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focus has to be on making things better for our members." A concrete example of that is a new professional development kit called PD in a Box. It's a package of workshop material designed so anyone can give a two-hour presentation on one of 10 HR topics. The package includes a PowerPoint presentation, a facilitator's package, workbooks for participants, place cards, felt pens and evaluation forms.

"One of the challenges is we have chapters all over Ontario," said Greenhalgh. "Generally if we run some kind of professional development, the tendency is to have it in a big location because it gets better attendance. But because two-thirds of our members are outside Toronto, the question is how to provide professional development that chapters require, of an equal quality and calibre as that provided in Toronto?"

With PD in a Box, a local chapter can set up seminars for as few as five people, not have to worry about hiring expensive speakers from Toronto and still be able to deliver quality seminars.

Also in line with its new mission — "to be a thought leader" — the HRPPO has set up a new web portal called HRThoughtLeader.com. Greenhalgh described it as "the go-to

site for HR people, not just in Canada but worldwide."

The HRPPO has also ramped up its government advocacy role, particularly with the hiring of a full-time director answering to a committee dedicated to this function. Within the organization itself, the HRPPO has undergone a governance review — an 18-month process looking at "how the association governs itself, the role of various committees, their terms of reference and mandates and directions."

FLORENT FRANCOEUR

President-general director

Ordre des CHRA et CRIA



At the Ordre des CHRA et CRIA, Quebec's association for HR and industrial relations professions, promoting the value of the CHRP designation is at the top of the agenda for the next two years, said president-general director Florent Francoeur.

But unlike the case with other HR associations, the pitch isn't necessarily aimed at members. That's because out of 7,800 members, 6,800 already have the CHRP. The rest are in the process of obtaining the designation. Members must either have the CHRP designation or be working towards it.

Rather, the campaign to raise the profile of the HR professional designation is aimed at business people generally. Relying on research that said business leaders are more likely to watch Quebec's all-news cable le Réseau de l'Information (RDI) and the all-sports cable, le Réseau des Sports (RDS), the Ordre has been buying ad time on these networks to get out its message.

"We want to continue to emphasize the difference between someone who has a CHRP designation and someone who doesn't," said Francoeur. "What we say to the public at large is, 'If you do business with an HR professional, you should be doing business with a CHRP holder. If you are hiring an HR professional, you should be hiring a CHRP holder.'"

The raising of HR's profile also involves working with the government to contribute the profession's view on policy. Francoeur already sits on the Labour Standards Commission and the Pay Equity Commission and he's also representing the Ordre as the government consults the public on three ongoing files: a review of pay equity legislation, a program addressing work-life balance and a bill on self-employed workers.

"This allows us to voice to the government how pay equity is implemented, from the point of view of an HR professional, or if the government proposes changes to the law around work-life balance, how we as practitioners think these changes will affect organizations," said Francoeur. "We think that's an important role for us, and we're very active in this role."

MERRILL BRINTON

CEO

Saskatchewan Association of Human Resource Professionals



Having spent the last year-and-a-half working to group together the various HR associations in the province, the Saskatchewan Association of Human Resource Professionals (SAHRP) is now looking for an executive director to take charge. At 750 members, the group has reached a critical mass and a volunteer board is no longer effective.

There's a need for someone on the ground on a full-time basis who "we can rely on to follow through and do the research and kick us a bit when we need it," said Merrill Brinton, CEO of SAHRP and head of the Saskatchewan HR practice of consulting firm Meyers Norris Penny.

The mission "to promote and encourage leadership and expertise within HR management through provincial networks and developmental opportunities while supporting professional standards to influence organizational excellence" remains the same for the association. But, as a larger body, it now has the resources to bring

in either local expertise or someone outside the province who might be appropriate, he said. "We need to step up and do a lot more, from a leadership perspective, helping our members, who are very diverse."

The SAHRP is a CHRP granting body and currently about 40 per cent of members have the designation. Those, along with overall membership, are expected to grow by about 10 per cent, said Brinton.

The Saskatchewan association is also challenged with trying to figure out how, as a smaller organization, it can link nationally on the HR front, he said. "We're not a big player but we have a lot to contribute obviously and a lot to learn from other associations. We look to them for guidance and support as we move forward."

PATRICK CULHANE

President and CEO
Canadian Payroll Association



It pays to pay attention to payroll, said Patrick Culhane, president and CEO of the Canadian Payroll Association (CPA).

"First, consider the metrics of payroll in Canada. There are \$660 billion paid every year in wages and benefits by 1.4 million Canadian employers; \$200 billion in statutory remittances go to the provincial and federal governments; and \$77 billion is paid annually in retirement and health benefits. The numbers are staggering."

To help Canadian companies handle that heavy load, Culhane and the CPA have racked up some impressive metrics themselves. In the last seven years, since the CPA recruited Culhane, a chartered management accountant, it has more than doubled its membership to almost 13,000.

"We're non-profit but we're a profitable \$10 million-dollar-a-year organization. So we plow our financial resources back into additional services for members," said Culhane, acknowledging that for the CPA too it pays to pay attention to payroll.

The payoff for practitioners who take CPA courses is to learn, first and foremost, how to keep their companies in compliance with the gamut of federal and provincial payroll legislation. However, imparting knowledge of provincial labour or employment standards is also an important CPA aim.

"In larger organizations, payroll tends to report through HR but, in smaller ones, there often is no HR department," said Culhane. "There may be one payroll person who is also handling compliance with labour standards."

And ignorance of how to comply can be costly.

"Up until 2003, if you were late with your payroll remittance to the government, there was a 10-per-cent penalty. It was one of the most onerous penalties in our entire tax regime. However, we worked with the Canada Revenue Agency and did a comparison with the United States, the U.K. and Australia. So now we have a graduated penalty like them; three per cent if you are up to three days late, five per cent under five days, seven per cent under seven days, and then it moves to 10 per cent."

IRIS ALMEIDA-CÔTÉ

CEO
Canadian Pensions & Benefits Institute



Having been in Canada for 45 years, the Canadian Pensions & Benefits Institute (CPBI) is undergoing a major refurbishment. While it has a healthy membership of more than 3,000 and plenty of events, it has lacked a strategic business plan. That is all changing with the arrival of Iris Almeida-Côté, who assumed the newly created position of CEO in 2006. Formerly the director of policy, programs and planning at the Parliamentary Centre in Montreal, she has worked hard to transform the CPBI into a dynamic organization while, at the same time, getting back to basics.

The mandate and mission of

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