

TITLE: Business planning for HIM research, consultancy and teaching in response to technological and economic change: charting a new course in rough seas.

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Business planning for research, consultancy and teaching varies significantly and yet each share commonalities that augment and dovetail into each other in the business planning process. In the health information industry each of these activities has the potential to compliment the other by providing business contacts that are mutually beneficial to current activities and identifying opportunities for service delivery.

Research business planning requires an understanding of conflict between the research accomplishment of individuals and organisational focus. Inconsistent source funding for research activities places limitations on financial planning which requires a different approach to competition in the context of cross academic collaboration. Fundamental research can be the basis for true innovation but collaboration with industry partners is also important as a vital source of research funding.

Consultancy generally involves identifying problems and providing solutions for those problems. Consultancy is a service industry and business planning therefore demands specifically defining your skill set and your markets. Competition is more clearly defined and along with market size forms the basis for calculating market share. Consultancy can feed off and collaborate with research activities and feed into teaching activities.

Teaching and the provision of formal education and training in the health information industry is often a response to needs identified during a consultative process. It can both compliment and compete with the strategic planning of Universities' teaching programs. Teaching in particular offers the greater potential to extend market share by utilising the latest telecommunications technologies for development and delivery.

This paper looks at the business planning process for a health information management organisation. It explores the steps taken to re-define products and services, assess human resources' skill sets, define markets and market share, identify opportunities for collaboration within its existing activities, develop new products and services and achieve balance between their different perspectives.