

Running Toward AHIMA's Mission, Vision, Values, and Long-Term Strategy

Save to myBoK

By Valerie Watzlaf, PhD, MPH, RHIA, FAHIMA

The process for preparing to run a marathon is similar to that of building strategy. Both begin with asking a seemingly simple question: “Why?”

We may decide to run a marathon for personal achievement, to support charity, or to assist in a specific community initiative. When taking on such a commitment, it's important to understand our motivations.

The AHIMA Board of Directors and association staff, under the facilitation of the THRUUE consulting group, convened in January to begin work on AHIMA's new mission, vision, and values, along with our direction for long-term strategy. While building the mission statement, the AHIMA Board continued to ask important questions to guide us through the process, such as “Why is AHIMA here?” and “What would happen if AHIMA did not exist?” Continuing to ask “why” helped to define and clarify AHIMA's purpose.

When preparing for this strategy session, the AHIMA Board of Directors examined large amounts of data from focus groups, interviews, and surveys of our members, stakeholders, and industry experts starting in July 2018 to the present. Re-examining the past helped us to re-energize and newly imagine our future.

The importance of the mission and vision of an organization—and defining and understanding why it matters—is key to effectively guiding strategy and providing direction. Understanding this also improves our ability to communicate our role in the industry. Great mission and vision statements of other organizations in healthcare and beyond were examined by the group. The mission needed to be clear, concise, memorable, fearless, and bold. It was important to remember that no one piece of what we were developing should stand alone, but that all parts must be presented in concert for better clarity.

Next, we formed three break-out groups to write drafts of the mission statement, which were then presented to our larger group and discussed in more detail. We then brainstormed on vision, which focuses on looking toward the future. For this step in the process, we examined types of vision, visioning questions, and trends in the industry that are important to note as we move into our future. There were many trends that emerged in our discussion, such as artificial intelligence, precision medicine, consumer-driven care, cybersecurity, and more.

We were told to constantly push ourselves to “imagine the unimaginable” as far as the role that information will play in our future world. The AHIMA proposed values tended to pop out as we discussed these areas. All of this information has been given to the AHIMA staff and THRUUE consulting group. We will meet again in March to further discuss and assist in the development of a strategic plan that will encompass our long-term strategy from 2020 to 2023. We will also continue to solicit member input. Be ready—your voice is invaluable.

It takes preparation, dedication, education, and training to run a great marathon—and the same can be said for building a great mission, vision, values, and long-term strategy for AHIMA. Once completed, they both provide a true sense of accomplishment, direction for achievement, and motivation for the future—well worth the effort!

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