

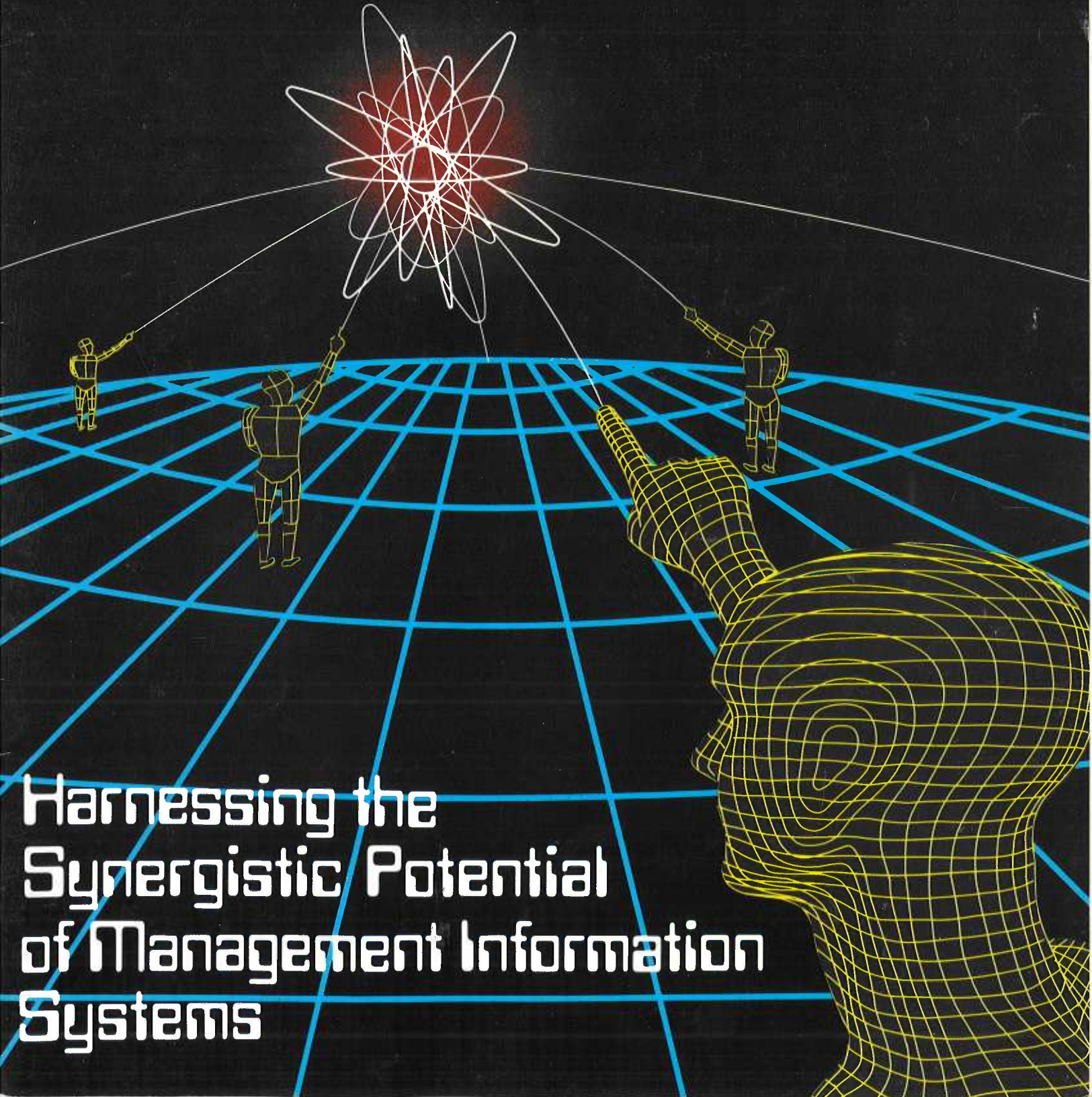
EAP ASSOCIATION

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EDITOR'S COMMENT

TO MOST PEOPLE, the term management information system (MIS) evokes images of computers, software disks, electrical cables and the like. Therein lie both the components and technology of MIS. But functionally, an MIS is an extension of the human mind and limbs. The computer hardware and software of MIS enhance the means by which people compile data and communicate with one another.

This month's cover, and the title of this Editor's Comment, illustrate one of the practical applications of MIS—enabling people dispersed geographically to work together. MISs are also valuable to EAP professionals in the way they can assimilate the various elements of an EAP operation—central administration, counselors, assessors who are on retainer, benefits and human resources managers, treatment providers and other community resources, third-party administrators, and so forth. An MIS can also analyze program performance. In an integrated EAP-managed behavioral health care program, it can be the *pièce de résistance* that determines program capabilities. Ironically, it can be both a program's costliest investment and greatest money saver. For these reasons, an MIS is potentially the tail that wags the dog.

Our cover includes an extensive checklist of factors to help EAP professionals determine their MIS needs and

MIS. Multiple Interface Sites.

evaluate MIS vendors. Once those determinations have been made, our marketplace guide featuring 14 vendors of EAP and/or managed care software

should come in handy.

EAPA's STANDARDS, PART 2 is now available for consumption by EAP professionals. It bears the subtitle "Professional Guidelines" and breathes life into the documentary-style information found in EAPA's original Standards for Employee Assistance Programs, published in 1990. Part 2 describes *essential* and *recommended* components of EAP services and gives examples. EAPA continues to provide leadership in defining EAP practice, and the Standards—Part 2 provides the latest evidence. Please see page 24 for ordering information.

EAPA PUBLICATIONS like the Standards and managed care monograph (part 2 of the latter is expected soon) form the operational scaffolding for EAP practice. Month-to-month coverage in the *Exchange*, such as this month's features on MIS, provide some of the bricks and mortar for everyday application.

Rudy M. Yandrick

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



page 8



page 13



page 16



page 24

COVER FEATURES

13

Synergism: An MIS can help EAPs and integrated EAP-managed care programs achieve their full potential

14

A checklist for identifying your MIS needs and choosing a vendor

based on information provided by Larry Earle, Jack Erfurt and Tom Amaral

16

What's out there?

a marketplace guide, featuring product and service providers

OF SPECIAL INTEREST

6

Meet the Nominating Committee for EAPA's fall elections

7

National Conference will include new program features

11

Towers Perrin Surveys companies on Workforce 2000 changes

24

Offer to purchase EAPA's Standards—Part 2, the Professional Guidelines

DEPARTMENTS

3

Editor's Comment

5

From the C.O.O.

8

Regions and Chapters

10

Update on Certification

26

Film Reviews

28

Public Policy

30

EAP InfoTracks

33

News From the Outside

34

Conferences and Workshops

34

Index of Advertisers

FROM THE C.O.O.

Strategic Planning: Board to Take "Bull by Horns"

by Michael L. Benjamin
EAPA Chief Operating Officer

Although there has been considerable discussion regarding strategic planning within the association, the production and implementation of such a strategic document or plan remains elusive. However, next month the EAPA Board of Directors will "take the bull by the horns" and finalize EAPA's strategic plan.

Why strategic planning for EAPA? First, at the 19th Annual Conference, President Daniel Lanier identified "development and long-range strategic planning" as one of the five priorities of his administration for 1990-92. Second, from my perspective, effective and worthwhile strategic planning is absolutely essential and, third, planning saves time, helps to get the job done, and will allow EAPA to change and stay ahead of the curve in an ever-changing environment. As Brad Googins, one of the cochairs of the Strategic Planning Committee, recently stated: "Strategic planning is the vehicle that allows EAPs to hang on to what is the core value of EAP, what is uniquely EAP, and at the same time remain responsive to the changing environment around us." He goes further and states, "Who are we (EAPA) and what do we stand for? We need to get better and to position ourselves according to the changes that are taking place."

Strategic planning is especially critical in volatile economic times where downsizing is common; where demographic changes (more women, more people of color, diversity issues) are impacting the workplace; where EAPs have the potential of being part of national health care reform in this current legislative season; and where we're in a highly regulatory climate relative to DoD, DoT, utilization review, and other regulatory issues.

The question becomes, how do we position EAPA to deal with these changes? In my work with organiza-

"...(strategic) planning saves time, helps to get the job done, and will allow EAPA to change and stay ahead of the curve in an ever-changing environment."

tions, I have strongly urged that the strategic plan be a "living" document which sets in motion the association's strategic agenda for the year ahead. Based on input from the Board and membership and at a committee meeting in January, Brad and Paul Sherman (the other cochair) drafted a working document which contains an articulated mission statement and five basic goals. The draft EAPA mission statement is this:

To be the authoritative voice of the employee assistance program field through the promotion of the highest standards of practice and continuing development of EAP Professionals."

The five EAPA goals that would address the mission statement are:

- **Professional Ethics and Standards**—to foster the highest standards of ethical practice;

- **Professional Development**—to augment the professional competency and qualifications of EAPA members;

- **Research and Information**—to collect, interpret and effectively disseminate information and sponsor research on conditions affecting the profession;

- **Promotion of EAP Contributions**—to provide leadership in promoting the awareness of EAPs as a profession and supporting the contributions of Employee Assistance Programs and;

- **Organizational Effectiveness**—to enhance the organizational structure which would strengthen EAPA's capacity to achieve the association's mission and goals.

At the May 16-18 Board meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, Board members and key staff will take two days out of the three to discuss the issues, finalize goals and produce objectives. With such a document in hand, staff will be able to establish action plans which then will be converted into a strategic document that will serve as a management tool for EAPA staff.

The bottom line to planning in EAPA is to give leadership a clear direction as to where we're heading and to provide a framework for addressing the important issues that affect our membership on a daily basis.

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