

Reinventing Ourselves

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by Melanie Brodnik, PhD, RHIA

As I think about all that the HIM profession aims to accomplish, I realize that we are faced with the challenge of reinventing ourselves. This seems daunting, but ours is not the only profession faced with this challenge.

Change Can Make Us Stronger

Consider the challenges facing information technology (IT) professionals, who need to acquire new skills and motivation in order to survive in today's more conservative business environment. These include an overall sense of business dynamics, financial discipline, and management aptitude, according to a recent article quoting Andrew Trestrail, vice president of Kelly IT Resources.¹ As the IT profession transforms itself, Trestrail says, it should "emerge from the experience with a stronger sense of purpose and mission."

HIM professionals have already made these skills part of our professional competencies. And as we acquire more technical skills and transform ourselves from managers of paper-based medical records to managers of e-HIM, we'll not only emerge with a stronger sense of purpose and mission but with new skills that will keep us competitive in the changing environment.

There's no shortage of work being done in this area. For example, AHIMA's landmark work force study recommends areas for increased HIM knowledge and skills. Watch for more work force results to be published in 2004.

The AHIMA Educational Strategy Committee and other volunteers are working diligently to revise our HIA and HIT curriculum models as well.

Opportunities at Our Fingertips

While educational initiatives are under way, we all face a personal challenge-taking the responsibility for self-development and lifelong learning. AHIMA offers an enormous array of resources and continuing education opportunities to help achieve your educational goals.

You may even want to look toward academic institutions for additional degree-related coursework. Looking back, I realize that my progression to a doctorate parallels the demands I faced at my respective jobs. Right now, opportunities are there for the taking for all of us.

For the immediate future, here are some educational opportunities to keep in mind:

A wonderful international event on the horizon is the 76th National Conventional and Exhibit, to be held in Washington, DC, October 9–14.

Another educational opportunity is the debut of Health Information Privacy and Security Week, April 11–17, at your place of employment. Use the week to educate health professionals, employers, patients, and consumers about their rights and responsibilities related to the use and disclosure of personal health information and HIPAA. AHIMA will have some great resources for your use in this endeavor.

Finally, March is Team Talks month. We invite you to meet your peers, learn about ongoing plans within the Association, and share your thoughts on upcoming strategic directions. Results of the Team Talks will be posted online on the State Leader and HOD Community of Practice (which is open to any AHIMA member) at www.ahima.org. Join us in these important discussions.

Note

1. "Ten Steps to Reinventing the IT Professional." *The Columbus Dispatch* (January 18, 2004).

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Driving the Power of Knowledge

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