#18 The commitment to professional regulation continuum

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As a profession that is at the beginning of a transition from unregulated profession to regulated profession, it is to be expected that not everyone would be on board. There are a number of models that describe the range of attitudes or behaviours towards change. These models describe a continuum that goes from resistant at one end to committed at the other. One model seemed particularly useful. The model is the commitment continuum model by developed by Jeff Janson. The model was first elaborated in the context of athletics but seemed quite work quite well in this context as well.

The model describes six levels of commitment—from resistant to compelled. There is actually a seventh level of sorts labeled obsessed, but let’s leave that one aside for now. Let’s see how this continuum might apply to the range of attitudes and behaviours Human Resources professionals may have towards the regulation of Human Resources professionals.

Resistant

“Professional regulation for Human Resources is a really bad idea as it takes away from focusing on the member.” “The Association has no business policing its members.”

Reluctant

“I really don’t have time for any of this. I have more important things to do. I don’t see any value in this regulation stuff anyway. There is already too much focus on regulation already.”

Existent

“I’m OK with the idea of being a regulated profession, as long as it doesn’t get in the way of anything I am doing.”

Compliant

“Just be clear about what you want me to do and I’ll do it.”

Committed

“I believe that becoming a regulated profession was the right thing to do, and I fully support it.”

Compelled

“I think that becoming a regulated profession is the most important thing to happen to the profession and it deserves my full support.”


Resistant

These are members that are dead set against professional regulation for Human Resources professionals. These members do not believe that Human Resources professionals need to be or should be regulated. These members believe that none of HRPA’s resources should be put towards the
promotion and protection of the public interest and should be entirely devoted to serving the interests of members. These members are openly defiant of HRPA’s regulatory authority and will openly state that they will not comply with specific requirements as set out in the Act or By-laws.

Reluctant

These are members that believe that professional regulation should exist but that it should be only a small part of what HRPA does—in any case, it should be secondary to serving the members interests. These members do not think of HRPA as a legitimate professional regulatory body. These members do not believe that HRPA should be proactive in promoting and protecting the public interest.

Existent

These are members that do not care or pay attention to professional regulation. These members are interested in designations and professional titles but that is about it. These members do not respect HRPA as a professional regulatory body but think of it as a service provider.

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Compliant

These are members that follow the rules. These members are not truly engaged in professional regulation but they are not antagonistic to it either. Compliant members obey the letter of the rules, but cannot be counted on to go beyond this.

Committed

These are members that are supportive of regulation for Human Resources professionals. These members have an understanding of what professional regulation is and what its role is in the evolution of the profession. These members understand professional regulation to be the core mandate of the HRPA.

Compelled

These are members who are champions of regulation for Human Resources professionals. These members are public in their support for professional regulation for Human Resources professionals and take an active part in getting the word out to others. These members will appear on social media with their support for regulation.

Of course, it’s a matter of proportions. All professions have members at each of these points in the continuum. It may also be that the continuum of commitment plays out differently for compulsory versus voluntary professions. In compulsory professions, all practitioners must belong to the professional regulatory body. The compulsory nature of membership may increase the number of members who may not be committed to regulation but who nonetheless belong to the professional regulatory body because they have to. One would expect that voluntary professions would have fewer resistant members because these individuals would simply not become members of the professional regulatory body. But these are expectations that one may have of more mature professions.
Nonetheless, the notion of a continuum of commitment to professional regulation seems useful in understanding some of the issues in the transition from unregulated profession to regulated profession.