

# Understanding Strategy Beyond Today

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By Diann H. Smith, MS, RHIA, CHP, FAHIMA

AS HEALTH INFORMATION management (HIM) professionals, we must constantly evaluate our role in the healthcare ecosystem as the industry continues to evolve. After all, healthcare has many stakeholders and HIM professionals are only one segment. Through collaboration with others we can continue to strengthen our profession and association.

When I stepped into the role of AHIMA Board President/Chair, I made a commitment to AHIMA, our members, and our profession to influence change. Often, this requires taking a hard look at ourselves. Such was the case when the AHIMA Board of Directors received feedback that we needed to include external stakeholders in our strategy sessions and begin to set a stronger framework for our future.

A leader's job is to make choices. Tough decisions must frequently be made when a substantial shift from what has always been done is required. I love the HIM profession, and I also believe the time is now for us to take a long, hard look at what lies ahead in the future for this profession. It's time to be completely honest with ourselves based on an understanding of the many disruptors in the marketplace—they aren't going away and we cannot manage or control them. We can choose to be proactive or continue down the path of "wait and see." If we wait, change will happen to us.

Alternatively, we can be the disruptor and take steps to prepare for and lead change. We have seen disruption with significant consequences in other industries such as in-home entertainment. Blockbuster, once valued at \$5 billion, was a well-recognized video rental brand 20 years ago. Netflix emerged on the scene in 1997 as the industry disruptor, and was largely ignored by the giant Blockbuster. Fast forward to today: Blockbuster is almost extinct (only one store remained as of this summer) and Netflix is now valued at \$150 billion. We can no longer afford to project today's business model into the future. That mindset has resulted in companies such as Blockbuster ceasing to exist, while the Netflixes of the world thrive.

Over the summer, AHIMA's Board of Directors, CEO, and Speaker of the House of Delegates spent time considering AHIMA's strategy, deciding that it was neither compelling enough to lead AHIMA into the future nor specific enough regarding execution to ensure we would effectively achieve its intent. The board and the CEO are committed to beginning a journey to change, toward a new and different future. With the help of an outside support team, AHIMA is now engaging in a process to discern and achieve the future we want to create.

A 90-year-rich history is nothing to take for granted. The profession as we have known it has evolved and will continue to do so rapidly. The AHIMA of tomorrow must uniquely solve a compelling problem for people in our ecosystem and reposition our business to create a vibrant future with clarity of strategy and resources aligned. We intend to pursue this journey with transparency as it unfolds. I remain committed to leading through this exciting period of change and welcome your support and involvement as we do so.

Diann H. Smith ([diannh.smith@ahima.org](mailto:diannh.smith@ahima.org)) is vice president of health information management services and clinical documentation improvement at Texas Health Resources.

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