

Leadershift Article for People Talk

Anne Charette, CHRP, assumed the presidency of the Canadian Council of Human Resources Management Associations (CCHRA) in early October 2002, for a two year term. A Past President of the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario (HRPAO), Anne has over 20 years in recruitment and human resources, and is President of The Burke Group, her own HR consulting firm.

Anne is an active contributor to the HR profession and the community. She loves a challenge and forges ahead where others fade. Having completed the amalgamation of 28 separate chapters of HRPAO into one cohesive provincial body, she is turning her sites to the national leadership scene of Canada's HR profession.

Charette assumes her role at a critical juncture. The CCHRA is set to launch much-anticipated National Standards for human resources professionals in March 2003, creating a consistent portable Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation. We met over breakfast the day after her election to the CCHRA presidency.. .

What attracted you to yet another volunteer position after leading the largest provincial HR organization in the country?

"I truly couldn't imagine a more exciting time to be assuming leadership of our national association," she said. The future of the HR profession in Canada looks brighter than ever with the final pieces of enabling framework for National Standards completed by the CCHRA this weekend in Ottawa."

Why do you think the CHRP National standards are important?"

"I believe that this is a landmark moment for human resources professionals in this country", said Charette. "National standards will demonstrate that our specialized knowledge and demonstrated capabilities are critical success factors for Canadian business."

She added that National Standards for the CHRP will define what constitutes an HR professional in Canada. "The CHRP will be our trademark of excellence", she said.

Will the CHRP make any major difference for the average HR practitioner?

"It has already created an edge for HR professionals, according to the latest research in Ontario. The results of a survey of HRPAO members earlier this year, demonstrated considerable value of the CHRP to the individual career development of the HR practitioners who have it."

The survey, which had 678 respondents, was conducted by Monica Belcourt, PhD, CHRP, a HR Professor at York University, and Andrew Templer PhD, CHRP, a Professor at the University of Windsor. It indicated that CHRP's are more likely to be selected for HR positions since 65% of employers "required" or "preferred" a CHRP in their job specifications. Charette believes that this will grow with the reliability of a common standard across the country.

Not only do CHRP's have a better time in getting a job, they also have a significant edge in holding one. CHRP's surveyed had held jobs for an average of 4.5 years, while those without the designation had only 2.6 years of average job tenure.

"Even more significant are the financial returns" commented Charette. "The average current salary among those survey participants holding the CHRP designation was \$67,000, while those without the designation had an average salary of \$50,000. A similar earnings gap held across an individual's career history."

"As a recruiter, I am aware that the CHRP gives an important career edge in the minds of many stakeholders (managers, employees, applicants and the wider public). They need to rely on the HR practitioner for reliable and current advice. National Standards mean that the CHRP holder has been assessed for knowledge and experience in the profession, has signed a code of ethics, and maintains currency in the field through continuing studies, leadership, writing, research, conference and seminar participation, and management development".

As leader of the CCHRA, what do you see looming for the HR profession in Canada as you look ahead?

"The growth of HR as a profession is an evolving process. Over time, there are a number of steps I would like to see to enhance the value of the CHRP and the professional lives of its holders. These might include international agreements for portability and mobility, a national research center, scholarships and educational assistance, and national advocacy groups on emerging issues.

"And", she added in her typical pragmatic, personable approach, "it would be a bonus to recognize personal achievements in the HR profession through a national awards program and a truly national HR magazine. But first and foremost, it is essential to complete the effective launch of the National Standards for the profession".

If specialized knowledge and demonstrated capabilities are truly the critical success factors for Canadian business, the Canadian HR profession is in good hands. Charette's track record of strategic leadership and effective change is both provincial and national. She has the nation's confidence and support in tackling the challenges ahead for the Canadian HR profession.

Submitted by .

Joan Harrison, BComm, CHRP

Joan is a current Board Member of HRMA responsible for Professional Designation, a Past President of HRMA, and is serving her second term as Secretary on the executive of the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations.