

Expert Erik Hartman speaks with Lisa Welchman

## The Importance of Web Governance

**Lisa Welchman from the United States speaks on September 17 and 18 at the Hartman Event about Web Operations Management and the importance of web governance. We ask more questions about her vision of governance.**

*Hartman: You are currently working on a book about web governance. What is that exactly?*

Welchman: "I'm working on a book about Web Operations Management-- a topic which covers the four key components that are important in managing Web properties: Strategy, Governance, Execution and Measurement."

*Hartman: Why is governance that important?*

Welchman: "Governance is key when it comes to operating Web sites because it provides the structures which will help produce high-quality Web sites. Most organizations have almost no Web governance in place. Web Governance has three aspects to it: a Governance Framework, Policies, and Standards."

*Hartman: Tell me more about it.*

Welchman: "The Web Governance Framework is the structure that is put in place by senior management. It specifies who in an organization has authority over the Web. That is, who gets to make key decisions regarding funding, staffing, and Web product management. Web Policies are important because they are the set of rules and organizational guidelines that must be followed when creating Web sites. Policies also provide a bridge from the strategic objectives of an organization to the actual execution and development of Web sites in an organization. Web Policies also keep organizations out of trouble by ensuring the Web properties meet any regulatory guidelines or other legal constraints that are put on the organization."

*Hartman: And how about the standards?*

Welchman: "Web standards are extremely important because they provide the tactical guidelines for developing content and applications for the Web. Standards manifest themselves in common documents like Web Style Guides, Application Development processes and procedures, etc. Many organizations have some Web Standards in place and, mistakenly, believe that standards=governance. But, as we have just seen, they are only part of the larger governance picture."

*Hartman: If it's so important, why is nobody doing it (properly)?*

Welchman: "Implementing Web governance in an organization is difficult. Frequently, senior managers have no understanding of what it really takes to make a Website and Web subject matter experts are frequently immature managers who are stuck viewing the Web site as a series of technology implementation projects. So, it takes a bit of a leap of faith, some education and a deep level of communication from the top to the bottom of an organization to get Web Governance working smoothly. Not an easy task."

*Hartman: What can you do to convince your board/manager about the importance of governance?*

Welchman: "The most important thing a Web subject matter expert can do is stop talking about Web

projects to their manager and start speaking the language of strategy. Explain to a senior leader how the organization is at risk due to lack of strong Web operational practices, including Web Governance. And, how the organization will benefit from the improved Web presence that comes with good Web Governance practices. The constant drone of: “give me more money for technology” that most managers here is off-putting. Tell them what they are going to get for their money!”

*Hartman: What are 3 tips for anyone who wants to start with governance but has no clue?*

Welchman”: “1. Find a senior Web sponsor who is willing to help the organization establish a governance framework so that the authority for Web product management is clearly established. 2. Understand that the Web is a communications and transactional vehicle for the entire organization and while certain aspects can (and should) be managed centrally, a large amount of organization-wide practices will need to be established. Start to foster those relationships. 3. Understand that establishing governance will take a while (perhaps years). It’s a process. But, the sooner you get started, the better.”

*Hartman: What are you going to talk about at the HartmanEVENT?*

Welchman: “I will be speaking in depth on how to create a Governance Framework, and create Web Policy and Web Standards boards in organizations.”

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