MODULE TWO

workbook

File storage and improving the physical space

FILE STORAGE AND RECORD KEEPING

Paperless offices, less paper offices, no office at all? This module is all about files, how we store them and where we work.

When it comes to file storage we will discuss what is the best option for your business, paperless, paper based or a bit of both. Electronic files and paper based files both need a clear place to live.

Keeping records safe, organised and easily accessible is a great way to save time and ensure that small jobs don't turn into big ones.

It's a big topic to cover, and it's the biggest module of this course.

Actioning some of the changes in your physical office space and your file storage is going to take some time, effort and possibly money.

It might be a good time to reflect on the value of your work as addressed in the last module.

DETERMINING YOUR FILE STRUCTURE

Does this make sense to me and others?

Will I be able to find it again? Will I put the next record in the same place?

Who else needs this record?

Access to electronic files can be shared. It's best to consider this when grouping records in folders

How long will I keep this record?

Will it be easy to destroy or archive this record when the time comes.

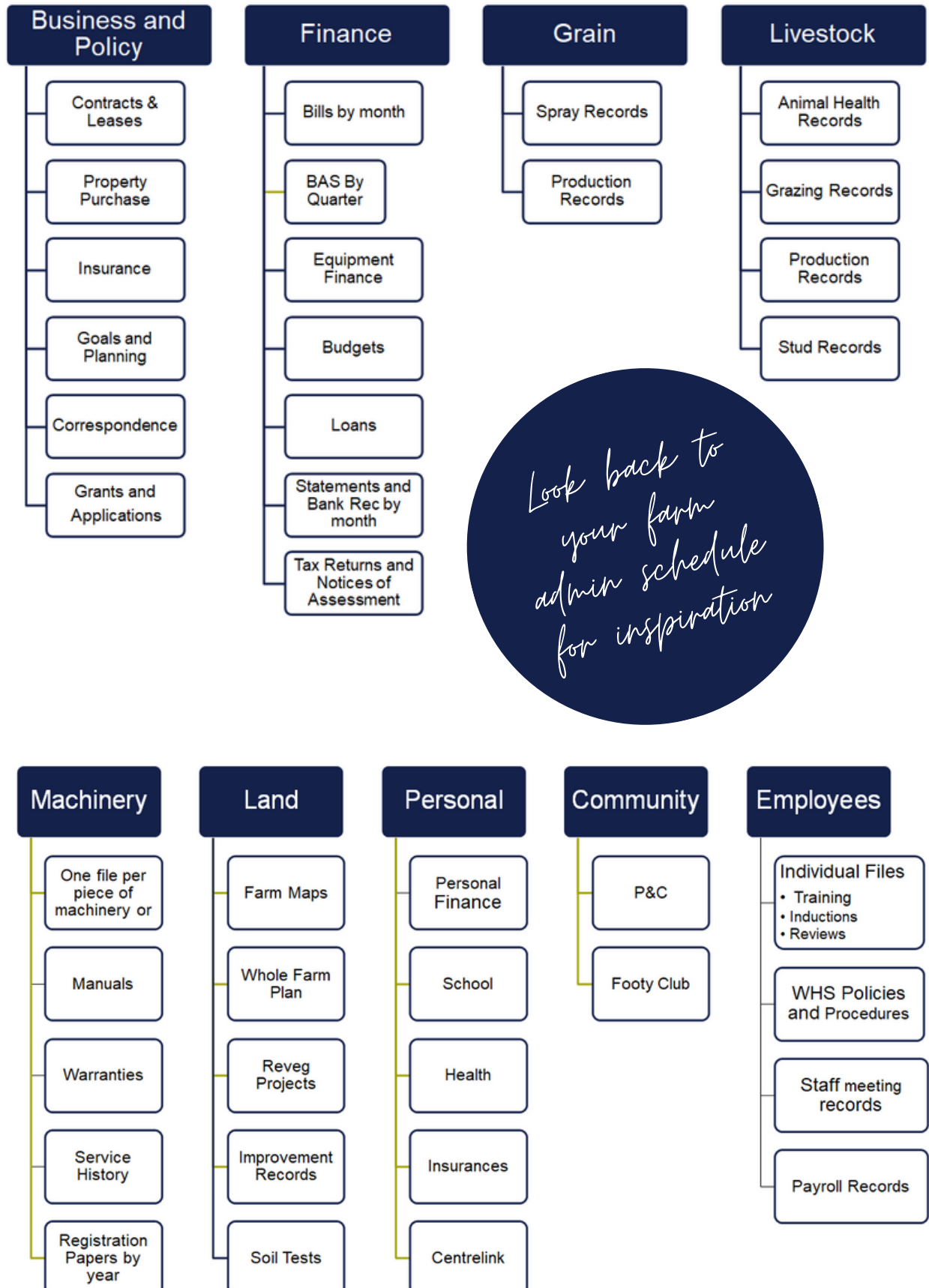### Who else needs this record?

Don't put your most commonly used files in the bottom of your hierarchy or the bottom draw or shelf
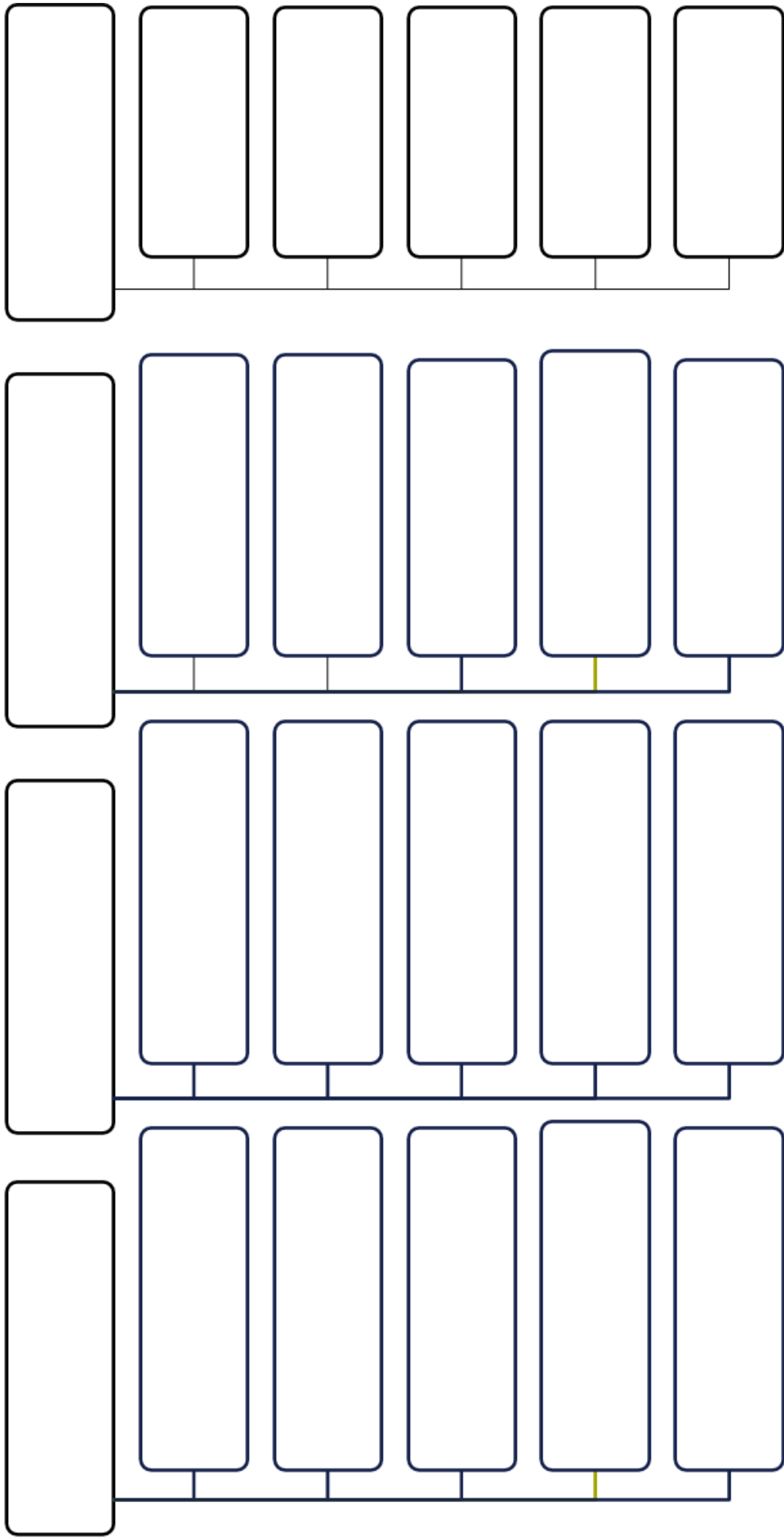
- Map out your file structure use colours or notes to indicate where the record is kept - eg paper file, folder, computer file.

- Consider who in the business has responsibility for this farm record. Is it a shared or individual responsibility?

- Destruction dates can be marked on the outside of a file or a file name.

- Do not destroy can be marked on the outside of a file or in a file name.

SAMPLE FILE STRUCTURE

Business and Policy
- Contracts & Leases
- Property Purchase
- Insurance
- Goals and Planning
- Correspondence
- Grants and Applications

Finance
- Bills by month
- BAS By Quarter
- Equipment Finance
- Budgets
- Loans
- Statements and Bank Rec by month
- Tax Returns and Notices of Assessment

Grain
- Spray Records
- Production Records

Livestock
- Animal Health Records
- Grazing Records
- Production Records
- Stud Records

Look back to your farm admin schedule for inspiration

Machinery
- One file per piece of machinery or
- Manuals
- Warranties
- Service History
- Registration Papers by year

Land
- Farm Maps
- Whole Farm Plan
- Reveg Projects
- Improvement Records
- Soil Tests

Personal
- Personal Finance
- School
- Health
- Insurances
- Centrelink

Community
- P&C
- Footy Club

Employees
- Individual Files
  - Training
  - Inductions
  - Reviews
- WHS Policies and Procedures
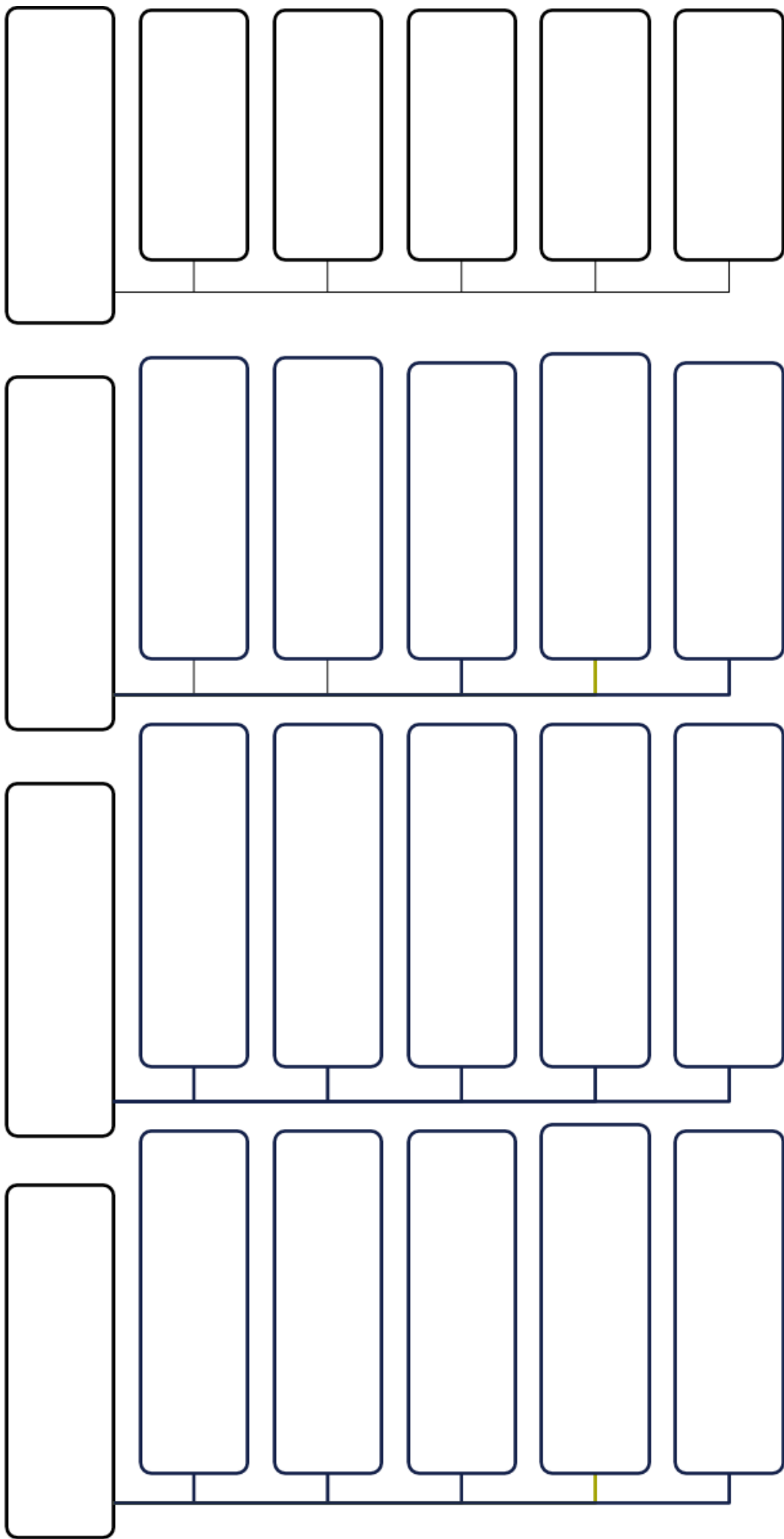- Staff meeting records
- Payroll Records

FILE STRUCTURE

PAPER VS LESS PAPER SYSTEMS

Paperless (or less paper) offices have their advantages and disadvantages. Note down the advantages and disadvantages related to **your** business and what you might need to consider before changing your system.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES

FILE STRUCTURE

CLOUD AND PAPERLESS SYSTEMS

HINTS AND TIPS

- It's not all or nothing, build your system one area at a time eg paperless payroll, then paperless bank statements and bank reconciliations, then paperless bills and invoices etc.

- It is perfectly acceptable to run a dual system whilst in transition, eg physical folders as well as a computer file of bills.

- Transitioning creditors to emailing rather than mailing you bills can take some time. Allow for for this in your planning process.

- To avoid the need to backup, only save documents on a cloud based document storage system eg drop box, one drive or google docs.

- To avoid the need for backing up your bookkeeping system, use the cloud or online version.

- If you can't use a cloud version for whatever reason, email a backup copy your accountant for a quick and effective offsite copy. This is more secure than a backup to another electronic device kept in your office.

- Structure your electronic filing system to reflect your paper based system but think about putting more frequently used files at the top of the electronic tree. Use numbers to do this eg 01 Bills to be paid 02 Bank Statements etc.

Expect it to be more difficult before it becomes less difficult

SAMPLE
PAPERLESS TRANSITION PLAN

HINTS AND TIPS

- Review email addresses and ensure that you are happy with them (in module 4 we cover email address options). Make any necessary changes.

- Explore capability of your accounting program to accept and file electronic copies of bills.

- Determine bill filing system (in accounting program or out of accounting program).

- Request all suppliers to email bills rather than mail them.

- Set up rules within your email program to minimise filing or send documents directly to accounting program.

- Determine most efficient way to scan paper based documents (phone scanner, printer scanner, app or add on to accounting system eg Dext or Hubdocs).

- Request you bank to send email statements rather than paper statements.

- Set date to review system.

PAPER BASED SYSTEMS

HINTS AND TIPS

- Review email addresses and ensure that you are happy with them (in module 4 we cover email address options). Make any necessary changes.

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REVIEWING APPS AND PROGRAMS

Programs and apps can ease record keeping. There are a lot of options out there. Use this worksheet to assess the best app or program for your business. Start by determining what you want to achieve, and then examine each app or program individually.

QUESTION #1: What do we want to be able to record?

QUESTION #2: Why is recording this important?

QUESTION #3: Who is responsible for the data recording and who else may need access?

REVIEWING APPS AND PROGRAMS

QUESTION #4: What are we currently using/doing and the limitations of this?

QUESTION #5: Other options - list apps, programs or alternative strategies

APP OR PROGRAM REVIEW CHECKLIST

App, program or strategy name

1 Can the information I want to record be captured in this program?

A bit of it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | More than we would ever use

Notes

2 Can I produce reports or access the information I need easily?

Limited or time consuming reporting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Useful standard reports and capability to easily tailor customised reports

Notes

3 Does the app or program integrate with other programs we use?

No | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Yes or not applicable

Notes

4 Is the program or app easy to use?

Extensive training and some of us may never get it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Intuitive, everyone will be able to work it out

Notes

Annual cost and subscription details

Total Score

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WHAT'S WORKING WELL

INSTRUCTIONS: It's easy to loose sight of the progress we have made. Think about the last 5 years. In each box note down a skill you have learned, an IT function you have learned, something you have become more efficient at. Having trouble? Ask someone else in the business what is easier now than it used to be.

CURRENT PROBLEMS AREAS AND PAIN POINTS

IMPROVING RECORD KEEPING

✔ FOCUS AREA #1

ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED

SOLUTION

BENEFITS

COST AND TIME COMMITMENT

✔ FOCUS AREA #2

ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED

SOLUTION

BENEFITS

COST AND TIME COMMITMENT

IMPROVING RECORD KEEPING

FOCUS AREA #3

ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED

SOLUTION

BENEFITS

COST AND TIME COMMITMENT

FOCUS AREA #4

ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED

SOLUTION

BENEFITS

COST AND TIME COMMITMENT

NOTES