

AHIMA's Preferred Future: Framing AHIMA's Challenges and Opportunities

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by Mervat Abdelhak, PhD, RHIA

Leadership's responsibility is to advance the organization it serves by delivering on its mission and promises. It should build a better future for its membership. Great leaders are intent on continuing the organization's legacy of success and sustained performance. They are committed to passing the organization on to the next generation of leaders in better shape than its present state.

AHIMA's Board of Directors convened for a strategic work session in January. The board was charged with defining the preferred future for the association, its members, and the profession. The board was asked to paint an operationally useful picture of a future that is more desirable than the present. Concomitantly, the board was also asked to lay out an action plan that will aid in securing that desired future.

Tackling the Hard Questions

In its deliberations, the board answered difficult questions such as:

- What are the important issues that must be addressed to ensure our future?
- What does success look like for our members and AHIMA?
- What will be most strikingly different about AHIMA and our profession in seven to 10 years? What do we hope will be most strikingly different about AHIMA and our profession in seven to 10 years?
- Who will be the association's key constituents? And what will be the values of the next generation of constituents?
- What are we overlooking at the association's peril?
- What is the biggest gap between what AHIMA claims it is and what it actually is?
- Who will be our competitors?
- What parts of the current state of our association are a questionable fit with the future we desire?
- How committed to and prepared for the emerging future are our members and our component state associations (CSAs)?
- What is the action plan to secure the preferred future?
- How will change take place?
- What are some of the landmarks along the path to the preferred future?

Awareness of Self

Leaders are responsible for seeing the big picture and articulating a vision of the preferred future, a better place than currently exists. It has been noted that most ailing organizations are not suffering because they cannot resolve their problems, but rather because they cannot see the problems to be faced in the future.

In our deliberations, the board was cognizant of framing the problems and opportunities with a new mindset, a new paradigm of the future—a paradigm that can guide our thoughts and actions.

A summary of our collective thinking and an action plan will be communicated in my next column, at Team Talks, during CSA updates, and at the House of Delegates. We will also engage corporate partners and our alliances in validating our definition of the preferred future.

Collectively we can shape our future to ensure that we are building a better tomorrow for our profession. That is stewardship, and it is the essence of leadership.

Mervat Abdelhak (madelhak@pitt.edu) is the department chair and associate professor of health information management for the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh.

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