

Growth in Every Direction

Save to myBoK

by Barbara P. Fuller, JD, RHIA

Growth is almost always a positive term. It is a term we like to hear associated with things like our salaries, our portfolios, our savings, the stock market, and, of course, our children.

Today's environment often requires that growth be measured quantitatively. It is not difficult to identify milestones:

- AHIMA membership is more than 40,000 and continues to increase at a comfortable rate
- AHIMA maintains an office in our nation's capital so we can monitor the ever-growing political issues that we must seek to influence
- AHIMA's staff is dedicated to helping members succeed
- AHIMA's National Convention attracts increasing numbers of members to a program rich in nationally known participants, extensive and varied exhibits, specialty tracks, and opportunities to network with colleagues

A Different Kind of Progress

So what is wrong with exclusively using quantitative analysis for growth assessment? It fails to measure the intangibles. It fails to assess feelings. It falls short of giving credit to our gut feelings, intuition, or instinct—all important factors in the decisions we make daily.

Let's take a look at some ways in which we, as members of AHIMA, have grown significantly.

The 2000 House of Delegates approved a dues increase for all active members. This approval acknowledges that a content-rich Web site, increased certification programs, expeditions, and Communities of Practice require increased staff and financial resources to make it all happen. No one looks forward to paying increased dues. But it is the mark of maturity and a recognition of financial reality that prompted the 2000 House of Delegates to vote for the dues increase.

I also feel a sense of growth in the way we have **embraced the elevation of our educational standards**. An increasing number of our members are earning advanced degrees. We are recognizing that society rewards educational advancement, and with our usual good sense, we are making the necessary individual sacrifices to ensure our educational achievements translate into deserved rewards.

We are assured of AHIMA's support in these efforts as well. Many of AHIMA's educational programs have well-developed **distance learning modules** as well as a curriculum designed to support students who must blend classes with work. Further, a current goal of FORE (AHIMA's Foundation of Research and Education) is to have **scholarship funds** sufficient to provide assistance to all qualified applicants. Our commitment to lifelong learning continues to be supported by the production of books, audio programs, and abundant written materials. The HIM profession can only be strengthened and advanced through the commitment of its members to education.

How else can we claim growth? I believe we have grown as **we respond to change**. Rather than discarding our profession in favor of another, we have held fast to its discipline and found it more than sufficient in preparing us to assume new roles. As HIM professionals, we are adapting the fundamental skills and knowledge of our profession as we move into compliance, law, government, finance, education, and a host of other areas. And, we are identifying expanded roles and responsibilities within health institutions and facilities.

The challenges and changes have been good for us, and we have grown in meeting them. To be sure, we have grown in numbers, in resources, in budget, and in many other directions. But included in that growth is the recognition that we are mature, forward-thinking professionals ready to move past the new boundaries we have set for ourselves.

The Educational Opportunity of the Year

You still have time to register for the National Convention in Miami Beach. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of all that has been planned. The educational sessions will focus on the hot topics facing our profession. Come and learn how to deal with the privacy regulations, coding challenges, all aspects of HIPAA, and many other HIM issues. In addition, come and network with your peers. An exciting educational opportunity awaits, and I hope to see you there.

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Article citation:

Fuller, Barbara P. "Growth in Every Direction." *Journal of AHIMA* 72, no.8 (2001): 8.

Driving the Power of Knowledge

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