

## 'Status quo' not a bad thing in B.C.

**T**his will be a year of mixed emotions for Simon Evans, CEO of the Vancouver-based British Columbia Human Resources Association (BC HRMA) — he's retiring in June after 10 years at the helm of the 5,500-member group.

He's "absolutely" looking forward to the change and pleased he'll be passing the torch to a new leader with the association sitting on solid ground. Despite the fact B.C.'s economy has had its challenges and membership growth has been relatively flat, the financial books are strong, says Evans.

The association has seen dramatic growth in its student membership — going from about 50 to 900 over the last several years — but some of those individuals don't retain their membership because they don't stay in HR, he says.

The association is also looking at the issue of segmentation and

whether different groups are satisfied with their membership.

"Are they getting fulfillment for themselves or do we need to adjust our offerings to them, whether that's content, professional development or current affairs — or is it something else? Do they want different types of sessions, are they getting the service they want from the field offices we have? Just to make sure we're meeting the needs of members by segmentation."

Overall, members seem pretty happy with the association, giving it an average score of seven out of 10 in the annual membership survey (1,458 members responded in 2013). The range has always been between 75 and 85 per cent, says Evans.

"We find that you get to a point where you can't really do much more without spending a whole bunch more money or investing differently," he said.

"I hate using the word 'status

quo,' but it's a good status quo at the moment."

### Key areas of growth

There are three key areas of growth where members would like BC HRMA to focus its efforts, according to the survey:

- Be the voice of the HR profession by providing the news media with information about employment issues.
- Focus on practices, trends and statistics.
- Provide a range of prices for professional development.

In 2013, BC HRMA also continued to deepen its relationship with the provincial government, various provincial MLAs and members of the opposition. The association hosts a government relations roundtable with guests from various levels of the provincial government.

And having hired a public relations firm and an ad firm in 2012, BC HRMA's rebranding will be



## Simon Evans, CEO, BC HRMA

unveiled in 2014, probably at the annual conference in April.

The association is also starting to get more serious about the question of self-regulation. It's a learning curve and while there's desire among membership, the costs still have to be investigated, says Evans.

"There's a lot of legwork to be done and we know only too well from (the Human Resources Professionals Association in Ontario) how many kicks at the can they had to take, so it's not a quick run."

BC HRMA is also looking into the possibility of an HR student competition and could join up with the Human Resources Institute of Alberta (HRIA), which just held its first student competition in March.

The heads of the associations for Ontario, Alberta and B.C. meet every few months to discuss such projects, says Evans.



As for the HR Metrics Service, the B.C. association is adjusting how these numbers are presented to employers, he says. At first, they were more blanket metrics, but now many companies are really looking to focus in on just a few metrics.

"We're trying to make it so they don't have to buy the whole enchilada and just a section of it."