

Ten Questions With ...

Paul Coss



Paul Coss is vice president of business development at Respiratory Motion, Inc., and principal at Coss Associates—a healthcare consulting firm. He also was recently named vice president of the Healthcare Technology Foundation, where he had been a member of the board for several years.

A recent addition to the AAMI Wireless Strategy Task Force, Coss began his career as a critical care nurse and then spent many years at Philips Healthcare, where he served as the telemetry product manager and later as the director of marketing for critical care.

What drew you into the healthcare marketing field?

After so many years of working with medical equipment on the clinical side, I felt I had an important perspective to add to medical device design and marketing.

What was a key takeaway from your days as a critical care nurse?

The healthcare industry needs to focus on predictive systems. Clinicians need to identify changes in a patient's condition earlier so they can intervene more quickly.

What excites you most about your current work?

I work with a number of companies and organizations seeking to make substantial changes to improve patient outcomes—both in the United States and abroad. I am seeing a convergence of interest in using smart systems to improve the delivery of care. Analytics and closed-loop systems show great promise.

Who in your life has influenced you the most, and how did they do it?

Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein—two authors of science fiction—affected my vision of the world and what it could be profoundly. On a personal and professional level, I have been influenced by many of the amazing people working in healthcare.

How has your experience as a firefighter served you in the workplace?

In our fire department, we used pagers to notify us when there was an alarm. We used to say that when the pagers went off, we would forget half of what we knew, and that if a real fire happened, we would forget the

other half. The takeaway for work settings is that our actions need to be deeply ingrained by good training and understanding of roles and responsibilities; they need to become muscle memory. Designing systems and monitors to be easy to use and intuitive in an emergency has been a vital element of the projects with which I have been involved.

What has been the proudest moment of your career?

My time as a nurse manager in an intensive care unit, working with a team of caregivers and support staff. It really was the best of times. More recently, I had the opportunity to work with a multidisciplinary team and the Federal Communications Commission to get new spectrum allocated to medical body area networks (MBANs). It was an amazing team and a fascinating experience. And the MBANs were approved.

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

I was on a game show once, called Think Twice. It was a lot of fun and more work than I expected.

What's one activity outside of work that you enjoy?

Scuba diving.

If you could try out any job for a day, what would you like to try?

I would like to go into space as an astronaut or be a Grand Prix driver.

What is your philosophy in 10 words or less?

Don't take yourself too seriously. Be sure to laugh. ■