



## Getting Comfortable with Discomfort

How to move ARM forward when you don't have all the answers

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**Today's talk will include:**

- Sweeping generalizations!**
- Pop science!**
- Daily affirmations!**
- Advice gleaned from the mean trenches of cutting-edge electronic records management!**



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### We're Smart People

- Highly specialized knowledge
- Do critical work
- Vital to good government

**Blind Spots:**

- Overestimate how much others understand
- Frequent failure to communicate effectively
- "They just need to follow the rules"

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### What about when you don't know?

**Natural Reactions**

- Talk about what they do know
- Keep quiet and pretend they understand
- Write it off as outside their area; don't try to learn
- Get frustrated, treat it as impossible

**Positive Alternatives**

- Lend expertise, but don't try to change subject
- Don't be afraid to say "can you explain that term?"
- Ask focused, clear questions; use every meeting as a learning opportunity



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### The Power of a Question


Things that have never happened when I ask a question:\*

- Lost respect in the eyes of peers or other professionals
- Been mocked for my ignorance
- Been passed over for a promotion
- Had my reputation ruined

Things that have happened when I ask a question:

- Learned something I did not previously know
- Got more information to formulate a better response to a problem
- Gotten quiet "thank-yous" from other people after the meeting
- Allowed myself to be a real, fallible human

\*Discounting childhood and adolescence because, let's face it, kids are monsters



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### Not knowing everything is OK

- Most important tool: trust
- Trust comes from honesty
- Beware the person with "all the answers"
- Come off as arrogant, fair or not
- Use others' expertise


what are other words for arrogant?



haughty, proud, supercilious, imperious, self-important, overbearing, conceited, lordly, lofty, superior



the-saurus-plus



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### Focus on your Strengths, not Weaknesses

- You DO know a lot
- You can't be an expert in everything, and neither can they
- What do YOU bring to the table that is unique and valuable?




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### You can't do it alone



**Do you have...**

- Administrative clout?
- Advanced network engineering and security skills?
- In-depth legal knowledge?
- Extensive training expertise?
- Control of and access to the best tech tools?



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### How to make friends and influence people

- Never miss an opportunity to make connect to new partners
- Give first, and you will benefit
- Know that we are an often-misunderstood field. Educate (kindly).
- Get involved in technology discussions
  - Shadow meetings, take notes, ask questions, contribute when appropriate.



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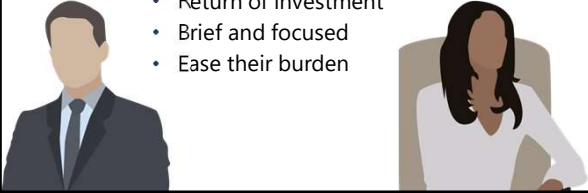

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**Making the Connection: Administrators**

- Fit in agency mission & governance
- Policy discussions
- Return of investment
- Brief and focused
- Ease their burden

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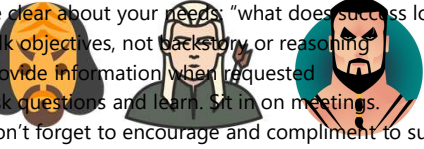

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**Making the Connection: the IT Team**

- They're people, not adversaries
- They speak a different language (Klingon? Elvish? Dothraki?)
- Be clear about your needs: "what does success look like?"
- Talk objectives, not backstory or reasoning
- Provide information when requested
- Ask questions and learn. Sit in on meetings.
- Don't forget to encourage and compliment to superiors

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**Making the Connection: Legal Counsel**

- Know your part of records law well
- Do your homework
- Focus on legal compliance
- Liability, defensible disposition




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**Quick Poll**

Who here has good working partnerships with your entity's administration, IT, or legal teams?



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**There is Common Ground**

<p><b>We Say...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records retention</li> <li>• Records disposition</li> <li>• Authenticity of records</li> <li>• Preservation of records</li> <li>• Metadata</li> </ul>	<p><b>They Say...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records discovery</li> <li>• Risk management</li> <li>• Business efficiency</li> <li>• Information security</li> <li>• Legal compliance</li> <li>• Legacy building</li> <li>• Metadata</li> </ul>
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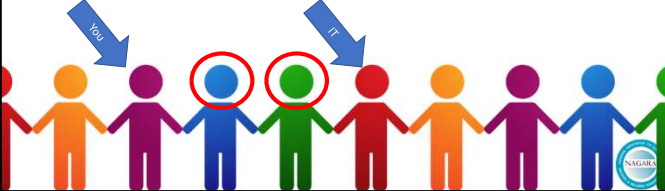

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**But what if I just don't get it?**

Sometimes you won't get it all. Sometimes you don't need to  
 Find team members who can help bridge the gap  
 Who do you already know that might have these skills?

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**The Stage is Set**

NOW you can ask for what you need  
 Utilize project management framework  
 Stay grounded in reality  
 Flexibility is key  
 Be prepared for delays  
 "No" is just a starting point- "what would you suggest  
 as an alternative?"

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**Questions?**

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**Contact Us**

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