Ten Questions With ...

Stephen L. Grimes

Tell us a little about why you decided to launch your own consulting firm—Strategic Healthcare Technology Associates, LLC?

A reduction in force (RIF) at my previous employer expedited the launch of Strategic Healthcare Technology Associates. But regardless of this, my plan was always to go back in the next few years to independent consulting, where I felt I could make the greatest contribution to the industry. That said, and in spite of the RIF, I am thankful for the support I received for many years from my immediate superiors and colleagues at that previous employer.

What's new in your effort to develop a standard to facilitate better cooperation between HTM and IT departments?

The results of polls taken during recent presentations suggest that the HTM community strongly agrees that the industry would benefit from such a standard. Guidelines for IT service management standards from other industries could serve as a baseline model for such a collaborative standard. I've submitted a formal proposal to AAMI for developing a new standard, and I'm optimistic that the association will undertake the challenge.

What needs to happen to make health delivery organizations' (HDOs') risk management efforts more effective?

First would be *education* of HDOs on the nature of the risks with associated new technologies they're adopting. Second would be basic (think KISS ["keep it simple, stupid"]), scalable *guidelines* for HDOs on how to identify and assess their technology vulnerabilities and risks and how to put plans in effect to mitigate those risks.

What's an emerging trend in HTM that you feel requires more attention?

HTM needs to be proactive and engage more effectively in the technology selection and deployment processes. HTM also must abandon nonproductive practices and instead focus on developing new capabilities necessary to support a radically different generation of clinical systems.

What's the one cause you feel most passionate about?

Quality healthcare and education for all, regardless of an individual's financial circumstances. I believe it's only when people are educated to think critically that we have any possibility of solving the wide variety of challenges our society and the world face today.

What was the most influential book you've ever read?

The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century, by Thomas L. Friedman, is probably a contender.

If you could develop one new skillset, what would it be?

Learning to speak another new language, as I believe some of the most important challenges we face will only be solved by engaging the world community in areas of common interest.

What is the best career advice you ever received?

My college professor said the future wasn't looking too bright for aeronautical engineers in the 1970s. He recommended that I consider the new field of biomedical engineering.

What's one thing about you that others might be surprised to learn?

I've always been uncomfortable with public speaking. But hopefully I continue to be invited to speak, because that means people still feel I have something to say that's worth hearing.

What is your philosophy in 10 words or less?

Tomorrow is promised to no one. Carpe diem! ∎

Stephen L. Grimes, FACCE, FAIMBE, FHIMSS, is managing partner of Strategic Healthcare Technology Associates, LLC—a healthcare technology management (HTM) consulting firm based in the Boston, MA, area. He is a nationally recognized authority on topics ranging from challenges facing clinical engineering and healthcare technology integration to medical device security and risk management. Grimes also is a fellow of the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, the American Institute of Medical and Biological Engineering, and the American College of Clinical Engineering (ACCE), where he is also a past president. In April 2015, he received ACCE's highest honor, its Lifetime Achievement Award. Grimes currently serves on the BI&T Editorial Board.