

Executive Insight

Conversations with leaders who are shaping the future of the radiology business industry.

This month, we're talking to Nicole Jones-Gerbino, President of PBS Radiology Business Experts.



Hi Nicole, tell us about your role as President at PBS – Radiology Business Experts. How has your career taken you to where you are now?

As President, my role is “linking the outside to the inside” – developing our vision for the company’s future, driving growth and performance, and ensuring that our behaviors and actions always match our values in the way that PBS’s teams, radiology client practices, and patients deserve. My career in healthcare began 28 years ago, mailing patient statements and making collection calls as a part time job while I was in school. I have worked across revenue cycle and business development in progressive leadership and strategic roles. I appreciate the multiple perspectives from radiology positions I’ve held over the years, from imaging center management, hospital practice leadership, health system executive, and consultant. Practicing radical accountability and limitless gratitude helps me deliver results. I’ve been fortunate to learn from wise people who have mentored and encouraged me over the years. The leadership, mentorship and learning opportunities I have experienced within RBMA is unmatched.

Is your current role anything like you envisioned when you were growing up? What was your dream job as a child?

My own kids used to describe my job as “flying places, talking to people a lot to fix problems and tell them what they should do.” I think when I was a child, I would have thought that was pretty cool! My dream job growing up was to study international business law and become a lawyer, because I liked the idea of traveling and arguing with people. Now, I see that finding common ground gets me much farther along in my communication, but I still enjoy traveling. Being able to grow a company working with our amazing team and clients is better than any career I could have envisioned for myself.

What’s the best thing about your role today, what inspires your work? Conversely, what are some of the biggest challenges you have to overcome?

I love the strategy and constant adaptation required in leading an organization in the health care industry and knowing that the work we do matters to physicians and their patients. Our people, the clients we serve, and culture truly set our company apart, and I am so proud to be a part of that momentum. It inspires me daily.

My greatest challenge is maintaining profitability and service delivery in a market where prices continue to drive down. Physicians and those who provide services to them are one of the few industries not receiving adjustments for inflation, instead receiving lower reimbursement with increased performance requirements every year. This requires us all to be more flexible, innovative, and set higher performance expectations to achieve the same results.

Looking back, what key piece of advice would you give your younger self going through education and your early career?

Commit to excellence, keep your standards high, and do so with humility - learn to apologize honestly, take the responsibility swiftly, and give the credit freely. Growth and comfort can’t ride the same horse, so set the goals that you don’t know how to achieve yet. Keep a bias for action and learn to evaluate quickly, make decisions, take continuous action to get closer to goals, and pivot when needed.



If you don't change, you're going to like irrelevance even less.



Are there any specific areas of radiology business you think will be completely transformed by AI?

I doubt there will be any areas in business that are not completely transformed by AI in the long run. We have already seen great progress in the areas of radiologist efficiency, patient registration, coding automation, and patient engagement strategy. We continue to see increased activity in the automation of claims management, patient scheduling, and disease detection such as heart disease evaluation. An area that I hope to see completely transformed by AI is the prior authorization process which causes delays in patient care and serious health impacts, in addition to the burdens on providers and their staff. Clinically-driven AI can be leveraged to cut through the red tape and approve access to care more seamlessly.

In radiology in particular, the key will be to keep up with the need. If we can get radiologists to be 10% more efficient through AI, but salaries are costing 20% more and there is a radiologist shortage of 15%, this does not add up.

What other technological innovations are exciting you at the moment?

I appreciate anything that reduces the administrative burdens that practices and many companies are facing. I am loving all the automated meeting software out there, Fathom AI is one we're using right now for note taking, meeting documentation, and task assignment. If we can employ tools that can help get us 80% of the way there in any area of our work, it allows us to spend more time refining that 20% for a more effective result.

In the RCM world specifically, intelligence to respond to payor and patient behavior and drive outreach and collection activities more strategically continues to be something exciting. These outreaches should no longer be a linear process and rather than simply automating actions or throwing more people at individual claim activities, practices need to be very strategic about what they are doing to maximize revenue.

How can radiology practices stay relevant during this ongoing and increasingly complex era of change?

A favorite quote is "if you don't change, you're going to like irrelevance even

less," and it applies the most in times like these. Our administrative and clinical landscapes are complex at best, and unsustainable if we do not keep evolving. Practices must embrace new technologies to become more efficient in reading turnaround times and quality, and ensure they are capturing all opportunities to improve revenue and thoughtfully reduce their costs. Even with factors we don't control in reimbursement and administrative burdens being added to practices, we can participate in advocating for change where we can through organizations like RBMA and RPA, as we continue to identify new revenue streams. The practices I see thriving are no different than the other businesses thriving today - continued adaptability, taking actions to grow, forward thinking strategy applied to patient/customer engagement, demonstrating value in hospital partnerships, and being willing to embrace new ways to grow their clinical practice by working with others.

You are currently also serving on the RBMA Board - has volunteering had an impact on your role and career?

My time in RBMA has had a profound and humbling impact - beginning 20 years ago, new to Radiology as a Director in a large group of imaging centers. Each experience as member, chapter volunteer, chapter president, advisory board, education committee has shaped my time in the business of radiology for the better. RBMA members are some of the most knowledgeable experts I have worked with in the healthcare industry, always chasing improvement and willing to share, mentor, and lift one another up. Being on the RBMA board is a true privilege that I see as an opportunity to continue to give back and drive progress through sharing.

Time to end with our customary fun question! If you were trapped on a desert island with three other people (excluding friends and family), who would they be and why?

Sheldon Cooper from the Big Bang Theory - a genius with an eidetic memory - if he can't help me escape the island, he'd at least have fun facts to keep me entertained. Someone who will help me survive - Les Stroud from the show, Survivor Man. And if I can't bring my husband with me, then I'll need someone to keep me laughing - Adam Sandler.

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