phone call is made to the chosen provider, a representative should answer. Your phone call should not be sent to a call center located hundreds of miles away, nor should multiple electronic prompts be presented to simply schedule a pick up. For assured communication(s), talking to an actual human being rather than a robot, or a representative at a national or overseas call center, makes all the difference in the world. It is appropriate and responsible to inquire about the provider's customer service procedures and protocols.

## **Certifications and Credentials**

Your due diligence will serve you well when selecting a provider. It is time well spent to ensure the potential provider holds all the necessary certifications and credentials. Be aware that there are security rules and regulations that pertain specifically to each business industry. Your service provider's certifications should align with those requirements.

## **Some important questions to ask when selecting providers:**

- ◆ Are my phone calls answered by a local customer service team, or are my calls forwarded to a central call center?
- ◆ Does the provider have a strong local presence in my area?
- ◆ Does the provider have all the proper certifications and credentials that my industry requires?
- ◆ Are the service representatives uniformed, professional, and courteous?
- ◆ Are the service representatives properly identified, background checked, and drug tested?
- ◆ Can the provider handle special service requests on short notice?

It is appropriate to ask providers about their customer service protocols before doing business with them.

# ***Business Information Security Provider Relationship***

## ***Our Recommendations***

- Communication is key! Make sure you have a trustworthy relationship with your service & account management teams; you are trusting them with your most sensitive information.
- Your service provider should be responsive. They should answer your phone calls and respond to your customer service needs in a friendly, professional, and timely manner (stay away from those call centers).
- Choose a service provider that offers multiple services. This will improve communication, enhance security, and can save you money by consolidating all information security services under one partner. Information management services include:
  - Certified Document Destruction
  - Records Storage and Management
  - Electronics Recycling
  - Document Imaging/Scanning
  - Product Destruction
- It is appropriate to ask providers about their customer service protocols before signing on to do business with them.



# *Secure Document Destruction*



Document destruction is a vital stage in the cradle to grave process of information management. It is the end of life for sensitive documents. It can be the service for the day-to-day generated material, or for documents that have been held onto and have expired past their retention date. Either scenario, the documents are ultimately securely shredded and impossible to reconstruct. Most service providers complete this process by recycling the shredded documents and ultimately turning it into tomorrow's recycled paper products.

## **Service Types**

There are two basic services when it comes to document destruction. The actual shredding can either occur on-site or off-site for the customer. It is important to know that the provider has the proper certifications to provide each of the specific types of shredding services, as each have unique regulations. The differences in the service are very clear and **both serve as great solutions.**

### **On-site**

For organizations that mandate on-premise shredding, the vendor will provide a mobile shred truck which will destroy documents and allow the customer to witness the process. The on-site truck has a built-in shredder which allows the documents to be securely destroyed at the location the customer chooses.

### **Off-site**

The documents will be picked up by a certified service representative and securely transported to their secure facility where the documents will be destroyed. With this service, the actual shredding is done off-site at the provider's facility. Oftentimes this service is more cost effective since the service provider incurs less cost.

Nevertheless, security process and procedures are followed by a certified vendor.

# *Secure Document Destruction*

## **Recurring (on-going) Scheduled Services**

Confidential business information is generated daily in every office setting. It is prudent to give good thought to how these documents are held in your business environment. If documents are left unattended, they risk being viewed or shared by unauthorized personnel, which can wreak havoc within your office and potentially lead to a serious data breach. The risk of a security breach is reduced by placing security bins in high risk areas (such as HR, personnel, payroll, accounting, finance, sales & marketing, etc.) and having them serviced on a set schedule. Security containers, consoles, and bins are locked in order to prevent access and minimize risk. A service schedule for the year is often provided to ensure the containers are serviced and never overflowing. Talk with your provider to discuss a frequency that works for you.

## **Purge/One-Time Shredding Service**

Even with recurring scheduled services, businesses have records that are on retention. This means that the particular document must be held onto for a specified time frame until it can be destroyed. This service is sometimes called purge, one time, or “as needed” service. Whether your material is being held at your office, home, or off-site records storage facility, these documents should be purged regularly and destroyed. Purges can be completed on-site or off-site.

## **“Shred-All” Policy**

A “shred-all policy” is an implemented procedure which calls for every single document generated on a day to day basis to be disposed of in a secure locked bin for Having a **“shred-all” policy** at your business alleviates concerns that you have contained and destroyed all of your confidential information. All the shredded documents are 100% recycled after destruction, and that means that there is no need for the bulky blue recycling containers under your employees desks!

**\* IMPORTANT: Do not leave the decision up to the office personnel to determine what is or is not confidential.**



# ***Secure Document Destruction***

## **Environmental Responsibility**

Once the documents have been destroyed, care should be given to the final disposition. It is important to make sure the shredded documents are recycled, rather than being simply thrown in the trash where anyone could access. The recycling process maintains confidentiality of your material as it fully destroys the remains. The shredded documents are securely shipped to a paper mill where the ink is extracted and the remains are turned back into paper pulp. That paper pulp is then used to create recycled paper products such as toilet paper, paper towels, tissue paper, napkins, and much more. Ultimately, this allows for numerous environmental benefits. Not only are trees being saved, but the process allows for water, energy, and landfill space all to be conserved. Needless to say, this is a major contributing factor to any company's sustainability efforts and "kills two birds with one stone" by protecting your confidential information while also protecting the environment. The impact of your efforts can be quantified through Environmental Reports issued by the provider. These reports document your company's sustainability efforts by taking the total weight of the documents shredded, over a period of time, and calculating the direct environmental benefits as a result of the recycling process. Details can include how many trees saved, how many gallons of water preserved, the amount of energy conserved, and other environmental benefits resulting from your choice to recycle. This data can improve your company's image and help to attract new customers and employees alike.

## **Certification**

Entrusting a company to destroy confidential records can be nerve racking. Choosing a provider that is AAA certified, through the national trade association NAID, National Association for Information Destruction, ensures that your documents are being handled in a proper and secure manner throughout the destruction process. NAID certified companies are subject to unannounced audits throughout the year. This means that a NAID officer can show up unannounced to a vendor's shredding facility at anytime to ensure certification requirements are being met. NAID officers will also follow vendor vehicles to make sure all security procedures are being met outside the facility. Needless to say, utilizing a AAA NAID certified provider is the safest bet for minimizing company risk, and ensuring confidential records are destroyed and disposed of properly. Due diligence is made easier with a certified company and is a must when seeking out these services.

# *Secure Document Destruction*

## ***Our Recommendations***

- Hire a AAA NAID certified service provider to handle your document destruction “shredding” needs.
- Do not let your obsolete confidential information pile up, it could cause unnecessary data breaches.
- At a minimum, schedule an annual purge- shredding service date to securely destroy old documents that are past their retention date.
- Have a “shred-all” policy at your business to ensure 100% of your confidential documents are being securely destroyed and properly recycled.



# ***Records Storage & Management***



Business documents must be held for various durations of time. Rather than storing them internally or at a public storage unit/locker, your most cost effective, secure, and efficient method of storing records is to hire a professional records storage company. Records storage companies also provide management of your confidential records, so when

you need a box or file, it is delivered to you. There is no need to spend your time or resources searching for them.

## **Retention and Storage**

All businesses generate documents which need to be kept for a specified amount of time. Retention periods for documents vary from business to business, by industry, and by document type. It is important to determine how long each of these different types of business records must be kept.

The records which need to be retained at your business are usually placed in boxes or filing cabinets. Oftentimes, companies will house these records internally, filling up closets, hallways and basements with boxes. While it may seem convenient, this process takes up costly real estate, makes it difficult to find what you are looking for, also it is important to note, this leaves records exposed to unauthorized access.

Utilizing a records storage and management service will keep your business organized, secure, and compliant with retention requirements. It can also reduce costs by saving hours of time searching for misplaced records or having authorized employees travel to your off-site storage areas to retrieve and deliver your boxes/records.

# ***Records Storage & Management***

## **Naming Conventions**

Naming conventions keep your records organized, and allow you to quickly identify and access them. Make sure when you are creating an internal convention system that your entire team is on board with using the same protocols. Keep it simple and easy to follow; always use the same abbreviations, periods, dashes, commas, etc. Your provider can assist you with guidelines to follow.

## **Barcoding**

Boxes are identified and tracked by a unique barcode that is placed on the exterior of the box. An inventory of boxes is then provided to the customer. The inventory lists every box in storage with descriptions and details of the contents, along with the corresponding barcode number. This key element in the chain of custody allows the customer and client to be aware of the location of their confidential records.

## **Accessibility**

The boxes are housed in the records storage facility throughout the duration of the retention. Should you need to access a box or file while being stored, it is just a phone call (or email) away. It will be delivered to you, and when you are finished with it, it will be retrieved and put back into storage.

There are several options as to how the records can be accessed. Options often include, but are not limited to:

- Delivery of boxes or files
- Pick up of boxes or files
- Document imaging (scanning)
- U.S. mail or delivery service (FedEx, etc.)
- Via email
- Fax
- Viewing rooms at providers facility

It is typical that providers' standard delivery is next day, while there are usually same day and rush deliveries available when there is an urgent need for records to be viewed.

# ***Records Storage & Management***

## **End of Retention**

Retention schedules can be generated so that you are aware just how long the records need to be kept. Once records reach their retention dates, they are no longer necessary for your company, and they should be destroyed. The provider will offer a secure destruction solution. Refer to the document destruction segment of this guidebook for further details.

## **Responsiveness**

It is important that the storage provider can meet the specific requirements of your business in a timely and professional manner. Records storage personnel should be responsive and transparent at all times regarding your stored documents. You need to know their communication “style” and procedures in processing your work requests to make sure it is a good fit for your company. Is there a local presence or is it a call center outside your area? Who are their customers? Small to mid-size companies or large national corporations? It makes a difference in how you may be treated, and it is advisable to ask the provider about their procedures.

## **Facility**

The physical facility should be a secure building with limited access, and checkpoints for security purposes. Those granted access should have gone through a pre-employment background check, and should be subject to random drug tests. The facility should be under constant 24/7 surveillance, and have a security alarm system. A fire suppression system and disaster recovery protocol are also vital.

# ***Records Storage & Management***

## ***Our Recommendations***

- Make sure to use conventions for naming, labeling, and organizing boxes and files.
- Work with a provider to move boxes out of unsecure public storage facilities/office closets/basements and store them with a dedicated records management company.
- Make sure that you are familiar with the records storage provider's communication "style" and responsiveness to ensure it's a good fit for your company.



# Imaging/Scanning



*\*\*To clarify, the words **imaging** and **scanning** are used interchangeably\*\**

Document imaging/scanning is the simple process of creating electronic copies of physical documents and records. This allows the records to be accessed remotely and by multiple users simultaneously. The storage and indexing methods of the electronic files,

the quality and format of the images, as well as the ability to search the content can all be customized to fit the customer's needs.

## Ease of Access

When documents need to be accessed constantly, and must be viewed by multiple employees, often at multiple locations and through multiple devices, the most convenient and effective process is to have these documents imaged/scanned. Begin by meeting with your team to decide what makes sense to image.

## Prep Work

Before paper documents are scanned, they must be “prepped” by removing staples, post it notes, paperclips, and any other items attached that could interfere with image capture by the scanning equipment. This step can be completed by your team or by the provider. They will walk you through the specific steps required for your project and consult on the best options.

## OCR

OCR stands for **optical character recognition**. This feature typically comes at an additional cost, but provides usability and searching benefits in return. OCR allows the characters to be recognized by the scanner and media baring device. This will allow the customer to search his or her database of scanned documents for a particular word or sequence of words or numbers. For example, if a customer wanted to search for anytime “John Smith” comes up in the database the OCR would allow for all documents containing the words “John Smith” to be pulled.

# *Imaging/Scanning*

## **DPI**

Once the prep work is done, all files are organized/indexed, and OCR is decided upon, the next step is to determine the DPI or **dots per inch**. Depending on the quality of image needed, a client might require a higher DPI. The higher the DPI, the better quality image received per scanned item. For simple text documents, 200 DPI will suffice and is the most cost effective option. If OCR is needed, 300 DPI may be the required minimum, at a greater expense. When scanning documents that hold images, graphics, or graphs, consult with the scanning company as to which level of DPI would suit best. Your provider can do test scans to determine the optimum DPI needed.

## **Quality Control**

After the documents are scanned, the imaged files are reviewed to ensure the clarity and integrity of the scan. This is called the quality control segment and is very important because the files must be completely legible with nothing obscuring the images. It also assures that all documents are accounted for.

## **Storage of Scanned Documents**

Once quality is assured, the scanned files are then transferred into a storage media for the client. Images can be stored on a CD/DVD, USB device, external hard drive, cloud storage system, or any other information-bearing storage device of the clients preference. Always have a backup of your images so that they can be retrieved in the event of an emergency. Finally, the decision of what to do with the actual paper documents must be considered. These documents should either be destroyed by a AAA NAID certified document destruction company or securely stored by a records storage company (*please review sections 2 and 3 of this document regarding document destruction and records storage*).



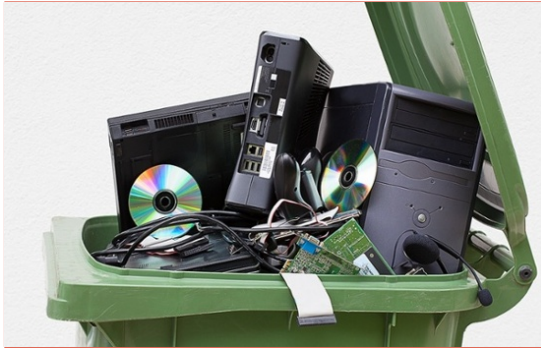
# *Imaging/Scanning*

## ***Our Recommendations***

- Begin by analyzing what types of records you access most frequently and how often you need to refer to them.
- Consult with a professional provider to discuss the details of the project, and to set expectations on the timeline and cost.
- When the imaging project is completed, be sure to properly protect the original files by professionally storing or securely shredding.



# *Electronics Recycling*



With devices being upgraded and replaced constantly, odds are there is electronic equipment cluttering your workplace. Countless devices contain *highly confidential information*, and many are deemed hazardous to the environment if not recycled properly.

Additionally, new privacy laws continue to increase fines and penalties that business in all industries are subject to. Hard drives containing confidential information should be destroyed prior to recycling. A professional electronics recycling provider will discuss the various options available to you, and they can offer certificates of secure recycling for your records.

## **Be Environmentally Responsible**

With a little extra thought, it is easy and environmentally responsible to properly recycle electronic devices. Computers, monitors, and other devices contain dangerous chemicals, including mercury. These chemicals have an extremely harmful environmental impact when not disposed of properly. Because of this, in many states it is even illegal to place electronics in landfills. Fines and penalties can be issued for improper disposal, and your reputation in your business community and your brand may be adversely effected.

## **Hard Drive Destruction**

All computer hard drives contain sensitive business and personal information. The best practice is to keep a written asset list of all electric devices within your company, along with schedules of when devices will be retired. It is important to remember that there is confidential information hidden inside computers, printers, copiers, and other electronic devices that needs to be securely destroyed before being recycled.

*\* IMPORTANT: If hard drives or other information-bearing devices are not securely destroyed prior to recycling, you are at risk for a data breach.*

# ***Electronics Recycling***

## ***Our Recommendations***

- Develop an asset schedule for different types of electronic devices.
- Be environmentally responsible when recycling your electronic devices.
- Choosing a provider that is AAA NAID certified for hard drive destruction assures you that your electronic information has been properly destroyed and recycled.
- Request certificates of destruction for your records.



# Product Destruction



When various company products are rendered useless, defective, or obsolete, oftentimes they must be destroyed prior to disposal. This destruction is done to avoid having the products end up on the second hand market or otherwise going back into circulation. Outdated marketing materials with your company's logo should

also be destroyed and disposed of properly to help protect your brand's image.

## Brand Protection

Businesses often have “off-spec” or defective products, old products that are rendered obsolete, or even old marketing materials that simply have the company brand name or logo on them. *Proper destruction and recycling of these products helps minimize risk to your brand.* Product destruction protects the organization's brand from being tarnished, and also helps sustain the value of future products by ensuring that the older versions do not end up being re-distributed. Routinely review your obsolete business products and have them securely destroyed on a set schedule. Many companies purge their products annually or at the end of projects or events.

Document destruction providers often have a specialized shredder specifically designed for the destruction of products (as opposed to paper documents). It is designed to shred anything that is not paper. This final disposition of your shredded products is another important aspect of product destruction decision. Every effort should be made to find an outlet to recycle the shredded remnants and avoid landfilling the remains.

# ***Product Destruction***

## ***Our Recommendations***

- Analyze your waste stream to be sure that nothing deemed proprietary, confidential, or sensitive is being thrown away in whole form.
- Work with a provider to set up routine destruction of obsolete items that could put your business at risk if they wound up in the wrong hands.



# *A Message from the Owners*

From cradle to grave, no matter how your information is held (paper documents, electronic devices, marketing items...) it is necessary to make sure that all of it is safe and secure.

**KEEP IT SIMPLE.** We've learned from experience that when you take time to implement an *information security program* that is simple and easy for employees to use, you can immediately reduce errors and minimize risk.

Following the **six strategies** outlined in this guidebook, along with our recommendations, will help you structure a simple information security and management program.

We believe the **first step** to your plan is to choose the appropriate service provider that fits your needs. The right provider will become your partner and advocate in implementing a comprehensive program that is built for the size of your business and budget.

**DON'T SETTLE FOR LESS, DETAILS MATTER, ASK QUESTIONS!** It's your money and your business. Ask yourself... Can the provider meet your unique requirements? Are they listening to you? Are they keeping up with changes to regulations and legislation? Time is money, are you getting your money's worth? Is pricing fair, can they accommodate your budget? Is your provider truly dedicated to personalized customer service? Are they committed to the environment and helping you achieve your sustainability goals?

*Take the time to evaluate your options and consider the parts of the service that matter most to you, and work with a provider that shares your values. Taking these steps will ensure success for you and your team.*



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## *Team Citadel at your Service*

Locally owned and operated since 1985, **Citadel Information Management** has set ourselves apart by *partnering with our customers*, listening to their needs, and following through as promised. We take pride in our *team philosophy*, as we believe this improves the quality of communication and personalized service our customers are looking for.

Most of our customers are small and mid-size companies (*many with multiple locations*), but no matter the size of your business, we would be happy to be your advocate and partner. Please feel free to contact us at any time to assist you with your information security, discuss your needs, answer your questions, or to talk about your budget and provide you with service options and quotes.

Visit our website at [Citadelim.com](http://Citadelim.com) or give us a call 866-798-7400.

Co-Owners,  
Paul F. Swenson & Donna M. Cooper



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