March 2003 Editorial

Thinking Ahead of the Box

By now, everyone is familiar with the often hackneyed expression, "think outside of the box." This important concept reminds us that we often need to change the paradigm of how we practice. This is accomplished by finding unique solutions to problems by thinking unconventionally.

We'd like to suggest that to truly maximize the benefits of this strategy; you need to think ahead as well. This means changing your mindset so that you begin to anticipate future challenges instead of merely reacting to them in real-time.

To effectively optimize this technique, you should first write down your future goals. Where do you want your practice to be in five years? In ten years?

Once you've set your goals, you should be able to visualize what it will take to reach them. For example, if your goal is to double the size of your practice in five years, you'll soon realize that you'll probably need a larger office, more staff, etc. You'll also need to work more hours or hire an associate or two as well as implement a marketing plan.

It's also essential that the podiatric profession also think ahead of the box. Project 2000 has passed, so the logical question arises, "where is Project 2010 or Project 2020?" Are we simply going to continue to fight today's battles of reimbursement and managed care or will we plan for the yet unseen challenges? Will we continue to struggle to have our degree included in new laws or will we change our degree to the universally accepted MD or DO degree? Will we try to go it alone as the APMA or will we push for the APMA to be a component of the potent AMA?

Thinking ahead of the box means taking acceptable risks to obtain achievable benefits. It's time to let podiatry's leadership know that you support these visionary changes for the future of the profession. What's your vision for podiatric medicine in 2020? Send it to us at bblock@prodigy.net by April 15, 2003. We will be awarding a one-week Windjammer Caribbean Cruise to the best entry.