

Creating the Future Every Day

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Digitized information has had a profound effect on the current generation of children. You just have to spend a few minutes with an eight-year-old to see how technology literate this generation has already become. Imagine how different their lives will be from the current workforce because they began using technology at such a young age.

This intensely digitized world necessitates current HIM professionals obtain additional education and training just to keep up and remain relevant, contributing value to an organization's health information systems and practices. Today's HIM educators and practitioners also have the responsibility of creating the future of health information management not only for ourselves but also for future generations of HIM professionals.

The Future Is Not a Destination

As we think about the future it's important that we not think about it as a destination. John Schaar, a futurist, states, "The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination."

Creating a successful future depends on our ability to experiment, innovate, adapt, collaborate, take chances, and clearly define updated and new HIM roles. This will require all of us to educate our employers and stakeholders on how HIM roles are changing and how new and evolving roles can help contain healthcare cost while improving data quality.

These new roles include:

- Facilitating the implementation and maintenance of data standards to achieve interoperability
- Ensuring health information privacy and security and access
- Participating in community-wide information exchange and clinical documentation improvement
- Helping consumers use their health information to partner with their physician on decisions regarding their health
- Managing data, including data capture, validation, analysis, and maintenance

Essential Competencies

Creating a successful future also means mastering essential competencies. Through my own work with HIM professionals around the country there are five competencies that emerge as critical success factors:

1. Critical thinking
2. Relationship building
3. Judgment (common sense and practical decision making)
4. Project management skills
5. Taking chances

How would you rate your competency in these areas? What additional education and training would help you master these five competencies?

With the emergence of new healthcare organization and payment models, implementation of computer-assisted coding, increased adoption of EHRs across provider settings, proliferation of mobile applications, and increased consumer engagement, the future of healthcare is being created each and every day by you, me, and our healthcare colleagues.

As Celine Dion sings, "What do you say to taking chances?" This is our time to take those chances for a better today and tomorrow.

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