Business Email Archiving Best Practices Streamline Compliance and Drive Productivity

According to estimates, the average employee receives over 100 work emails every day, or more than 25,000 per year. In the event of litigation, organizations may be required to produce relevant emails years after the fact. Consequently, as the regulatory environment becomes more complex, business email archiving plays an essential role.

For example, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX) mandates that publicly traded companies indefinitely retain emails related to insider dealings. Banking laws mandate a five-year retention period. Numerous additional laws and industry regulations require various retention periods for certain types of emails.

To stay compliant, companies turn to archiving solutions. But the various solutions offer a wide range of features, and organizations must define and enforce retention policies. The process can prove complex, but these best practices will help organizations achieve compliance while supporting productive work.

Business Email Archiving vs. Backup

Archiving differs from an email backup and involves more than simply storing a copy of electronic information. Whereas a backup provides short-term insurance in case of disaster or accidental deletion, archives provide quick access to decades of important data.

Businesses archive email for several reasons. In addition to regulatory compliance, they preserve electronic data to aid in internal investigations, as well as eDIscovery for litigation and documentation of intellectual property. Archives also streamline records management by removing old data out of active mailboxes.

Because archived data must remain preserved in its original form, archiving systems operate under specific requirements. The organization must implement strict security controls and ensure that archived data is not altered in any way. Emails and attachments within the archive should be indexed to facilitate quick search and retrieval of relevant data.

Carefully Review Regulatory Requirements

Any organization could be subject to multiple federal and state laws, as well as industry regulations. Each law or regulation has its own retention requirements, and failure to comply can result in hefty penalties, reputation damage or even prison time.

To complicate matters, new privacy laws such as California's CPRA mandate timely disposal of certain types of information. As a result, companies can no longer take the easy way out and simply keep all emails indefinitely.

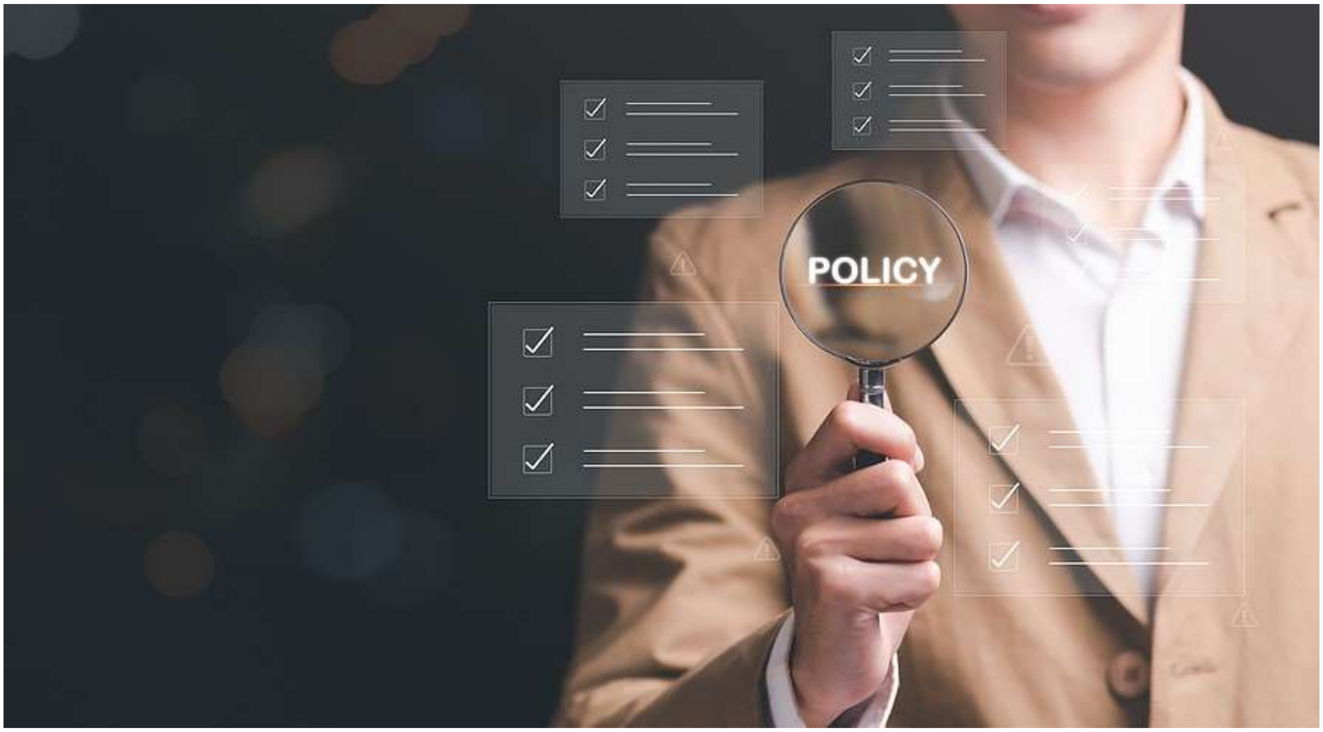
Keep an eye on the regulatory landscape and consult your legal team on a regular basis to ensure ongoing compliance.

Update Retention Policies Regularly

Retention policies play a critical role in archiving. These policies indicate what data should be retained and for how long. Because business needs and regulations change periodically, organizations should review and update retention policies at least annually. In addition to the legal team, stakeholders from every department should provide input.

Embrace Automation

No matter how carefully the compliance team documents retention policies, relying on users to implement the policies manually is neither feasible nor defensible. A good archiving system will include tools to automate enforcement of retention policies. With automation, archiving and disposal happen behind the scenes, according to policy and without end user intervention.



Ensure a Tamper-proof Archive

In the event of litigation and to demonstrate compliance, the organization must be able to show a defensible chain of custody and prove that electronic data has not been edited. This requires a tamper-proof archiving system. For instance, PST files will not provide the necessary protection against corruption and should be avoided.

In addition to guarding against data corruption and editing, archiving solutions must incorporate tight security controls. This includes data encryption, both in transit and at rest. And it includes solid access management with comprehensive auditing.

Explore the Benefits of Cloud-based Business Email Archiving

Modern cloud archive solutions provide a host of business benefits. For instance, eGovernance Cloud:

- Offers dynamic data management through policy-based retention and disposal of data.
- Ensures tamper-proof archives with a read-only view into older data.
- Saves storage space by eliminating duplication.
- Allows you to retain control of your data with unlimited export functionality.
- Provides powerful search tools for both beginners and professionals, making it easy to find the data you need quickly.
- Keeps data safe with a physically separate, searchable copy. Users can forward data back to the live system as necessary.

To streamline compliance and increase productivity in your organization contact an archiving specialist to explore eGovernance Cloud archiving solutions.