#13 Professional regulation comes as a bundle

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Professional regulation is a ‘package deal’ or bundle. When the *Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2013*, was passed, HRPA bought into the ‘professional regulation bundle.’ The bundle includes title protection for Human Resources professionals, but this is only part of the package or bundle—there is much more to it than that.

The self-regulation bundle also includes the requirement to establish, maintain, develop and enforce standards of qualification, standards of practice, standards of professional ethics, and standards of knowledge, skill and proficiency, the requirement to establish and maintain fair and impartial complaint and discipline processes, the requirement to maintain a public register, and so on. These are all part of a package deal.

But the most important part of the professional regulation bundle, and the part that pulls it all together, is the public protection mandate. The powers of professional regulation are bundled with a public protection mandate. A public protection mandate is not only a commitment to using such powers in the public interest, it is a commitment to make the promotion and protection of the public the core mission of the organization. The powers of regulation are not an add-on part or feature, they are a part of an integral bundle which marries regulatory powers with a regulatory mission. What happened with the passage of the *Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2013*, is not so much that the Ontario Legislature granted HRPA additional powers of regulation but that the Ontario Legislature gave HRPA a regulatory mission and consequently the powers to carry it out. The powers cannot be separated from the mission.
It can be misleading to think of certain regulatory powers outside the context of the bundle. For instance, the ‘designation recognizing’ part should not be extracted from the rest of the regulatory bundle. Governments do not ‘recognize designations’ they regulate the practice of certain occupations either directly or by establishing self-regulating bodies. Designations are part of the requirement to establish, maintain, develop and enforce standards of qualification. By providing statutory protection to professional titles, the government is not so much ‘recognizing designations’ but enabling a component among others of the regulatory framework.

So we need to think ‘bundle’ rather than ‘parts.’ So we need to think ‘bundle’ rather than ‘parts.’ We can’t pick and choose the parts we like, such as title protection and designations, and disregard the rest, such as the duty to promote and protect the public interest by governing and regulating our members and firms.