

New Ways to Work

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The demand for competent HIM professionals is at an all-time high. That's true for traditional employers as well as for organizations that didn't even employ HIM professionals 20 or even 10 years ago. Remember, about 50 percent of HIM professionals now work for hospitals, down from 90 percent two decades ago.

With this growth come questions. How is HIM practice changing, and what competencies are critical for success? What skills and knowledge do new graduates need, and how can they gain the experience that employers are looking for?

HIM work force development is a key focus for AHIMA and the Foundation of Research and Education. We invest in research to track practice changes; inform academic, education, and practice standards; and guide the development of lifelong learning tools.

This month the *Journal* focuses on the dynamic world of the HIM workplace, particularly how HIM leaders are reshaping managerial roles.

Corporate HIM

Managing transition requires the skill and resilience described by Leslie Ann Fox and Patty Thierry Sheridan in "Change Packs an Emotional Wallop." Transitions are emotional processes that require resilience and ingenuity. These observations are echoed in "HIM Manager, non-HIM Staff," which explores the transition from managing an HIM department to managing a multidisciplinary staff.

As we build the picture of the successful HIM leader, we see that the ability to collaborate, particularly to implement new ideas, is a highly valued attribute. If you have these qualities and domain expertise, consider sharing them as a member of the Action Community for e-HIM® Excellence (ACE). Learn more about ACE at www.ahima.org/ace. [web page no longer available]

The case studies in "Being One of Many" further illustrate the new world of the HIM workplace. Once again, we see the need for hard managerial skills, emotional strength, resilience, and bias to collaborate for the common good.

Corporate-level HIM leaders have a special challenge: to manage staff in multiple locations and business units including telecommuters, outsourced staff, and even offshore workers. In "Keeping Virtual Teams Real" Phyllis Cartwright offers advice for managing a remote or telecommuting staff.

As Cartwright aptly states, for some, "management by walking around" is no longer relevant.

Domain Expertise

The corporate directors interviewed in our features agree that in addition to leadership and management competence, solid HIM expertise is what sets them apart. The transition from paper to e-HIM, regardless of the type of organization, does not simplify information management tasks. In fact, as organizations progress to higher stages of computerization the information management challenges become more complex and require deeper technical skills.

In today's workplace, if you have a mix of managerial and technical skills you will be valued. If you aspire to advance as a manager, you need to focus on learning leadership skills—yes, a learned skill set. If you aspire to specialize in one specific area such as coding or privacy and security, make sure you know it well.

AHIMA's 79th Annual Convention and Exhibit kicks off in Philadelphia on October 8. We are eager to meet and learn from the thousands of colleagues who will come together to advance HIM. In today's world, job security no longer exists, but employability is strong for those with the right skills and knowledge.

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