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Guest Interviews: The Assessment

Focus on the Future

For the past 12 Issues of the Agenda, we have published responses by organization and community leaders to five questions that focus on the future. In this special issue, we are pleased to present a summary and analysis of those thoughtful responses.

We hope the summaries prove to be valuable to all, and once again we want to express our gratitude to the leaders who took the time to participate!

Question 1:

Q: What changes in your professional environment in the past 3-5 years have you found to be the most beneficial?

Internet

No surprise, the main comment was about the Internet and the benefits of the digital age as it applies to the specific needs and priorities of their industry. Bottom line; the Internet brings greater efficiency and effectiveness thus allowing for more to be accomplished. Specific comments include:

- *The Internet with increased resources increased my range, and speed of service. I can now service clients with greater availability and speed*
- *Digital age with improvements in communication and data management*



Ellen Rosenthal
Conner Prairie Museum



Craig McKee
Atty., Wilkinson, Goellier



Robert Gray
Atty., Hunton & Williams



Rene Cabral-Daniels
Williamsburg Community

Service Corporation



James Affini
South Texas Coll. of Law



Kurt Daw
San Francisco State U.

Question 2:

Q: What changes have been the most troubling to you?

Four of the interviewees are involved with health care. One acknowledges *the growing problem in dealing with the underinsured and uninsured of the country*. Another likewise is concerned about *the growing demand upon the healthcare system as the public (directly and indirectly) demands increased quality while seeking reduced cost*. A member of the pharmaceutical industry is also concerned about *the pressure to reduce costs to the point that the profession becomes more of a commodity activity*. Finally, one

revolutionized the way healthcare functions

- *The Internet and use of email allowing more to be accomplished*
- *The Internet and access to legal information and ease of communication*
- *The use of the Internet for communication, research, and connection*
- *The use of e-mail as an accepted method of professional communication*

Healthcare

Healthcare seems to be moving on a path towards more emphasis on preventive care and a constantly improving level of quality care. The digital revolution has had an increasingly positive impact on the delivery of health care.

- *Government health care programs have expanded coverage to include more people and more diverse populations, have become more focused on preventive and chronic care, and have embraced value-driven purchasing concepts.*
- *The digital age has had the greatest measurable impact on our industry. Improvements in communication and data management have revolutionized the way healthcare functions. Specific to vascular ultrasound, digital technology has improved every aspect of the vascular ultrasound professional's life from image acquisition and data management to web based networking and distance learning*

Planning

TRG clients and colleagues are planning oriented. They highly value the business advantages that formal planning affords.

- *The adoption of a strategic plan which allows us to think strategically about the future*
- *The development and implementation of a successful Marketing Plan*
- *Encourage continued professional development and peer networking through the credentialed manager. I would highly recommend to any business owner to find a consultant who can help you put your ideas on paper*
- *Our association with TRG has been a great help in winning a grant last year, and has allowed more flexibility and increased our funding*

Museum management

Only one comment. We see a connection to

Health Foundation



Rob Lohr
Town Mgr., Purcellville VA



Karen Russell
ECHOWorks

Question 3:

Q: How will globalization (e.g. the emergence of new global powers, such as China and India) affect your professional area in the near term?

The twelve respondents seem to agree that globalization is, in general, a positive development. However, their responses clearly demonstrate the phenomenon that where we sit determines how we see the world.

Four of our interviewees indicated in one way or another that globalization is unlikely to have a significant effect in their field of endeavor in the near term. Two of these respondents are in the

expressed disappointment that *diversity is perceived as charity rather than a strength or positive strategy*.

Several of the respondents are affiliated with the education process. One expressed concern that *the economic downturn has impacted both existing endowments and future giving*. This was echoed by another who fears *the effect budget cuts will have on education*. A third fears that *the system is not adapting in order to adequately prepare future leaders*.

Two attorneys also participated. One expressed displeasure with *the growing divide between the generations*. He perceives that *the younger professionals seek and expect benefits in a much more rapid timing than that expected by more seasoned attorneys*. Likewise, *the impersonality of communication (email) is of concern* to him. A former President of the American Bar Association, has somewhat the same doubts, commenting briefly on *the "quality of engagement" and "new forms of relationship"*.

We also sought the comments of the leader of a non-profit organization and a public body. They expressed concern about *the impact of the*

structured planning as professional museum management moves more towards formal business practices.

- *Museums operating more like a business*
- *Increasing attention to incorporating best business practices. Conferences once devoted entirely to program, now feature speakers from the business community. Museums are pooling data to understand market trends and establish standards for salaries, costs and attendance.*

Education

Only one representative from higher education.

- *In higher education and the arts & entertainment industry I've noticed a new emphasis on creativity and innovation developing. In the entertainment world this represents a slight loosening up, but in higher education it is a revolution.*

Law

The ease of communication has grown. The immediate access to information via the Internet, the ease of legal research, the use of emails as an alternative to regular mail or telephone tag, all make for a better practice and happier clients.

Professional Associations

Movement by ICMA and other professional organizations to encourage continued professional development and peer networking through the credentialed manager.

HR Practice

One change that reaped unanticipated benefits was the hiring of young professionals in key positions. By hiring young, talented professionals, the office was able to stay abreast of emerging trends in electronic communications, better understand generational paradigm shifts on health access issues, and tap into the high energy levels of this age group.

Globalization

- *Expanded market opportunities*
- *Local partners in new markets*
- *Expanded team approach to deliver services*

Question 4:

legal profession, one in health care, and one in a local non-profit agency. Nine of the respondents foresee significant, and primarily positive, implications in the near term.

A broad pattern that seems to exist is a view that globalization is bringing a healthy new level of competition that will bring innovations, regardless of the field of endeavor. For example, several leaders noted implications for education, but each from a slightly different perspective, and each with a slightly different take on what those implications might be.

In spite of the differences in perspectives on the issue of globalization, three broad patterns seem to be emerging:

1. *Globalization opens up new markets in which Americans can compete;*
2. *A healthy new level of competition in the U.S. is resulting from globalization, bringing with it innovative developments;*
3. *Globalization results in a need to take a world view, rather than thinking only locally or*

economy on groups throughout the country, including worries about the growing divide between the elected bodies and those who are dedicated to serving them; and a potential lack of respect toward the professionals.

Of course, new technologies can be seen as having changed the symptoms, but the underlying concerns may be the same as those addressed over the years.

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Q: What significant challenges might be anticipated in your professional area in the next few years?

Question #4 was all about the future:

Four of our respondents have an eye on the coming changes in health care in the US, and the value and quality improvements expected of them.

Answers include *"Pay for reporting, pay for performance, pay for improvement--these are just a few of the concepts whereby purchasers (public and private) (will be) demanding evidence of value."*

One answer: *"The primary challenge will be delivering the quality and quantity of care demanded within the economic constraints both present and anticipated."*

One leader warns that *" Legitimate Internet pharmacy is around the corner . . . which is unsecure and unsafe for patients. . . . On the bright side, healthcare services will be in great demand due to our aging population. Those pharmacists, who are . . . prepared to meet the needs of aging baby-boomers, will be very successful."*

To another respondent, the greatest challenge will be one of cost: *Reckless spending for limited value erodes our nation's ability to assure health to all sectors of the public."*

Four of the respondents were attorneys, and two were concerned about advancing technology. One stated: *"Technological changes have made litigation very challenging (eg., e-discovery). Technology has also had a big impact on transactional work."*

One listed 3 "New models": *"Technology and globalization"* was one, and the other two had to do with *personnel: "Women and minorities in leadership" and "Empowering people in your organization for better service."*

One leader warned that *"Large firms get clogged with legal talent without enough to do. . . . The legal profession will be reallocating resources and people, with little interest in fields where the need is greatest and the reward quite poor."*

Another was concerned about patent activity:

nationally.

As we continue to survey local and national leaders, we will evaluate the strength of these early patterns.

Question 5:

Q: What are the greatest challenges confronting young professionals in Western culture today?

Speed and range or complexity of change was a repeated theme, one that was connected to a concern for increased pressure in two directions related to professional education:

- *the need for young professionals to absorb exploding volumes of information*
- *coupled with concerns for those who must be trained at all levels.*

As a result, several of the interviews either directly called for or pointed to *a need to modify individual actions, including expanded empowerment.* This also called for *a need to better balance lifestyle with efforts.*

One related, and most unfortunate by-product noted was *a perceived reduction in civility, which, combined with a growing need to improve relations with elected officials calls for the need to shift some of our societal behavior before they*

"The greatest challenges are how governments . . . will manage the patent systems they oversee. Will they take the wrong direction and try to discourage patent activity to limit their workloads, rather than fully fund and effectively manage the agencies?"

And the final four represent a variety of fields: The President of a museum told us: *"Museums are facing increasing competition for leisure time from pressures to work and fragmented family lives, (and) home entertainment options."*

A college dean noted: *"Within a decade (education) may be completely personalized. It will be more about . . . 'What can you do,' not 'where did you learn it?'"*


A community activist told us: *"My biggest goal is to educate the community about the capabilities of the people we serve."*

Finally, a concern about succession: *"So many senior managers will be leaving at the local government level that there will be a significant shortage of young professional administrators to step up. Intern programs . . . will be critical."*

become a hindrance.

The overarching message from the group was that *young professionals must recognize and respond to the need to balance their skills, behaviors and lifestyle to better compete in a rapidly changing Global environment.*

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