

BAC Conference 2015

Notes from group discussion: "Just say no?": The challenges of collecting business archives

In the final session of the Business Archives Council Conference 2015, delegates split into groups and were asked to choose and discuss a key challenge to collecting business archives. These are the notes that the different groups produced during those discussions.

Group 1: Ensuring diverse and representative collections #1

Solutions:

- A matrix needs to be created by a diverse group
- Understand what is in the collection and collaborate to share knowledge
- Recognise value of 'unofficial voice'/personal material
- Take a flexible approach to collecting
- Outreach – identify champions
- Oral Histories – identify gaps and other points of view

Help needed:

- Money
- People – internal, external, stakeholders and communities
- Chance to share experiences and learn from others

Group 2: Ensuring diverse and representative collections #2

Solutions:

- Use oral history
- Include critical voices
- Link to company's diversity policy
- Embed the archives in new projects
- Get close to records management
- Address diverse audiences

Group 3: Ensuring diverse and representative collections #3

Solutions:

- Contacts at different levels
- Oral history – audio and video
- Diversity in the profession
- Challenge the appraisal policy, question why you are keeping or not

- Diversify formats
- Understand the business
- Opening up the archive – de-professionalization

Help needed:

- Resources
- Training
- We don't like giving up our control to others/opening up

Group 4: Ensuring diverse and representative collections #4

Solutions:

- Business partners
- Prioritising collection
- Understanding what records are governed by regulatory standards
- Building trust in the organisation

Help needed:

- How to get archivists can actively helping departments in their records and collaboration with records management

Group 5: Records from across the organisation #1

Solutions:

- Building relationships
- Communication
- Education
- Approved policy, official mandate

Help needed:

- Case studies – examples of policies (especially for lone workers)
- Networking opportunities

Group 6: Records from across the organisation #2

Solutions:

- High level statement of policy
- Local champions

- Management structure and location
- Highlight the risks and benefits
- Inclusion in inboarding/induction

Group 7: Records from across the organisation #3

Solutions:

- Champions
- Records management feed into archive
- Open days and sessions within the organisation to advocate benefits
- Staff magazine call out
- Oral history
- Black bin days
- Inductions
- Campaigns on particular areas – World War 1
- Family papers
- Keeping it on our agenda
- Target key people who are retiring

Group 8: Enforcing records management

Solutions:

- Electronic Records Management – talk to data/IT department
- Archives and records management together in the same department
- Build into corporate culture to deal with devolution – compulsory courses
- Use legal and regulatory stick

Group 9: Getting space and infrastructure

Solutions:

- Ask for help from higher up in the organisation
- Take advantage of changes in the organisation
- Know your requirements and be flexible in solving them
- Advocate your outcomes not just your needs
- Use management speak such as 'risk' – get on a risk register
- Advocate the value of your collection
- Use external standard for reference
- Show the external value of the collection
- Be involved in disposal and records management processes

- Use case studies to understand your situation and gather ideas of how you will tackle the challenge

Help needed:

- Advocacy and external support from bodies such as the BAC, BACS and TNA