

POPI business myths popped



By Leigh Andrews

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Worried about compliance issues once the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act comes into effect? Don't be. Wayne Clarke, Managing Director of [Metrofile Records Management](#) shares some tips you can implement today to turn POPI into a business opportunity...

While some limited sections of the POPI Act came into effect last year, it is speculated that [the end of 2015](#) will see the full Act come into effect. Then again, it [could only be officially announced](#) in the next three years, followed by a one- to three-year grace period.

Here's how you can attain the desired effect of improved customer relationships as a result of taking action now...

■ 1. Firstly, what's the main impact of POPI expected for SA businesses alike?



Wayne Clarke

Clarke: All businesses must ensure that they familiarise themselves with the guidelines imposed by POPI to avoid financial losses resulting from fines as well as reputational damage. It is however not all bad. Businesses also now have the opportunity to review their existing processes while ensuring POPI compliance.

2. Is there any specific industry that will be most affected?

Clarke: It can be any business dealing directly with client/customers personal information. This personal information would include Identity documents, passports, credit cards and the like.

3. Let's talk about how POPI will affect the big data trend.

Clarke: Organisations that seek a competitive edge by through mass-surveys and research can, following the implementation of POPI, be more confident that the data-bases used by big data organisations are ethically sourced and legally sound.

Many organisations will need to sift through and review their databases to ensure that no personal details are included on correspondence to unauthorised parties. You can keep your competitive advantage through mass surveys and data-collection by partnering with a POPI-compliant service provider to ensure all data is ethically sourced and legally sound.

■ 4. What's the expected impact of POPI on document shredding/destruction/deleting old data?

Clarke: All industries dealing personal information should partner with a proper document shredding company to ensure that documents are destructed in a proper way.



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■ 5. *How is the opportunity to tailor business processes a good thing?*

Clarke: Due to the positive aspects it can bring into a company such as improving relationships with customers and clients, improving the quality of data, creating more awareness around POPI will make more people aware and cautious of their personal information.

Furthermore, the process of tailoring procedures holds the potential to improve the overall business management if the organisation approaches the process as a type of 'internal auditing' exercise rather than a tedious process that only focuses on POPI.

■ 6. *Explain the ultimate effect of improved customer relationships as a result of taking action now.*

Clarke: Customer satisfaction may increase when customers know that their information and interaction with organisations is secure and protected. In achieving and maintaining POPI compliance, organisations are in a position where they are able to confidently reassure customers.

We suggest that organisations communicate their progress with customers and stakeholders to maintain good relationships and to inform them of the steps that are being taken to safeguard their personal information, this in turn would give customers the assurance they need in relation to their personal information.

Read up on the [data implications](#) of POPI as well as how to [protect your customers' personal information](#) so that you're better prepared.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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