

# Strategic Planning: a Winning Play

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*by Melanie Brodnik, PhD, RHIA*

In April we look back at AHIMA's own form of college basketball's "March Madness"—Team Talks. The communication, collaboration, and networking of these meetings make all who attended national champs. The information shared at Team Talks is essential for achieving the Association's strategic initiatives and operational program goals. And as with any good team, there is a strategy behind the plays that direct the team toward success.

## A Long-Term Game Plan

The AHIMA Board of Directors strategizes using a four-step planning horizon. The board envisions the future in 10 to 30 years, then looks at critical factors that may affect the profession within the next five to 10 years. Based on this information, the board plans for the next three to five years, identifying the most important questions facing the profession and the Association.

From these strategic questions comes a framework for one- to two-year action planning. This action planning process delivers the key strategic issues along with the goals, strategies, and programs that AHIMA engages in on an annual basis and that represent our game plan for success.

In January the board updated and revised 14 strategic questions for 2005 to 2008.<sup>1</sup> The questions focus on membership, practice leadership, academic education and research, and the HIM professional definition. Posing these questions helps frame activities that lead to answers.

## We're All on the Team

I hope that sharing the board's strategic planning process will encourage you to think strategically about your own game plan for success in an e-HIM<sup>TM</sup> environment. What strategic questions might you identify for yourself, and what are your short-term professional goals? For example, looking at the next three to five years, you might ask yourself, "How can I ensure that I will have the skills necessary to survive in an electronic practice environment?"

Depending on your background, you might answer this question by planning to accomplish the following in 2004:

- Attend the "Renaissance for the 21st Century" seminar to enhance your leadership and change management abilities
- Seek membership in your facility's IT conversion or EHR implementation team
- Take a college course in project management

Or your plan might be to:

- Enroll in a clinical data management course
- Take an advanced course in PC applications
- Volunteer to help your department implement a software application

Whatever approach you take toward personal and professional development, just remember that you're part of the larger AHIMA team that is committed to advancing the profession and supporting its team members through numerous educational opportunities and professional resources. Together, as a team, we'll plan our plays, take the shots, and adjust the playbook in order to achieve that win in the new game of e-HIM practice.

## Note

1. AHIMA Board of Directors. "Working Draft— AHIMA Strategic Questions for 2005–2008, January 2004." Available in the AHIMA Community of Practice under "Resources" at [www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org).

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