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Regulatory agenda at HRP

The Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) is the regulatory body for HR management in Ontario, by virtue of the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario Act, 1990.

At its essence, this act is a deal between the HRP and the province of Ontario that goes something like this: "You recognize us as a profession and give us the statutory power to regulate the profession and we will ensure, on your behalf, HR management professionals are competent and act in an ethical manner."

This is not a unique deal because it is, in its essence, the same deal all provinces strike with self-regulating professions.

The desire to become, and be accepted, as true professionals has been a deep, underlying driver for HR professionals from the beginning. HRP itself is an expression of that desire and a vehicle to make it happen.

As a result of the act, HRP wears two hats — it is both a professional association and regulatory body. The agenda of the regulatory organization within HRP is to fulfill the deal the association made with the province in 1990. The overarching objective of the regulatory organization is to protect the public by ensuring HR management professionals are competent and act ethically. A second objective is to move the profession forward along the path of professionalization.

To accomplish these two objectives, the regulatory organization has developed a three-pronged approach:

- Develop awareness and clarity around the whole concept of professional regulation in HR management, both within the profession and with the public.
- Foster a sense of ownership, responsibility and accountability around regulatory matters on behalf of all members of the profession.
- Move forward with the continued professionalization of HR management in Ontario.

Regulation is more than just a matter of granting the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation. It also involves all the other activities necessary to ensure HR management professionals are competent and act in an ethical manner, such as the regulation of professional conduct and the discipline of members. In addition, regulatory bodies often engage in other activities that support this core mandate such as efforts to educate members and the public about the



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workings of regulation.

HRP considers self-regulation an achievement the profession should be proud of; but with it comes responsibility and accountability. Effective regulation is not just a "nice thing to do." Our ability to regulate our own profession and to maintain our independence vis-à-vis other professions depends on not only being effective regulators but also being seen as effective regulators of the HR management profession. A lot rides on our ability to regulate ourselves effectively.

The first prong of our three-pronged approach is communication and education around the regulatory framework for HR management. The general level of understanding of this framework among members is not what it should be. There are many misconceptions and confusions about what professional self-regulation is and how it works. For instance, many HR management professionals in Ontario are surprised to find out HR is indeed a regulated profession in Ontario and the HRP is its regulatory body. HRP has stepped up its "communicate and educate" activities as it pertains to its role as a professional regulator, especially among students and new entrants to the profession.

Communication and education about our regulatory mandate and activities must include the public as well. The whole regulatory organization within HRP was created first and foremost to protect the public. In order to gain statutory recognition, HRP agreed to serve the public interest in matters of professional regulation. A regulatory body is not there to serve the members of the profession (at least not directly), but to serve the public. Regulation is not a service that is provided to members but to the pub-

lic. The public needs to be made aware of how the regulatory organization serves their interests and how they can engage it.

As the professional regulatory body, HRP is responsible for the protection of the privacy of all individuals involved in regulatory processes. Not long ago, HRP adopted a comprehensive privacy policy to protect the privacy of members and reviewed its regulatory processes to ensure they are in line with the privacy policy. HRP will soon launch a new online register, making it more easily accessible to members of the public as required by the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario Act, 1990. Soon, there will be more information on HRP's website designed to help members of the public understand and access, as needed, our regulatory processes.

Finally, HRP is committed to moving forward in the process of professionalization. Although entry into the profession is often the first order of business for a regulated profession, as a profession matures, more attention is directed to regulating professional behaviour and effective discipline processes. Along these lines, HRP has set up a task force to develop rules of professional conduct.

In 2006, Ontario passed the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act (FARPA). FARPA requires that certain professional regulatory bodies in Ontario adopt registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair. Although HR management is not one of the regulated professions to which FARPA applies at this time, HRP has made the commitment to becoming FARPA-compliant.

It is important to remember that although regulation is done in the interest of the public, self-regulation is in our enlightened self-interest. There are advantages that accrue from being members of a regulated profession. But this comes at a price of effective self-regulation.

On the other hand, if we don't regulate ourselves, somebody else will. At some time in the future, if HRP were ever to go back to the province to ask for additional regulatory powers, the first thing the province would likely ask is: "How well did you do with the regulatory powers you were entrusted with so far?" We want to make sure there is no doubt HRP is fully accountable for its regulatory responsibilities.

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