



Human Resources  
Professionals  
Association

## Answers to questions from webinar *HRPA's Metastrategy*

June 1, 2017

**Q: Does the HRP A maintain a list of changes it has implemented since 2013 that would likely impact an HR professionals practice?**

A: No, but that is a really good idea that we will try to implement.

**Q: Not really a question, but from my observations the Ontario College of Trades has also had struggles too.**

A: Indeed. Being an effective professional regulatory body is not easy.

**Q: The cost of HRP A membership is quite high when many of us pay this cost ourselves, and not the companies. Will HRP A consider lowering this cost?**

A: Yes, but we have to be careful here. When HRP A accepted the challenge of self-regulation, it agreed to do a number of things. As part of membership, members agree to financially support professional regulation.

This issue came up recently with the professional regulatory body for engineers in Quebec. As fall-out from the Charbonneau Commission, the professional regulatory body for engineers in Quebec came under close scrutiny. The oversight body for professional regulators in Quebec (there is no equivalent body in Ontario), appointed two monitors to look into the matter. In their report, the monitors noted that the membership dues for the professional regulatory body for engineers in Quebec were *too low*, and that such low membership dues hindered the professional regulatory body's ability to deliver on its public protection mandate. In response to the report, the Government of Quebec put the professional regulatory body for engineers in Quebec under trusteeship.

Although it is difficult to calculate exact figures, it should also be noted that only a small proportion

of membership dues is spent on professional regulation.

**Q: *It may be helpful to clarify when professional liability insurance is required.***

A: The whole of section 17 of our By-laws is dedicated to the professional liability insurance. For a complete answer to your question, please refer to the By-laws.

Section 17 of our By-laws states:

Any Member, Student or Firm, providing Human Resources services to the public either on a full-time, part-time, or occasional basis and whether for remuneration or *pro bono* shall:

- (a) maintain professional liability insurance; and
- (b) provide the Registrar with satisfactory proof of such insurance in the form of a copy of the insurance certificate. Acceptance of the copy of the insurance certificate by the Association as proof that the Member, Student or Firm maintains professional liability insurance shall not constitute approval of the insurance policy itself.

**Q: *Thank you for this session. As a fairly new HRPAs member, it is IMPORTANT to have this knowledge. However, why do I feel that the Office of the HRPAs is primarily focused on a 'regulatory' role and I haven't seen much on the actual contributions we make to Organizations, Society et al !!***

A: There is no need to put the word *regulatory* in quotation marks—HRPA is a professional regulatory body. The reason why HRPAs Office of the Registrar is focused on professional regulation is that professional regulation is our core mandate under law. Our core mandate is to promote and protect the public interest by governing and regulating the practice of members and firms.

**Q: *So what can we do as HR Professionals to really help this along?***

A: The webinar listed the following:

1. Learn more about topics such as the professions, professionalism, and professionalization
2. Participate in the governance of HRPAs
3. As a chapter volunteer, from time to time, ask yourself '*how is what we are doing contributing to the professionalization of HR?*'
4. Read about other professions in the media when those articles appear (the Toronto Star has really taken this on).
5. From time to time, ask yourself '*am I thinking and acting like a regulated professional?*'

6. Take the time to read regulatory information such as the *Regulatory Affairs* newsletter
7. Volunteer for one of HRPAs regulatory committees
8. As relevant, comply with all requirements (e.g., professional liability insurance, requirement to notify Registrar of bankruptcies and insolvency events)

Those are just our ideas, any other suggestions welcome.

***Q: Instead of worrying about regional differences, what efforts are being made to develop a continental or international standard? In alignment with CIPD or SHRM?***

A: Developing an international standard for Human Resources is a tall order, but the initiative is underway and HRPAs is playing a leadership role in this initiative. HRPAs is leading an international working group under the auspices of the International Standards Organization (ISO) to develop a harmonized competency framework for Human Resource professionals. This is an auspicious start. In time, other standards such as standards of qualification, standards of practice, and standards of professional ethics may be considered.

***Q: Why has the risk to the strategy from the Chartered HR Profession not been recognized?***

A: The HRPAs strategy is not inconsistent with other provincial HR associations pursuing and achieving self-regulation. That other Human Resources associations achieve self-regulation is not seen as a risk to the professionalization metastrategy.

***Q: It is like the Police talking mainly about policing rather than taking the discourse to the level of civic engagement!!***

A: I take that 'civic engagement' refers to engaging the public. Indeed, engaging the public is essential to the professionalization strategy. In the end, it is the public that effectively grants 'profession' status to an occupation. The interesting thing is that these are linked. Consider the various times where professional regulators make it to the news. What the public cares about is that professionals are effectively regulated by their professional regulatory bodies. What makes it to the news are 'regulatory failures' of one kind or another. We need to regulate ourselves effectively, and be seen to regulate ourselves effectively, in order to maintain public confidence in the profession.

***Q: Can you give us some examples of similar challenges other newly regulated professions are having in line with HRPAs challenges***

A: The key challenge is that members are just not used to being accountable to a professional regulatory body. There are all sorts of compliance issues. Members feel that their professional regulatory body has no business in telling them how to practice their profession (whereas the enabling legislation requires the professional regulatory body to set practice standards when this is necessary or beneficial in protecting the public. Members don't respect the authority of their professional regulatory body, they do not understand that regulatory policies and decisions have the force of law.

Also, in newly regulated professions the professional regulatory body has to 'come up to speed' in terms of policies, processes, and procedures and in terms of the skills of the various committees that make regulatory decisions.

**Q: *What should/could be done to increase the commitment level of HRPAs members to professionalization?***

A: Members need to understand how the whole self-regulation deal works.

We need to stop thinking of ourselves and think of the public interest, or as it has been put elsewhere we need to move from a narrow self-interest to an enlightened self-interest. A narrow self-interest perspective will kill self-regulation. That is just not how the whole idea of self-regulation works. Self-regulation is an exceptional arrangement. The only reason why governments will delegate regulatory authority to professional regulatory bodies is because they trust such bodies to put the public interest ahead of self-interest because they are composed of *professionals*.

We need to fully accept the costs and obligations of self-regulation. The costs and obligations of self-regulation and the benefits of self-regulation are like two sides of a coin. Expecting to get the benefits of self-regulation without accepting the costs and obligations of self-regulation just won't work.

We need to accept that there are risks to the public stemming from the practice of Human Resources. The only reason why governments delegate self-regulatory authority is that they believe there are significant risks to the public that need to be managed.

**Q: *Do regulated professional bodies normally have their member service operations co-housed, or, break off for better clarity?***

A: Most professions in Ontario have separate organizations to regulate the profession (serve the public) and to provide member services (serve the members). This is because of the inherent conflicts in serving two different masters. It is HRPAs position that it is both the professional association and the professional regulatory body for the Human Resources profession in Ontario and that any potential conflict of interest can be managed by having internal firewalls between those

functions that serve the public and those that serve the members.

**Q: *Suggestion - would be great to have a self-diagnostic that members could complete to determine if their behaviour and beliefs align with the regulatory expectations***

A: Yes, indeed many professions have such a tool as part of their quality assurance or continuing professional development process. We are looking into this.

**Q: *Also, in the profession of veterinarian they are professionals, but follow metastrat.***

A: The professionalization metastrategy is less of an issue for established professions as they have already arrived. The challenge for established professions is complacency. Maintaining high standards of professionalism requires on-going vigilance.

**Q: *Does the board of the HRPAs have thoughts regarding our long term goals as a professional regulatory body? Do they already have an idea of the 'end goal'?***

A: Interesting question. In her address at the 2017 Annual General Meeting, outgoing Chair Brenda Clark's comment focused on the journey of professionalization of which establishing a professional regulatory body is an important part. The end goal is to become a full-fledged profession in every respect governed and regulated by a strong and respected professional regulatory body.

**Q: *Have we considered focus groups or surveys to obtain feedback on the public's perception at this time?***

A: Yes we have. In fact, we are thinking of creating a 'public advisory committee' with this exact purpose in mind.

**Q: *Some have been in the news for misconduct.***

A: Indeed, the Toronto Star, especially, keeps a close eye on professional regulatory bodies. Indeed, there have been a number of situations where professional regulatory bodies have fallen short of the expectations of the public. If anything, the expectations put on professional regulatory bodies seem to be increasing. Fair enough. This means that, as a professional regulatory body, we need to be sensitive to the expectations of the public.

**Q: I note the CPA profession has spent significantly on public awareness and branding related to the benefits of their profession and the CPA designation which is also targeted at the members.**

A: Indeed, certified professional accountants are similar to Human Resources professionals in that accounting is regulated but unlicensed. Only 5% of Certified Professional Accountants are licensed to practice public accounting, the other 95% work in areas that are not licensed (that is why there are unlicensed and unregulated bookkeepers, tax preparers, financial planners, retirement planners, and so on).

There is nothing wrong in making the public aware of the difference between regulated and unregulated professionals.

**Q: After your comment that we are ahead of the SHRM, can we somehow develop a streamlined way for someone to get a faster certification if they are working in another community that is run by a different regulatory body from the HRP?**

A: This is a complicated matter. On the one hand, HRP does not want to put in place unnecessary hurdles or barriers to certification, on the other, HRP must maintain a consistent standard.

HRP's registration and certification processes have been thoroughly reviewed and assessed by the Office of the Fairness Commissioner. The assessment of the Office of the Fairness Commissioner is available online from the Office of the Fairness Commissioner website:

[http://www.fairnesscommissioner.ca/index\\_en.php?page=professions/summary\\_human\\_resources\\_professional\\_association\\_2016](http://www.fairnesscommissioner.ca/index_en.php?page=professions/summary_human_resources_professional_association_2016)

HRP received a stellar review from the Office of the Fairness Commissioner. This means that HRP has done an exceptional job of balancing accessibility of registration and certification with the maintenance of standards.