

Be an HIM Champion

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by Bryon Pickard, MBA, RHIA

If you are a sports fan, it's easy to get caught up in the excitement of March Madness, making your picks and filling out those winning brackets. This is the time of year when 65 NCAA college basketball teams capture the attention of millions, and over 20 days of competition, one champion emerges.

What Does It Take to Be a Champion?

What does it take to be a top team and achieve the distinction of being named champion? Whether speaking of sports, the workplace, or life, those who succeed usually have a burning desire to do so and never give up. True leaders persevere through all of the ups and downs, influence others, and tend to always look ahead to the future.

How are you taking the lead in HIM? I am always amazed at the breadth of talent and passionate energy among our HIM leaders. I learned a long time ago that it doesn't take an official title to make someone a leader. Just like sports champions, one of the best ways individuals, teams, and organizations increase their overall effectiveness is by gaining an advantage and increasing everyone's leadership skills.

Competitive Edge

The US healthcare system is being transformed before our eyes with new EHR and PHR initiatives, health information exchanges, and an array of other information technology solutions. A growing audience of professionals shares the vision of quality healthcare through quality information, and 2007 brings an opportunity for anyone interested in HIM to become an active member of AHIMA. HIM champions are needed across the country, and AHIMA provides a trusted source for essential HIM practice standards and professional credentialing.

One of the best strategies for individuals to differentiate themselves and gain a competitive edge is by earning professional certifications. Research shows AHIMA credential holders who have already achieved a professional designation in HIM, health IT, coding, privacy, or security are more apt to earn higher salaries and be more valued by employers.

A respected HIM colleague recently shared John Kotter's book *Our Iceberg Is Melting*, and if you like a quick, easy read, this book cleverly describes what it takes to successfully prepare for the future. In the book, Kotter makes it clear the status quo must be challenged and offers a witty and fresh perspective on how leaders emerge. Becoming an exceptional leader requires discipline, taking risks, and is a lifelong learning process. You can be a leader and make a name for yourself regardless of what role you are in.

New Challenges

The AHIMA Board recently convened a strategic work session, reviewing the association's future direction and reaffirming key priorities and milestones for 2007–2009. We then invested time to stretch our minds on future possibilities for 2010.

It becomes increasingly clear that the national race toward interoperable EHRs and information exchange is going to take enormous grass-roots efforts at the state and local levels. Many of you are already contributing your unique skills and expertise in defining a legal EHR, privacy, security, data integrity, and other HIM professional practice activities.

Whether you are just starting out, a seasoned mentor with a winning record, or someone in between, I challenge you to be an HIM champion.

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