

Creating a Career Blueprint

Save to myBoK

By Patty Thierry Sheridan, MBA, RHIA, FAHIMA

Most of us don't begin our careers knowing exactly where we want to go, but we do have a general idea of the path we would like to take. Our career path inevitably takes on a life of its own based on our education, mastery of the five essential competencies (critical thinking, relationship building, judgment, project management skills, and taking chances), and self-confidence.

For some time now, we have lived in an era where change is indeed the only constant. This forces us to evolve how we practice and teach HIM and advance the principles of personal health information management in our society. The alternative of not changing is being left behind, and generally this is not an option if we want to thrive in society.

"We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are," businessman and writer Max De Pree states. That resonates with me, and I hope with you too. It's hard sometimes to accept that what got us to where we are today is not what is going to get us to the future.

The Start of a Career Blueprint

When I started my career, the future was easier to see and creating a career blueprint was a no-brainer. The career paths were simple and almost linear.

Today, the opportunities are endless, nonlinear, and only restricted by the limits we impose on ourselves.

I appreciate that it has become harder to launch careers upon graduation. I think that more than ever in our history, careers start the moment we enter college. Creating our career blueprint starts at that moment.

It's at this point in our career that networking begins. We raise our hands for that volunteer activity or unpaid internship, and we gain subject matter expertise and critical thinking skills that make us attractive to a future employer.

Experience and resume building begins your first day as a student, not after graduation.

AHIMA Career Resources

Whether you are just entering the HIM profession or interested in advancing your career, taking the time to create a map starting from where you are today to where you want to go will be helpful in achieving your career goals. AHIMA has many resources to help you create your career blueprint.

The first stop should be the Health Information Careers Web site, www.hicareers.com. The site includes information on career pathways and educational programming, as well as a career assistance job board.

The next stop is AHIMA's Career Assist Web site, <http://careerassist.ahima.org>, which offers more resources and career-coaching services. Subsequent stops include your local and state associations, the AHIMA Communities of Practice, and your local network.

AHIMA has also partnered with the Center for Adult Education and Learning (CAEL), focusing on helping new and displaced HIM professionals find careers. In cooperation with CAEL, we are developing a career pathway and salary calculator to be placed on www.hicareers.com.

I wish you the best as you create or update your career blueprint. Like any map, your career blueprint will show you the way and help you manage any detours you encounter along the journey. Dream big!

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