

Human Resource Management as a profession in South Africa

by

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ABSTRACT

1 Introduction

The 2004 drafting and the 2006 revision of a proposed Bill (“The Human Resource Professions Act”) by the South African Board for Personnel Practice (SABPP) has initiated much discussion on the merits of regulating the Human Resource (HR) profession.

One of the key points raised in these debates, is whether in fact HR can be regarded as a profession. This is, in essence, the problem being addressed in this study. Losey (1997:147) unequivocally states that “*human resource management is a profession*”. Ulrich & Eichinger (1998:1) point out that “*HR must become more professional*”. Leading authors in the HR field (Armstrong 2000:23; Losey, Meisinger & Ulrich 2005:xix; Ulrich & Brockbank 2005:243) and various institutions (Harvard, Cornell, American Business Association) use the term “HR professionals” in their writings as a matter of course.

2 Purpose of the study

For the purpose of establishing whether human resources can be regarded as a profession, the following goals have been set:

2.1 The goal of the study is to firstly describe and document the historic development of professional human resources in South Africa with specific reference to the history of the establishment of the SABPP, as a contribution to professionalization of HR in South Africa.

2.2 To identify, secondly, the foundational principles or pillars of professionalism and the ethical professional conduct issues (including values) which are embraced by internationally recognised professions.

3 Research questions

The following research questions were considered:

- How did professionalism within HR emerge historically in the South African context?
- What are the foundational principles or pillars on which professionalism stand?
- What are the ethical professional conduct issues (including values) which are embraced by internationally recognised professions?
- What are the ethical professional conduct issues (including values) that should drive HR in South Africa?

To achieve these objectives the study progresses as follows:

- The study will firstly focus on the South African human resource (HR) environment. The history of the establishment of the South African Board for Personnel Practice (SABPP) as the standards body for HR in South Africa will be documented for the first time. The writer is in a unique position, having been the Registrar and CEO of the Board since 1989, to do this work. Permission has been obtained to access documents such as the minutes of meetings, newsletters and correspondence files. Interviews will be undertaken with some of the founding members who still recall the events. The Board was established in 1982 and recording this history from documents not in the public domain presents an opportunity to safeguard information that may otherwise be lost to the HR community. The current functions and focus of the SABPP are also recorded.
- Four professions, the legal, the engineering, the medical and the accounting professions were selected for more detailed examination, as they are internationally recognised and have been practised for millennia. Background information on current burning issues within these professions will be looked at and also their value systems and how their regulating bodies operate, both

locally and internationally. Their recognition of a specified body of knowledge as appropriate subject matter will be confirmed. The important elements of their professional values and ethics will be identified and will form the basis of the questionnaire that will be sent out.

- The next step will be to examine the way in which HR is positioned internationally in order to establish to what extent HR has been professionalised globally or may be moving towards professionalism. The history, levels and criteria, recognised body of knowledge and codes of conduct of HR in three countries will be examined, by looking at their main HR bodies. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in the UK, the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI) in the United States and the Canadian Council of HR Associations (CCHRA) have been selected for this purpose. The conduct issues and values addressed in their codes of conduct will be used in the questionnaire.

It is hoped that this study will support the process of professionalising human resources in South Africa and indeed, the regulation of the profession.

While this study covers many aspects of professionalism, its core focus is on the values and attitudes lying at the very heart of all major professions. Emerson once said (1917:96) *“What you **are** stands over you the while, and thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary.”* (own emphasis). Or a more contemporary quote from Elvis Presley: *“Values are like fingerprints. Nobody’s are the same, but you leave ‘em all over everything you do”* (Meisinger 2005:4).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1.1 Introduction

The 2004 drafting and the 2006 revision of a proposed Bill (“The Human Resource Professions Act”) by the South African Board for Personnel Practice (SABPP) has initiated much discussion on the merits of regulating the Human Resources (HR) profession.

One of the key points raised in these debates is whether in fact HR can be regarded as a profession. This is, in essence, the problem being addressed in this study. Losey (1997:147) unequivocally states that “*human resource management is a profession*”. Ulrich & Eichinger (1998:1) point out that “*HR must become more professional*”. Leading authors in the HR field (Armstrong 2000:23; Losey, Meisinger & Ulrich 2005:xix; Ulrich & Brockbank 2005:243) and various institutions (Harvard, Cornell, American Business Association) use the term “HR professionals” in their writings as a matter of course.

1.2 Background areas of impact and Problem Statement

The background of the research problem will be described in terms of the factors that impact on the basic premise being investigated, namely that human resource management can be regarded as a bona-fide profession.

1.2.1 The changing environment

This study is set against a backdrop of globalisation and a changing economic environment which have significant impact on the human resources field.

Hock (1999:5) elegantly encapsulates the changing environment and its impact on organisations and on people:

“The Industrial Age, hierarchical, command-and-control institutions that, over the past four hundred years, have grown to dominate our commercial, political, and social lives are increasingly irrelevant in the face of the exploding

diversity and complexity of society worldwide. They are failing, not only in the sense of collapse, but in the more common and pernicious form – organisations increasingly unable to achieve the purpose for which they were created, yet continuing to expand as they devour resources, decimate the earth, and demean humanity”.

Worldwide the old constructs are being questioned. According to Ungerer, Herholdt and Uys (2006:19) the ability of companies to sustain themselves over the long term is increasingly coming under threat in this era. Hock (1999:97) contends that the ideas of the past, although half destroyed, are still very powerful, and the ideas which are to replace them are still in process of formation. The modern age represents a period of transition and anarchy. Drucker (1995:1) postulates that in a period of upheaval, such as the one we are living in, change is the norm.

The focus has shifted from muscle power, machine power, and even electrical power to brainpower (Ungerer et al (2006:20). The authors conclude that the key resources have shifted to information, knowledge and creativity. Handy (1997:2) claims that organizations are whittling down to the core, outsourcing everything they can. He concludes that those core people will, by definition, be competent. This, incidentally, applies equally to the HR field.

This changing environment has pushed human resources to the frontline as never before. Losey et al (2005:55) point to the fact that the business world around us is continually changing, raising the bar for the HR professionals. According to a field study of future HR competency requirements undertaken by the Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies (CAHRS) at Cornell University (Blancero, Boroski & Dyer 1995:3), the volatile business environment and an increasing need to view employees as a major source of competitive advantage have caused many companies to rethink their human resource functions (Boroski, 1990; Dyer, 1993; Dyer & Blancero, 1992; Dyer & Holder, 1988; Dyer & Kochan, in press; Kochan & Dyer, 1993; McIntosh-Fletcher, 1990; Schuler, 1990; SHRM Foundation, 1994; Smith, Boroski, & Davis, 1992; Ulrich & Lake, 1990; Walterk, 1994).

Losey et al (2005:1) refers to the fact that human resource managers must accurately anticipate the future and plan appropriately – *“we affect more than mere designs, machines, sales, and numbers – we touch people’s lives. Almost never can we undo our mistakes”*.

Ulrich and Smallwood (2007:194) confirm the increasing significance of the role of human resources in a recent publication:

“Senior HR leaders who work as generalists, either for the entire company or for a major division of a company, play a key role in shaping, delivering, and sustaining a leadership brand.”

They describe the move to positions of influence citing Ulrich & Brockbank (2005) and Lawler, Boudreau & Mohrman (2006).

The professional standing of HR is under the spotlight worldwide. An example of this is the very recent formalisation of professional human resources standards in countries such as Canada and Germany, which is described in greater detail in Chapter 5.

There is an understanding that HR is evolving as work realities change globally. During recent visits of Chinese delegations to the SABPP, it became clear that while they currently come from a completely different paradigm with HR still very much a state dominated, administrative function, they are nevertheless sensitised to a changing environment in human resources and investigating what other countries are doing.

Three prominent writers in the HR field, Losey, Meisinger and Ulrich explore the issue of human resources as a profession in their book *“The Future of Human Resource Management”*. According to them (Losey et al 2005:409) the name changes occurring in this *“relatively new”* profession already give an indication of the shifts in responsibility from industrial relations to personnel to employee relations to human resource management and people management. The latest additions in this chain of titles are human capital and human assets. This is clearly

an evolving field that will continue to grow in importance as the world changes as Losey et al put it: *“in ways that put HR in the spotlight”*.

They argue therefore that the forces for change necessitate HR to respond by winning the loyalty of the talented and increasingly mobile employees. The human resource function should help organizations adapt to technological changes and needs to understand how to manage people and organizations in a global economy. Losey et al (2005:409) accordingly feel that human resources will increasingly become a profession in the spotlight and that organizations with effective HR systems win; those without them do not. *“HR professionals need to go beyond accepting or responding to change and anticipate, appreciate, and master change”*.

The World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA) Survey of Global HR Challenges Today, Yesterday and Tomorrow (2005:7) identifies the emerging HR competencies, citing the top three challenges today, globally, as change management (48%), leadership development (35%) and the measurement of HR effectiveness (27%).

This same survey anticipates the top three global challenges in three years will be organizational effectiveness (39%), leadership development (33%) and change management (28%).

It is clear that the changing environment impacts on the need for professionally practised human resources.

1.2.2 A climate of corruption

There is an increased awareness, both internationally as well as in South Africa of the necessity for ethical conduct in business (Dixon 2006:4, Ndlovu 2006:1). An Eskom chairman, Reuel Khoza has said that if boards do not behave ethically, there is a *“risk ultimately of having business over-regulated and hamstrung by red tape”* (Vaida 2006:1).

One of the signs of this focus is the establishment in 1993 of Transparency International which was formed to support better governance. According to Transparency International, the first Corruption Perceptions Index was published in 1995. (TI 2006:1). This Index has been widely credited with putting the issue of corruption on the international policy agenda. More than 150 countries are ranked by their perceived levels of corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys.

A discouraging finding of the Report on the Transparency International Global Corruption Barometer (2007:13) is that public expectations about the extent of corruption in the future have become gloomier over time. In 2003, 43% of all interviewees expected corruption to increase in the next three years, but in 2007 this increased to 54%.

The impact of the Enron scandal is still being felt worldwide. Details of the scandal reverberated across the world. In a magazine article, Kadlec (2002) for instance reported that workers who audited Enron's books for Arthur Andersen received an instruction to destroy all audit material except for the most basic "work papers", just four days before Enron disclosed a \$618 million loss. Some of the repercussions of this breach of ethics included the disruption of hundreds of corporations in the middle of audit season, the fall of one of the world's leading accounting firms and the loss of thousands of jobs.

One of the results has been a sharply increased awareness of personal accountability in the handling of unethical instructions from superiors.

Following on the major governance issues touched upon in the first King report, the second report emphasizes values, conduct, fairness, accountability, responsibility and transparency in corporate governance. In an interview conducted by the then President of the HR Council of South Africa (HRCOSA), Shaun Schwanzer, with Judge Mervyn King, King emphasized his support for the regulation of the human resource environment in order to ensure compliance with a suitable code of

conduct. King saw the enforcement of a code of conduct as the basic requirement for good practice.

In South Africa, an increased awareness of the negative consequences of corruption and sub-standard services has contributed towards the demand for codes of conduct and negotiated “Charters” endorsed by Government in all spheres of business. These factors have also added to the awareness of a large majority of human resources practitioners of the need for some form of regulation of the practice of human resources.

1.2.3 HR Education

Another background factor to this study and one which also contributes to the current drive towards professionalising human resources in South Africa, is the increasing burden of compliance to legislative requirements. It is largely the responsibility of the human resource practitioner to implement legislation governing employment such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the Labour Relations Act, the Skills Development, UIF, Safety, Health and Wellness, Employment Equity and other Acts. This environment requires an understanding and knowledge of the legislation as well as the competence to take the correct measures in the workplace.

This is but one of the areas within HR requiring specialised knowledge. The ever-changing environment of business locally and internationally requires on-going updating of knowledge, expertise and competence in practice. HR has evolved to the sophisticated and strategic level of Human Capital Management which is examined in more detail in Chapter 5. David Norton says *“In the New Economy, human capital is the foundation of value creation. This presents an interesting dilemma: The asset that is most important is the least understood, least prone to measurement, and hence least susceptible to management.”* (Becker, Huselid and Ulrich 2001:2)

These factors provide compelling reasons why HR practitioners should have the right knowledge background *and* be highly professional, meeting a minimum

standard set and being measured by the profession itself. Companies depend on competent and qualified HR practitioners to handle sensitive people practice issues and safeguard the company against a breach of legal requirements.

Cohen (2005:63) takes for granted that HR professionals need a strong educational background to be successful because of the increasingly high expectations that business leaders have of their HR staff and HR functions. She explains that HR professionals *“need an education and background that will prepare them to be analytical and strategic, thoughtful communicators, skilled negotiators, savvy business professionals, astute change agents, and expert HR generalists or specialists”*. Cohen (2005:69).

In this drive towards professionalism and the need for formal qualifications in HR, it is interesting to note the report of the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations’ (WFPMA 2000:ii) on HR Competencies and Professional Standards. This report indicates that three-quarters of the respondents to this study believe it is very important to have a degree to practise human resources, an entry requirement taken for granted by all other major professions. The following results are reported (WFPMA 2000:21-22).

“Almost all (96 per cent) of respondents believe that personnel management practitioners in their country were more likely to have a degree now, than ten years ago. Three-quarters believe it is very important to have a university degree to practise personnel management, with the remainder seeing this as quite important. Very similar opinions are held with regard to the need to follow a course of study in personnel management.

This data shows an apparent rise in the importance of gaining a personnel management qualification, compared with the findings of the Cranet survey in 1992 which reported that only a quarter of senior HR managers had specific HR qualifications.”

Canada and Germany (p140, p150) are two of the countries who recently took new steps towards professionalising their human resources. For example, effective January 1, 2011, the Certified HR Practitioner (CHRP) designation In Canada will only be awarded to applicants who have passed both their Council's examination and have attained a Bachelor's degree in business before specializing in HR.

From the South African perspective, professional registration is attained by applicants who have a formal and relevant qualification together with a number of years of experience at a specified level of practice. A recognition-of-prior-learning (RPL) route is available and has been proved to be effective.

1.2.4 Lack of entry barriers

The need to have a recognised body of knowledge and to provide standards of conduct in the practice of human resources was identified in South Africa in the late seventies. Newton (1989:1) mentions three things on which lawyers base their claim of professional status namely special educational requirements, then self-governance and finally a duty to the public to secure legal rights and benefits.

Paradoxically and at the heart of the problem being tackled in this study on the professional status of human resources, is the fact that people from all walks of life are engaged in the practice of human resource management. At the Executive HR Network National Summit, Sue Meisinger (2006:2), CEO of the American Society for HR Management (SHRM) stated that many in HR are not HR professionals and that this affects the perception of HR.

This fact is also amply illustrated by the number of applications for professional registration received by the SABPP from people of widely diverse backgrounds. It would be an interesting study to analyse the academic backgrounds of applicants for professional registration, with the SABPP, over the past 20 years.

Clearly some people land in HR by default without any formal training. Others move or are moved into human resource management from disciplines such as engineering, theology, accounting and teaching. This does not happen in other

major professions, where a focused qualification remains a minimum entry requirement.

These multiple entry points from other disciplines may be driven by companies who in some cases redirect a person who is not successful at another operational level into the human resource department of the company. In a recent conversation at a Local Government seminar in South Africa, this well-known practice was referred to as “dumping”. This has a devastating effect on the general level of competence of people in human resource management and consequently on the perceived lack of stature. Klimoski (2001:4) presents a list of “not-so-good” news in his presentation on the state of HR:

- Everyone is an HR “Expert”;
- “Pretenders” (are) offering “solutions”;
- Low barriers to HR field entry;
- Too many outlets or sources for HR information;
- Society’s desire for simple solutions to complex HR problems;
- Low demand for “deep” levels of understanding;
- Reluctance to implement multi-level thinking;
- HR field lacks powerful stakeholders (e.g. weak Departments of Labour);
- Society’s tendency to see people as a cost not as an asset.;
- Many HR academics emphasize the supply side.

On the opposite side of the scale are those individuals who, without any formal HR training have mastered human resources so well that they function effectively at the highest level. Two people illustrate this point, but there are many others. The magazine of the Cornell Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies, *hrSpectrum* regularly does profiles on top HR figures. Jürgen Brokatzky-Geiger is at the helm of the HR function of the large pharmaceutical company Novartis. He is a PhD chemist (*hrSpectrum* September – October 2006: 2). Hugh Mitchell is the Human Resources Director of Royal Dutch Shell and he has a degree in modern history and thinks that his academic background is very useful to his function in human resources (*hrSpectrum* July – August 2006:2).

From more than twenty years of experience in registering professionals as Registrar and CEO of the professional body for HR in South Africa, the researcher is of the view that those who make a marked success of practising HR without formal HR qualifications, are usually people who have qualifications in other formal professions such as engineering, accountancy or education. An understanding of business and an academically trained mind has helped them to make a successful transition into human resources.

Despite these exceptions to the rule, professions are built by an understanding of the underlying sciences and of continued structured development of the body of knowledge of each profession.

1.2.5 The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

A fifth background factor that impacts on this study of human resources as a profession is the addition of a quality management system for education and training for South Africa which has been implemented through the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act No 58 of 1995. The setting up of this quality framework, which continues to evolve, has raised national awareness of the necessity not only of acceptable standards, but also on measurement or quality control of education and training on a much wider scale than ever attempted before in South Africa.

In all fields, there is a renewed emphasis on skills training, education, up-skilling, knowledge currency through continued professional development (CPD) but also on levels of practice. Currently the teaching profession in South Africa for instance, is implementing a continued professional development process. The Institute of Directors (IoD) is currently introducing a title of 'chartered director'. It is being constituted to be "*a new elite category with minimum entry criteria with some education programmes, including case study work*". At the end, there will be an examination and a peer interview with other company directors, according to Rose (2006:11).

As the established and recognised standards body for human resource management, the South African Board for Personnel Practice (SABPP) deemed this development of sufficient importance to apply for accreditation as an Education and Training Quality Assurance body (ETQA) in 1998. The SABPP also established, and initially funded, a Standards Generation Body (SGB) for human resources management and practice in the same year. While the SABPP took the initiative to set up consultative meetings and gave a platform for an SGB, once a clear mandate had been received, the Board allowed stakeholders to take over the management and constitution of the SGB.

The Board was duly accredited as the ETQA for Human Resources Management and Practices, also Human Resource Development (HRD) and Skills Development Facilitation (SDF), Productivity and Disability Employment Practice in November 2002. Re-accreditation granted up to September 2011, has confirmed the status of the SABPP both as professional body and as the ETQA for human resources in South Africa. This accreditation has given the registering body not only statutory status under the SAQA Act, but has brought the role and place of human resources in South Africa sharply into focus.

1.2.6 Professionalization

The last background factor to be looked at, is the increased awareness of the value of professionalism. In the public sector in South Africa, mounting pressure for delivery of quality service has coincided with a drive towards professionalisation of functionaries in the hopes of increasing productivity and decreasing corruption. The government is mounting a concerted effort to halve poverty and unemployment by 2014. This is articulated by the Presidency of South Africa in the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative (ASGISA 2006:2). People practices play a pivotal role in the success of Government's plan. For instance, a shortage of skills has been identified as the single greatest obstacle to growth (2006:9) and in order to galvanise the economy, scarce skills must be found. Special training programmes are required as well as bringing back retirees and drawing in immigrants where necessary (2006:10). Training to support the expanding of opportunities for women is another identified need (2006:12).

To meet these needs, experienced professionals in the human resources field will have to be identified and deployed as a matter of urgency. Personnel managers, however, are also identified as a scarce skill (2006:9). Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that qualified, competent and high level human resource practitioners are scarce. The SABPP is currently collaborating with the Local Government Leadership Academy working group to promote the professionalisation of human resources, as are other professional bodies. On the agenda are issues such as professionalisation programmes, up-skilling of current incumbents, levels of career pathing through Adult Basic Education, Further Education and Higher Education and Training etc.

However, this move towards professionalization is by no means limited to South Africa. There is, today, an emerging trend to form professional certification groupings on a voluntary basis in order to recognise individuals who meet pre-determined criteria.

Talking about professionalism in a context which includes statutory as well as voluntary non-statutory registration, Barnhart (1994:xix) contends that by creating a standard for a particular profession, complete with ethics, performance standards, career paths and continued development, practitioners seek to define themselves independently from company job descriptions and academic degree programmes. Associations, industry groups, and even corporations see professional certification as a natural outgrowth of the Quality Movement as a “*quality enhancement mechanism*”. (1994:xvii).

This professional certification becomes a way for individuals to control their own destiny. Barnhart (1994:xx) goes on to say that universities no longer provide the ultimate measure of professional knowledge and capability. Retrenchments, coupled with outsourcing, and temping, have forced practitioners to take control of their own careers, independent of their employer. Finally the business environment requires almost constant training, development and professional involvement beyond one’s particular job title. The structuring and recognition of

such development by the professional regulating body benefits both the practitioner and the profession.

Professional certification requires extensive personal commitment. Individuals, who show the motivation, give the time and carry the expense necessary to pursue and maintain certification/registration, have demonstrated a commitment to their profession.

In the light of the above, the value of professionalization would include:

- Service and quality as the norm;
- A recognised body of knowledge;
- A clear career path;
- A regulatory body that would:
 - Provide leadership within the profession;
 - Continue to scrutinise professional practices and strive to improve the profession;
 - Promote research;
 - Set adequate standards of education;
 - Set competency and experience criteria;
 - Ensure peer review of applicants, registering them at the appropriate level of functioning;
 - Structure and audit continued professional development;
 - Oversee the accreditation of good quality HR curricula;
 - Mediate between industry and academia on course content;
 - Enforce acceptable ethics through a Code of Conduct that will benefit the public (not private advantage).
 - Take disciplinary action if necessary;
 - Continually strive to improve the profession.

In the USA, this trend to professionalise covers a broad spectrum of occupations. In his Guide to National Professional Certification Programs, Barnhart (1994:iii-xvi) lists 540 different certifications, registrations or accreditations:

Table 1.1 *Barnhart's list of certifications, registrations or accreditations in USA*

| Number | Fields | Sub-fields such as |
|--------|--------------------------------|---|
| 45 | General professionals | Archivists, Parliamentarians, Cost Analysts, Clinical Sociologists etc. |
| 17 | Accounting and Finance | Auditors, Financial Analysts, Pension Actuaries etc. |
| 10 | Financials | Bank Auditors, Mortgage Bankers, Corporate Trust Specialists etc. |
| 17 | Human Resources | HR Professionals, Senior Professionals, Pension Consultants, Payroll Professionals, Benefits, Organizational Development etc. |
| 11 | Law | Court Reporters, Document Examiners, Legal Investigators etc. |
| 8 | Logistics | Claims, Logisticians, Materials Management etc. |
| 49 | Management | Fund Raising, Contracts, Product Safety, Integrated Resources etc. |
| 11 | Marketing | Business Communicators, Manufacturers Representative, Marketing Directors/Executives/Professionals etc. |
| 6 | Security | Protection Specialists, Fire And Explosion Investigators, Protection Specialists/Officers/Professionals etc. |
| 38 | Insurance and Personal Finance | Advisers In Insurance, Claim Law Associates/Specialists, Financial Consultants, Risk Management etc. |
| 29 | Real Estate Appraisal | Appraisers Of Residential Property, Real Estate, Businesses, Farm & Land etc. |
| 13 | Property Management | Property Administrators, Managers, Apartment Maintenance etc. |
| 20 | Real Estate | Auctioneers, Land Consultants, Market Data Analysts etc. |
| 37 | Hospitality and Travel | Club Managers, Catering Executives, Foodservice Management etc. |
| 43 | Engineering and Science | Analytical Technology, Chemists, Drafters, Hydrologists, Electronic Specialists etc. |
| 15 | Computers and IT | Data Processors, Knowledge Engineers, Systems Professionals/Engineers etc. |
| 29 | Environment | Agronomists, Environmental Professionals, Hazardous Materials, Irrigation Designers, Soil Scientists/Specialists etc. |
| 49 | Trade and Technical | Broadband Communications Engineers, Building Inspectors, Electrical Inspectors, Welding Inspectors etc. |
| 18 | Health and Exercise | Aerobic Instructors, Exercise Leadership, Personal Trainings, Fitness Specialists etc. |
| 13 | Laboratory | Bio-Analysts, Immunologists, Microbiologists etc. |
| 12 | Medical Management Services | Patient Accounts, Case Managers, Medical Representatives etc. |
| 50 | Medical Practitioners | Dietitians, Opticians, Occupational Therapists etc. |

1.3 Purpose of the study

For the purpose of establishing whether human resources can be regarded as a profession, the following goals have been set:

1.3.1 The first goal of the study is to describe and document the historic development of professional human resources in South Africa with specific reference to the history of the establishment of the SABPP, as it contributed to professionalization of HR in South Africa.

1.3.2 The second goal is to identify the foundational principles or pillars of professionalism and the ethical professional conduct issues (including values) which are embraced by internationally recognised professions, including HR.

1.4 Research questions

- 1.4.1 How did professionalism within HR emerge historically in the South African context?
- 1.4.2 What are the foundational principles or pillars on which professionalism stand?
- 1.4.3 What are the ethical professional conduct issues (including values) which are embraced by internationally recognised professions?
- 1.4.4 What are the ethical professional conduct issues (including values) that should drive HR in South Africa?

To achieve these objectives the study will progress as follows:

- The study will firstly focus on the South African human resource (HR) environment. The history of the establishment of the South African Board for Personnel Practice (SABPP) as the standards body for HR in South Africa will be documented for the first time. The writer is in a unique position, having been the Registrar and CEO of the Board since 1989, to do this work. Permission has been obtained to access documents such as the minutes of meetings, newsletters and correspondence files. Interviews will be undertaken with some of the founding members who still recall the events. The Board was

established in 1982 and recording this history from documents not in the public domain presents an opportunity to safeguard information that may otherwise be lost to the HR community. The current functions and focus of the SABPP is also recorded.

- Four professions, the legal, the engineering, the medical and the accounting professions were selected for more detailed examination, as they are internationally recognised and have been practised for millennia. Background information on current burning issues within these professions will be looked at and also their value systems and how their regulating bodies operate, both locally and internationally. Their recognition of a specified body of knowledge as appropriate subject matter will be confirmed. The important elements of their professional values and ethics will be identified and will form the basis of the questionnaire that will be sent out.
- The next step will be to examine the way in which HR is positioned internationally in order to establish to what extent HR has been professionalised globally or may be moving towards professionalism. The history, levels and criteria, required body of knowledge and codes of conduct of HR in three countries will be examined. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in the UK, the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI) in the United States and the Canadian Council of HR Associations (CCHRA) was selected for this purpose. The conduct issues and values addressed in their codes of conduct will be used in the questionnaire.

It is hoped that this study will support the process of professionalising human resources in South Africa and indeed, the regulation of the profession.

While this study covers many aspects of professionalism, its core focus is on the values and attitudes lying at the very heart of all major professions. Emerson once said (1917:96) “*What you **are** stands over you the while, and thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary.*” (Own emphasis). Or a more

contemporary quote from Elvis Presley: *“Values are like fingerprints. Nobody’s are the same, but you leave ‘em all over everything you do”* (Meisinger 2005:4).

1.5 Expected Contribution

The dissertation will contribute to the HR profession in a few ways.

- The work will add to the human resources profession in South Africa by defining the parameters of professionalism in general and positioning HR within this framework.
- The early history of HR professionalism in South Africa will serve to contextualise the profession and steer the future development in the field.
- The Board of the SABPP required the current code of conduct of the SABPP to be modernised. The information gathered on the values and norms of the four major professions and HR globally, will be used to design an instrument to test the views of registered HR professionals on the appropriate conduct issues to be addressed in a new code of conduct.
- The identification of core conduct issues, including values, on which other professions based their codes of conduct, will lead to the improvement of the South African HR Code.
- A relevant and effective code of conduct is intended to increase awareness of the weight of the responsibility of the HR professional. HR is evolving and a new Code will align it more closely to the global scene and show life and growth within the profession.
- This work will make a contribution to the current debate on the position and professionalism of HR in South Africa.
- In South Africa the standing of HR is still mostly a matter of personal perception and a scientific study such as this will enhance this understanding.
- This will contribute to society understanding the role of HR and lending support to the acknowledgement of the stature of this pivotal profession.

1.6 Implications

If the premise of the increasing importance of the HR role and the economic imperatives for this function to be practised effectively, is accepted, it can be inferred that the time has come to professionalise human resources in South Africa. Many of the elements are already in place. HR has:

- international status and recognition;
- an established body of knowledge;
- a regulatory body that has statutory status as the quality assurance body under the SAQA Act, with a track record of stability;
- heraldic registration;
- formal registration processes in place;
- a career path that makes provision for entry at various levels;
- registration levels with detailed competency criteria;
- post nominal titles for registration levels;
- a Code of Conduct;
- a Continued Professional Development (CPD) process to keep professionals current;
- an accredited quality assurance process;
- the will to regulate itself.

Extensive consultation with HR practitioners has clearly indicated that there is an awareness and acceptance within the profession of the necessity to professionalise. There is also a growing acceptance in commerce that professional registration delivers many benefits to companies and serves as a benchmark of quality. Stipulating a professional level in an advertisement for an HR position has become common-place. This can be taken further to the international stage and an argument made for rationalisation of standards and a uniform body of knowledge. To quote from the report of the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations on HR Competencies and Professional Standards June 2000 (P2): *“As organisations become more global it can be argued that the need for standardisation within the HR profession is growing.”*

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

According to the *WordWeb Dictionary* quoted in Hofstee (2006:19) a thesis statement is “*an unproved statement put forward as the premise in an argument*”.

The premise on which this study is based, is that Human Resources can be regarded as a bona-fide profession.

In this investigation the first phase was documenting the history of the SABPP in order to provide insight into the development phases of the professionalization of HR in South Africa. The second phase was to identify the foundational principles or pillars of professionalism and the ethical professional conduct issues (including values) which are embraced by internationally recognised professions such as the legal, medical, engineering and accounting professions. The information extracted from both these phases will provide valuable insight to determine whether HR in South Africa can be recognised as a profession.

2.2 Research Design

According to Babbie and Mouton (2006: 72) “*research design, ... addresses the planning of scientific inquiry – designing a strategy for finding out something.*” Trochim (2006) describes research design as the “*structure*” of research. The strategy, methodology and the approach gives a complete representation of the design.

2.3 Research Approach

In terms of the research problem, the research aim and the research questions, a qualitative approach should be used. In line with a qualitative focus the interpretivist approach will be used.

Babbie and Mouton (2006:20) define metatheory with reference to the positivist tradition, the phenomenology/interpretivist tradition and critical theory. The interpretivist point of view (epistemology) is that most of our knowledge is gained through social construction such as language, consciousness, shared meanings and documents (Trauth 2001).

According to Garrick (1999) in Trauth (2001), fundamental assumptions of the interpretive paradigm include the following:

- The belief that any event or action can be explained in terms of multiple interacting factors, events and processes. The researcher will attempt to find the commonalities and differences in the understanding of professionalism as manifested in different countries by different professions.
- An acceptance of the extreme difficulty in attaining complete objectivity. This will be addressed by triangulation.
- The understanding that the world is made up of multifaceted realities that are best studied as a whole, recognizing the significance of the context in which experiences occur. The interpretivist researcher will focus on the way each profession under discussion developed and the significance of the realities of the professional environment.
- An awareness that enquiry is always value-laden and that such values influence the framing, focusing and conducting of research.

Babbie & Mouton (2006:28) postulates that all human beings “*are engaged in the process of making sense of their (life) worlds*”. The reality and the individual who observes it, cannot be separated. The world (life) has both subjective and objective aspects. The subjective reflect our perceptions of the meaning we attach to an environment. While the researcher believes it imperative to retain “*the distance necessary to produce a valid and critical analysis*” (Babbie & Mouton 2006:308), it must be acknowledged that framing the research is in itself a subjective exercise. In contrast the objective continually engages us “*in negotiating this meaning with others with whom we interact*” (Weber 2004). The researcher in this study is interested both in the subjective views of participants and the objective

views found in literature on the subject of HR, its professional standing and its future role.

2.4 Key Scientific Beliefs

2.4.1 Ontological position

From an ontological position, interpretivists focus on the subjective meanings, socio-political and symbolic action process through which people construct and reconstruct their reality (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). Thus, according to Sanghera (2008), interpretivism involves an *ontology* in which social reality is the result of processes through which social actors negotiate the meanings of actions and situations. Human experience is thus a process of interpretation and not of sensory reception and apprehension of the external, material world. Thus, human behaviour is dependent on how people interpret the conditions in which they find themselves. Social reality is not an object that may be interpreted in different ways but includes interpretations. It is vital therefore to operate within a conceptual and linguistic framework. The social world has to be grasped as a *skilled accomplishment* of active social actors; the constitution of this world as 'meaningful', 'accountable' or 'intelligible' depends upon language as a medium of practical activity. The current study focused on the viewpoints of HR professionals and what they believed to be the foundational principles or pillars and the professional conduct issues of HR as a profession in South Africa. The researcher was aware that the contributions were from the understandings and interpretations of the participants' understanding of what constitutes foundational principles and professional conduct issues of HR as a profession.

2.4.2 Epistemological position

The epistemological position focuses on "how we as human beings know the world" (Georgia Institute of Technology, 2008). According to Sanghera (2008), knowledge is derived from everyday concepts and meanings, that is, common sense terms and meanings. From an epistemological position, interpretivism promotes the necessity of researchers understanding the differences between humans in their role as social actors (Saunders et al, 2007). This perspective

requires a researcher to adopt an empathetic stance, thereby challenging researchers to go into the world of their research subjects and understand the world from their point of view (Bridges, et al 2007). Interpretivism allows the study of the social world, one that reflects the distinctiveness of humans as against the natural order. From an epistemological position in interpretivism a researcher should set aside pre-conceptions in his/her understanding of that world (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

In the current study the researcher is not an HR practitioner working in the same organisations as most of the HR professionals that were interviewed. The researcher remained as objective as possible by trying to understand the dynamics of the phenomenon in question, namely to make HR a profession by identifying, understanding and interpreting what constitutes the foundational principles and conduct issues of the profession from the participants' point of view. In order to do this, she therefore used the original documents of professional boards to substantiate her findings.

2.5 Research strategy

Qualitative research, broadly defined, refers to "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:17). This would include research questions, collection of data and narrative.

According to Ereaut (2007), qualitative research focuses out the 'why', not the 'how' of a topic through the analysis of unstructured information (such as interview transcripts and recordings, emails, notes, feedback forms, photos and videos). It doesn't just rely on statistics or numbers, which are the domain of quantitative researchers (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister and Zechmeister, 2003). Muchinsky (2003) posits qualitative study is a class of research methods in which the researcher takes an active role in interacting with the participants under study. The researcher thus becomes an active participant instead of being a detached observer (Spector 2005). Qualitative research is used to gain insight into people's

attitudes, behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles. Qualitative research is also used to inform business decisions, policy formation, communication and research. Focus groups, in-depth interviews, content analysis and semiotics are among the many formal approaches that are used, but qualitative research also involves the analysis of any unstructured material, including customer feedback forms, reports or media clips (Ereaut 2007). According to Mishoe (2003) the strengths of qualitative inquiry include the following:

- the concrete description of detail;
- the portrayal of process in the active mode and
- attention to the perspectives of those studied

By approaching this study qualitatively, the researcher was able to obtain a wider understanding of the world of professionals and also to explore the real problems facing professions in general and HR in particular. A qualitative method assisted in identifying the fundamental principles and pillars on which professions are built. The interviews with senior practitioners in the field around some set topics enriched the understanding of perceptions about HR in South Africa.

2.5.1 Triangulation strategy

Triangulation is a method to cross-validate or corroborate findings of a study. Two different methods are used to address the same research question in order to seek “convergence” in research findings (Kvale 1996).

In this study triangulation is used in the following way:

- In the first instance, archived material was analysed which provided historical information on the HR profession.
- Secondly, structured interviews were conducted with five (5) members of the SABPP who had participated in the early years in the work of establishing the professional body, some from the very beginning and some at a slightly later stage.

- Thirdly, the current study focused on original documentation of regulating bodies of the medical, legal, engineering and accounting professions internationally and in South Africa as well as the regulating bodies of HR in the UK, USA and Canada. This was done in order to identify the foundational principles or pillars of professionalism and the ethical conduct issues embraced by these professions.
- Fourthly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen (15) mentors from SABPP in order to ascertain what they believed were the foundational principles or pillars of professionalism and the ethical conduct of HR as a profession in South Africa.
- Lastly, a questionnaire to verify the information received from the interviews was sent to HR professionals registered with the SABPP.

2.6 The Role of the Researcher

Marshall and Rossman (1999) maintain there are three rules researchers should be aware of in qualitative studies. These are as follows:

- Researchers should be aware of how they represent their participants in their study.
- Researchers should carefully scrutinise the complex interplay of their own personal biography, power and status, interactions with those of the participants and the written documents (Rossman and Rallis 1998).
- Researchers should be aware of the dynamics of ethics and politics in their work.

An awareness of the shades of meaning of data can be referred to as theoretical sensitivity. This includes having insight, understanding and discernment when dealing with data. (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

The researcher is in a unique position to do this study, having been the Registrar and later Chief Executive Officer of the regulatory body for HR in South Africa for 20 years of the 26 years of the Board's existence. The research into the history of

professional human resources in South Africa will therefore be conducted by someone who lived through most of it.

The researcher believes it imperative to retain “*the distance necessary to produce a valid and critical analysis*” (Babbie & Mouton 2006:308). Particular care will have to be taken to counter research bias in favour of the desired outcome of the research. This is done by using the different triangulation methods as discussed.

The researcher is aware of how the views of participants are reflected in this study and will strive to approach the study with an open mind and to contextualize findings on the conduct issues. The researcher will remain aware of the ethics and politics involved in this area and will be as objective as possible. She will also ask key participants for their views on the final report.

2.7 Research methodology

2.7.1 The sampling method

2.7.1.1 Purposive sampling

According to Schutt (2008) purposive sampling is one of the methods used in non probability sampling. Non probability sampling is a sampling method in which the selection of population elements is unknown. According to Trochim (2006), in purposive sampling, the researcher will sample with a *purpose* in mind. The researcher would usually have one or more specific predefined groups. One of the first things a researcher will do is to verify that the respondent does in fact meet the criteria for being in the sample. Purposive sampling can be very useful for situations where one needs to reach a targeted sample quickly and where sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern.

In the current study purposive sampling was used for three samples:

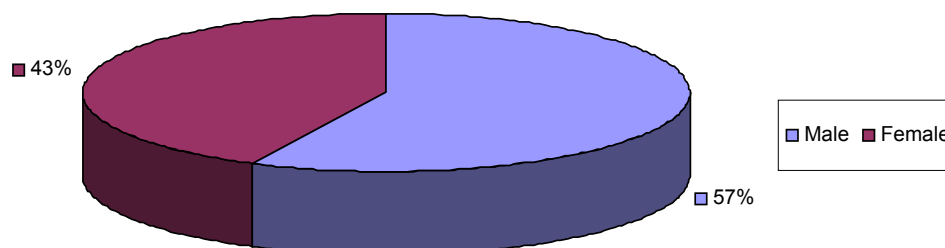
- Firstly, five people who had participated in the early years in the work of establishing the professional body, some from the very beginning and some at a slightly later stage were selected due to their in-depth knowledge of the SABPP.

- Secondly, Mentors who were registered as Chartered or Master HR practitioners with the SABPP were chosen to obtain their views on the current state of HR in South Africa.
- The description of the above-mentioned samples is under point 2.5.1.

In delineating the population group to be surveyed it was decided to make use of the list of registered HR professionals of the SABPP. It seems logical that the human resource practitioners who went to the trouble of meeting the professional registration criteria, took the time to register professionally and voluntarily consented to be accountable under a code of conduct, would be deemed to be typical or representative of professional HR. Thus the questionnaire was sent to this group of HR practitioners as opposed to those practicing HR without having registered professionally. As HR is not a statutory profession with compulsory registration, voluntary professional registration does indicate an interest in HR practiced as a profession.

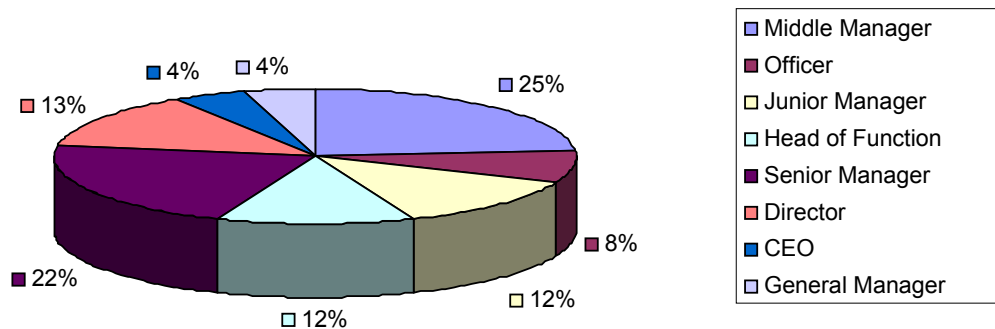
2.7.1.2 Participant representation

Figure 2.1 *Participants- gender*



2.7.1.2 Distribution of respondents according to operational level

Figure 2.2 *Present level in organisation*



According to Figure 2.2 above, more than half (55%) of the respondents who completed the bio-demographic part of the questionnaire are represented in top management. Chief Executives and Directors make up 17%, General Managers, Senior Managers and Heads of Function 38%, Middle Managers 25% and Junior Managers and Officers 20%. This is an indication that a great number of mature, senior people regarded the issue as sufficiently important to take the time to respond.

2.7.1.4 Sector representation

The following percentages indicate a spread of responses from the different sectors, with the private sector making up almost a third:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Private Sector: | 32% |
| Consulting: | 24% |
| Public Sector: | 22% |
| Education and Training: | 22% |

While the preponderance of responses from the private sector was more or less expected, the number received from the public sector was not expected. This may

indicate an awareness of the importance of ethics, but also a willingness to participate in the national debate. The percentage of Consultants who participated could also be regarded as an interesting snapshot of the changing landscape in HR today where outsourcing has become commonplace.

The number of Education and Training participants reflects the growing level of awareness of the ETD practitioners of professionalism which is confirmed by the widespread interest in the current work of the SABPP in this regard.

The representative spread among the different sectors as indicated above, together with the seniority of more than half of the respondents, does lend credibility to the conclusions drawn from the research.

2.7.2 Data collection method

Data was collected from three sources, namely, original documentation of regulating bodies of the medical, legal, engineering and accounting professions as well as the SABPP in South Africa as well as the regulating bodies of HR in the UK, USA and Canada; structured and semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire.

2.7.2.1 Interviews

Boyce and Neale (2006) postulates that

“... In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation. Interviews are often used to provide context to other data (such as outcome data), offering a more complete picture of what happened in the program and why. The advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys....”

This type of interview allows depth of focus and the opportunity for clarification and detailed understanding.

In Chapter 3 where the history is documented, both structured and semi-structured interviews were used.

A **structured interview** has a specific format and focuses on specific issues. All candidates are asked the same questions. This standardization ensures that candidates are evaluated in a consistent manner (Verizone 2008).

Davies (2008) outlines the following benefits of the structured interview:

- It is legitimate and reliable.
- It controls the flow of the interview.
- It addresses the field in question.
- It makes the interview the same for every interviewee – ensuring similar responses
- Similar responses are received for each participant, which controls reliability.
- Questions are pre-written, reducing nervousness for the interviewer.
- It maximizes the interviewer's time and research expense.

The **semi-structured** interview is a commonly used data collection method in qualitative research. A semi-structured interview starts off by trying to minimise the hierarchical situation so that the participant feels comfortable talking with the interviewer. An interview script is used, consisting of a set of questions as a starting point to guide the interaction. Nevertheless, as the aim is to capture as much as possible regarding the subject's views about a certain topic or a practical task, the interviewer follows in depth the process of thinking and posing new questions after the first answers given by the subject. Thus at the end every interview can be different from each other (Del Barrio 1999).

2.7.2.2 The questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire was to ascertain whether the experts (HR Practitioners) believed that certain ethical professional conduct issues were relevant and should be an integral part of the regulatory mechanisms of the HR profession in South Africa. The ethical professional conduct issues that are part of the questionnaire were drawn from the regulating bodies as indicated in 2.6.2. The professional conduct issues were divided in five (5) sections, namely:

- Responsibility towards the profession
- Responsibility towards the public/society
- Responsibility towards the client/employer
- Responsibility for personal work ethic
- Responsibility for knowledge and skills

Furthermore, the researcher used the opportunity to obtain the experts' (HR Practitioners) opinion about desirable professional qualities and personal values as this can be seen as a vital professional conduct issue.

The research questionnaire titled "*Determining the ethical professional conduct issues in the HR field*" was developed and discussed with a panel of experts to ensure that the questions were relevant and easily understood (Annexure A).

The rating scale is a five (5) point Likert scale. 1 depicts "not essential" and 5 "essential". This scale was intended to assist in determining the weight placed by the respondent on each identified conduct issue. In order to analyse the data and using Lawshe's technique, 1 and 2 are put together to obtain a single value and 4 and 5 are put together to obtain a single value.

2.8 Managing and recording data

The researcher in the current study has recorded data. Before recording the data, the researcher firstly explained to the participants why the data had to be recorded and what will happen to the data after being recorded at the same time assuring

confidentiality. Only after obtaining the participants' permission was data recorded. Interviews were transcribed.

In the current research the researcher had coded the recurring themes extracted from the interviews.

2.9 Analysing data

The researcher has used content analysis in order to extract themes from the original documentation of regulating bodies as indicated in paragraph 2.5.1 as well as both the semi-structured and structured interviews. Content analysis includes coding and classifying data (Hancock 2002). According to Trochim (2006) coding is a process for categorising qualitative data and for describing the implications and details of these categories. Open coding deals with creating new codes for the transcripts and the original documentation of regulating bodies as indicated in paragraph 2.5.1. The researcher has identified a list of categories from the transcripts and initially used open coding to identify certain themes. After the researcher had used open coding for all new themes, list-by-code was used for all subsequent documents that had the same recurring themes. The researcher also used quick coding as this method can be used for consecutive coding of segments using the same code (Muhr 1997).

To make the study more valid, the content of the questionnaire was assessed using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) of Lawshe (1975). The CVR is an item statistic that is useful in rejecting or retaining specific items. Using this approach, subject matter Experts (HR Practitioners) indicate whether certain professional conduct issues are relevant in the regulation of the HR profession. The input from the subject matter Experts (HR Practitioners) is then used to compute the CVR. The CVR equation takes on values between -1.00 and $+1.00$. Where a $CVR = 0.00$ it implies 50% of Subject Matter Experts (HR Practitioners) believe an item to be necessary and should be included in the code of conduct and other regulatory mechanisms of the HR Profession. Anything greater than 0.00 , therefore indicates that more than half of the Subject Matter Experts (HR

Practitioners) believe the item to be necessary and is then considered “face valid” (Lawshe 1975). Lawshe (1975:568) has also developed minimum CVRs for different panel sizes that have been based on a 0.05 significance level. The lower the number of the panel size, the higher the minimum CVR. For example if the panel consists of five (5) subject matter Experts (HR Practitioners) then the CVR value is 0.99. For forty Subject Matter Experts (HR Practitioners) the CVR value is 0.29. The value was extrapolated to 80 subject matter experts by using the formula $y = 0,9568 \left(\frac{x}{5}\right)^{-0,5873}$ ($y \rightarrow$ experts; $x \rightarrow$ minimum value). The result is that the CVR value for 80 experts is 0,20.

2.10 Strategies to ensure quality of research

When conducting qualitative research, researchers have to pay attention to the credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability aspects of the research.

2.10.1 Credibility

According to Mackey and Gass (2005) in terms of credibility, due to the fact that qualitative research can be based on the assumption of multiple constructed realities, it is vital for qualitative researchers to demonstrate to their research population their findings are credible. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) suggested several techniques to increase the credibility of the research. One suggestion is continuing the data collection for a long period of time so that the research participants become used to the researcher and start behaving naturally; another suggestion is collecting data in as many contexts and situations as possible so that the picture provided is as complete as possible. The researcher had for the current study collected data using original documentation of regulating bodies as indicated in paragraph 2.5.1, structured, semi-structured interviews as well as a questionnaire so as to add credibility to the study.

2.10.2 Transferability

In terms of transferability in qualitative research Mackey and Gass (2005) regard the context as important. Although qualitative research is not really transferred from one context to another, the extent to which findings may be transferred

depend on the similarity of the context. In determining the similarity of findings “thick descriptions” are used which deals with using multiple perspectives to explain the insights gained from the research and taking into account the viewpoints of the participants. The reason for using thick descriptions is that if the researcher discusses the findings with enough detail so that the reader may understand the context and participants, the reader will be able to compare the research situation with their own and determine which findings to transfer to their own. Some of the professional and ethical conduct issues discovered in the current research can be used by other researchers in a similar context.

2.10.3 Confirmability

Objectivity deals with reliable knowledge, checked and controlled, undistorted by personal bias and prejudice (Kvale 1996). Here qualitative researcher should provide full details of their findings on which they make claims. The reason being that another researcher can confirm, modify or reject the first researcher’s interpretations (Mackey and Gass 2005). The current study provided the Subject Matter Experts (HR Practitioners) the opportunity to confirm whether the identified professional conduct issues are relevant in the regulation of the HR profession in South Africa.

2.10.4 Dependability

The quantitative view of reliability is built on the assumption of replicability or repeatability. It is concerned with whether we would obtain the same results if we could observe the same thing twice. The idea of dependability, on the other hand, emphasizes the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs. The research is responsible for describing the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes affected the way the researcher approached the study (Trochim 2006). For the current research the researcher had requested the participants to review the interpretations obtained.

CHAPTER 3

PROFESSIONALISM IN HUMAN RESOURCES IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Documenting the history of the development of professional human resources in South Africa from the establishment of the South African Board for Personnel Practice (SABPP) in 1982.

An historic overview of the development of professionalism in human resources in South Africa is undertaken in this chapter, with specific reference to the establishment and early history of the South African Board for Personnel Practice (SABPP). The SABPP is today, the professional registering body of human resources as well as the statutory quality assurance body under the SAQA Act.

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the events that led to the establishment of the professional body SABPP (1977 – 1981), and to document the first years of its existence (1982 - 1991). The source materials used are the official minutes of the Board, all newsletters published by the Board, news clippings filed by the Board and interviews with some of the main figures who participated in the establishment and launching of the South African Board for Personnel Practice.

Interviews were conducted with some of the first members of the SABPP Board. Rear Admiral Dr Ray Eberlein, the first Chairman of the Registration Committee and Mr Wilhelm Crous, the first part-time Registrar of the SABPP shared their insights into the broader background of the time.

Light will be shed on the understanding of professionalism at the time of the establishment of the SABPP, through this history of the professionalization of HR.

This study is further investigating the basic elements of four major professions, and reviewing the standing of human resources internationally in the next two chapters.

3.1.1 1973 – 1976 : An evolving profession

In South Africa the professionalisation of human resources became a topic of discussion at the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) Council meetings between 1973 and 1976. At this time, the role of personnel management was being shaped on the international stage.

Writing about the history of the professionalisation of Human Resources in the USA in 2004, Leonard (2004:1) indicated that the first steps in building of a national certification program for HR professionals in the USA began more than 50 years ago, as personnel managers worked to create a national association for their profession. In the Autumn of 1948, when organizational meetings for American Society for Personnel Administration (ASPA) were being held, Herbert Heneman Jr., Ph.D.(1948), published the article, "Qualifying the Professional Industrial Relations Worker," which focused on the need for certifying personnel professionals. Heneman, a professor of industrial relations at the University of Minnesota, was of the opinion that the keys to starting a certification program were:

- A code of ethics; and
- An objective measure of technical competence.

By placing the code of ethics in this very basic listing, Heneman confirmed the contention of this study that ethics lie at the heart of professionalism.

The work of ASPA culminated in the establishment of the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI). The HRCI began certifying HR professionals in 1976, following a decision by the board of directors of ASPA to approve the creation of a professional accreditation programme for human resource managers. The World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA) was also founded in 1976 to aid the development and improve the effectiveness of professional people management all over the world.

In the South African context, over the same period, there is a parallel awakening to the fact that the role of the human resource practitioner would become increasingly important in the future. According to Wilhelm Crous the 1973 strike in the sugar industry illustrated the fact that human resources were not professional enough to handle the crisis. There was further an awareness of the function's obligation to society and the economy.

An extract from a report by Eberlein published in the November 1989 Newsletter of the SABPP reads:

“In the early nineteen-seventies, a group of concerned people came together to carry out what was then a relatively unknown exercise: an environmental scan aimed at determining the sort of problems which would face South Africa and the personnel person in the eighties. They went through the whole gamut of what are today fairly well-known activities, including SWOT-analysis, and strategic planning before they came to any meaningful conclusion.

One of the conclusions that they reached was that South Africa could not possibly develop economically unless and until the shortages of skilled manpower were eliminated. They also concluded that the personnel person had a role to play in developing and utilising that scarce manpower to the optimum. Their strategy: professional development”.

Eberlein concluded that the whole development of the personnel profession was aimed, not at the status of the individuals but at professional development focused on securing South Africa's future.

3.1.2 1977 – 1980 : Laying the foundations

Extensive consultations with top HR and business people commenced around 1977. Recognised practitioners in the field such as Dick Sutton, Piet Rossouw and Piet vd Merwe the then Director General of Labour lent their support to the drive to professionalise the personnel field. In giving some of the background of the time,

Eberlein commented that South Africa had isolated itself from the outside world but global imperatives and the need to develop parallel structures was a factor in the establishment of the Board. Garry Whyte, who is acknowledged as the founding father of the Board and its first Chairman, saw the establishment of the SABPP as providing a “home” for young HR entrants.

In an interview with Wilhelm Crous, the first Registrar of the SABPP, on background issues at the time, he explained that the original idea was first to obtain legislation to establish a professional registering body for personnel practice, and that the IPM and Government would then together launch such a body. Government was not against the idea of professionalization but required that the profession establish itself first. This led to the IPM going ahead with the establishment of the SABPP without Government buy-in.

- **Establishing an Ad Hoc Committee**

In 1978 the IPM Council established the forerunner to the first Board by appointing the “*Ad Hoc Committee on Professional Recognition for Personnel Practitioners*”. This Ad Hoc Committee started work in 1978.

- **The research**

Research to define a “profession” was initiated by Langenhoven and Daniels (Langenhoven and Daniels 1980) at the University of Bloemfontein and Nelson (National Institute of Personnel Research - NIPR). The Langenhoven study “*An Investigation on the professionalisation of expert personnel management*” was published in 1980

During this developmental phase, the research by Langenhoven on the importance of professionalizing human resources was significant in the whole process. The study (Langenhoven 1980:1) commenced by asking the following questions:

- Is professionalisation required?

- Is the management of personnel complex or important enough?
- Is personnel work of a professional nature?
- Is the time ripe?
- Are the applicable sciences far enough advanced to serve as a basis for a profession?
- Will it serve any useful purpose?
- Are personnel practitioners interested?
- Will it create more problems than it can solve?
- Are there enough people in possession of the necessary training to serve as a nucleus for such a profession?
- Are existing facilities sufficient?

It is pointed out in the introduction that it was not intended nor was it possible to prohibit people like line managers from doing personnel work. The value of professional registration lay in the fact this would “*identify people who meet certain qualification requirements and who submit to certain standards of conduct*”. The view is expressed that a regulatory body would be able to guide tertiary institutions on the type of training required. Furthermore, registration and the status which it conferred would make it worthwhile for personnel people to acquire the necessary training.

The major findings of this 1980 study can be summarized as follows:

- While personnel officials constitute a relatively small percentage of the total staff establishment viz. 0,82% (1975), 0,92% (1980) there is a clear trend that they are increasing more rapidly than the total staff complement.
- A relatively small percentage of the present personnel people are qualified to perform expert personnel work. The majority (60,9%) have received no post-school training.
- Too much time is taken up by clerical and semi-professional work rather than professional work, by which they could make a more valuable contribution to their organizations.

- Consultation with, and services to management are rated by respondents as the function in which personnel practitioners could make the greatest contribution. This is followed by planning, implementation and evaluation of personnel systems; formulation of objectives and policies on personnel matters; etc.
- As far as the relative importance of various types of knowledge and experience for personnel practitioners is concerned, knowledge of an applied behavioural science is rated as most important by respondents, followed by practical training and experience in personnel work; knowledge of economic or administrative sciences, knowledge of the relevant labour and industrial legislation and anthropology.
- The most desirable construction of the training course seems to be:
 - Industrial Psychology III;
 - Business Economics or Industrial Sociology II;
 - Labour Law I;
 - Statistics I;
 - Public Administration I;
 - Applied Anthropology I;
 - Economics I;

Louis Allen is quoted by Langenhoven (1981:2) as defining a profession as follows:
“A specialised kind of work practised through the use of classified knowledge, a common vocabulary, and requiring standards of practice and a code of ethics established by a recognised body.”

Langenhoven’s basic body of knowledge, described above, is, with some variations, still the core of today’s HR qualifications offered at South African universities.

3.1.3 1981 : The establishment of the SABPP

In 1981 the Ad Hoc Committee recommended to the Council of the IPM, the establishment of the SA Board for Personnel Practice. A basic premise decided on by the Committee was that of no discrimination and members of the previously

disadvantaged groups have been elected to all SABPP Boards since inception. In fact, by the early 2000's the previously disadvantaged groups become the elected majority on the Board.

The final meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee, before the establishment of the SABPP, was held on 27 October 1981 and the Board was appointed in September 1982, under the Chairmanship of Garry Whyte. A list of persons to be invited to serve on the first Board was forwarded to the then President of the IPM, Dr Johan Gouws.

The draft charter and regulations were submitted to IPM Members and put to the vote. A total of 48% of the membership responded with 92% voting in favour of the establishment of a separate regulatory body for the registration of HR practitioners and 8% voting against.

It was agreed that, in the interim, the South African Board for Personnel Practice would operate from the offices of the IPM. However, as soon as funds allowed, alternative accommodation would be sought. Whyte and Crous were given permission to initiate the procedure of choosing a suitable heraldic device for the Board.

The establishment of the Board was announced to government in letters to the Director General Manpower, the Chairman of the National Manpower Commission and the Chairman of the National Training Board as well as in the IPM Journal in 1981. The Mission, Philosophy and Strategy accepted were:

- **Mission**

To establish, direct and sustain a high level of professionalism and ethical conduct in personnel practice.

- **Philosophy**

To enable those engaged in the personnel profession to make a significant contribution:

- to the organisation, in terms of its management and utilisation of personnel;
- to the individual, in the realisation of his or her potential, in terms of his or her aspirations;
- to the community at large, in terms of an enhanced quality of life.

- **Strategy**

To promote, direct and influence the development of the personnel profession; to set competency standards for the education, training and conduct of those engaged in the profession; to advise involved parties on the development and attaining of those competencies; and to evaluate such attainment.

At a meeting in June 1981 at the University of Stellenbosch, the proposed registration levels and categories were discussed and it was suggested that the following three specialist categories of registration should be allowed:

- Personnel Management (which later became the Generalist category)
- Labour Relations (which later became Employment Relations)
- Training and Development (which later became ETD/HRD)

3.1.4 1982 : The first Board appointed

The first Board of SABPP met on the 29th November of 1982, with the appointed Board members being Mr Garry Whyte (Chairman); Prof. H P (Langie) Langenhoven (Vice Chairman); Dr Peter Berry; Prof Johann Coetzee; Mr Wilhelm Crous (Registrar); Mr Willem de Villiers; Cdre (Dr) Ray Eberlein; Dr Johan Gouws (the then President of the IPM); Mr Cyril Jantjies; Ms Denise Jordan; Mr Japs Jacobs; Mr Ray Kwatsha; Mr David Lamola; Mr Bulumko Msengana; Dr Gordon Nelson; Mr Wells Ntuli; Mr John Poppleton; Mr Piet Rossouw; Prof Dick Sutton; Prof Blackie Swart and Ms Judy Townsend.

Figure 3.1 : Members of the first Board of the SABPP



Standing from the left: Mr Piet Rossouw, Prof Johan Coetzee, Mr Cyril Jantjes, Mr Wells Ntuli, Mr Japs Jacobs, Mr David Lamola, Cdre Ray Eberlein, Prof Dick Sutton, Dr Gordon Nelson, Mr Wilhelm Crous (Registrar), Mr Willem de Villiers, Dr Bulumko Msengana. Sitting from the left: Mrs Denise Jordan, Prof Henrik Langenhoven (Vice Chair), Dr Johan Gouws, Mr Garry Whyte (Chairman), Mrs Judy Townsend. Absent: Mr Ray Kwatsha, Dr Peter Berry, Prof Blackie Swart, Mr John Poppleton.

- A Registrar for the Board

The first order of business was to officially appoint Mr Wilhelm Crous as the part-time Registrar of the Board, in an individual capacity and not as Director of the IPM, with the proviso that the appointment would be an interim one and that as soon as funds allowed, a full time registrar would be appointed.

- The Board establishes committees.

The first committees established were the Registration Committee, with Dr Ray Eberlein as the first Chair, the Education and Training Committee led by Prof H

Langenhoven, the Finance Committee chaired by Mr Garry Whyte and the Disciplinary Committee chaired by Mr Willem de Villiers.

3.1.5 1983 – 1984 : The work of the SABPP commences

Registration was invited at the levels of Practitioner, Technician and Candidate. The first fees to register for these three levels were Practitioner: R15, Technician: R15 and Candidate: R10.

- The first Code of Conduct

The code and ethics as laid down in the Charter of the Board were accepted and read as follows:

- *Registered members of the personnel profession are obliged to uphold certain standards in their practice, both in the interests of the public and of their calling. These include:*
- *Conducting themselves at all times in keeping with the dignity, standing and reputation of the profession.*
- *Doing their work to the best of their ability and so discharging their duties to employers, employees and clients.*
- *Not undertaking work for which they are inadequately trained or experienced.*
- *Not canvassing or soliciting for work in an improper way.*
- *Refraining from presenting themselves or advertising their services immodestly or in any way undermining to the profession.*
- *Refraining from any conduct arising from malice or negligence that would harm, directly or indirectly, the business, reputation or prospects of any other person or organisation.*
- *Refusing to disclose confidential information acquired in the course of their professional practice. (In a court of law, professional confidence*

may be breached only under protest and at the direction of the presiding officer).

- *Always obeying the rules and conventions, as prescribed by the Board, in their professional life.*

- **Heraldic device**

The design of a heraldic device for the Board was completed and registered with the Bureau of State Heraldry on 20 February 1984.

Figure 3.2

The Heraldic device



The Coat of Arms of the SABPP is described as follows:

ARMS: Per pale Or and Gules, a bar couped enhanced conjoined to three pallets couped and barbed to base, counter-changed.

CREST: A dexter hand issuant holding a torch erect, Or, handle Sable, enflamed Gules.

WREATH & MANTLING: Or and Gules

MOTTO: Pro Facultate.

The explanation reads:

ARMS: The bar from which the arrows are pended represents the guarding of professional standards. The three arrows represent the principal specialist categories of Personnel Practice: Training & Development, Industrial Relations, and Personnel Services. They also represent the three categories of registration: Candidate, Technician and Practitioner. The arrows point downwards to convey depth of professional knowledge the colour division of the shield represents a transference from non-professional to professional standing.

CREST: The hand symbolises the concept “Manpower”. The torch symbolises the Board’s promotion of education and training the field of Personnel Practice.

WREATH & MANTLING: In Heraldry, tincture has no special meaning. However, the Rule of Tincture requires that colour should not be placed on colour; nor metal on metal. The Board has chosen red as Colour and gold as Metal. Both are primary heraldic tinctures.

MOTTO: "According to one's ability".

Prof. I. v W. Raubenheimer was appointed to the first Board to replace Mr Ray Kwatsha who had been transferred to America.

- **The Institute of Industrial Psychology**

The relationship with the South African Medical and Dental Council's Institute of Industrial Psychology was discussed at the Board meeting of 12 September 1983. It was agreed by the Board to set up a special committee to investigate the question of an agreement between the SABPP and the Institute of Industrial Psychology about a specialist category. A decision was taken to institute a specialist category titled "Psychologiae" under both Practitioner and Technician levels for Industrial Psychologists and Psychometricians respectively. Prof. .Raubenheimer, who was at that time, the Chairman of the Institute of Industrial Psychology, conveyed the satisfaction of the Institute with this decision.

- **Registration commences**

The registration process commenced in early 1983, with the following specialist categories being approved: Training and Development; Industrial Relations; Recruitment and Selection, Personnel Services, Education and Research. and Psychologiae. All members of the Board were requested to submit their applications for registration. It was agreed that the first 21 numbers would be reserved for members of the Board.

- **Recognition of the IPM Diploma**

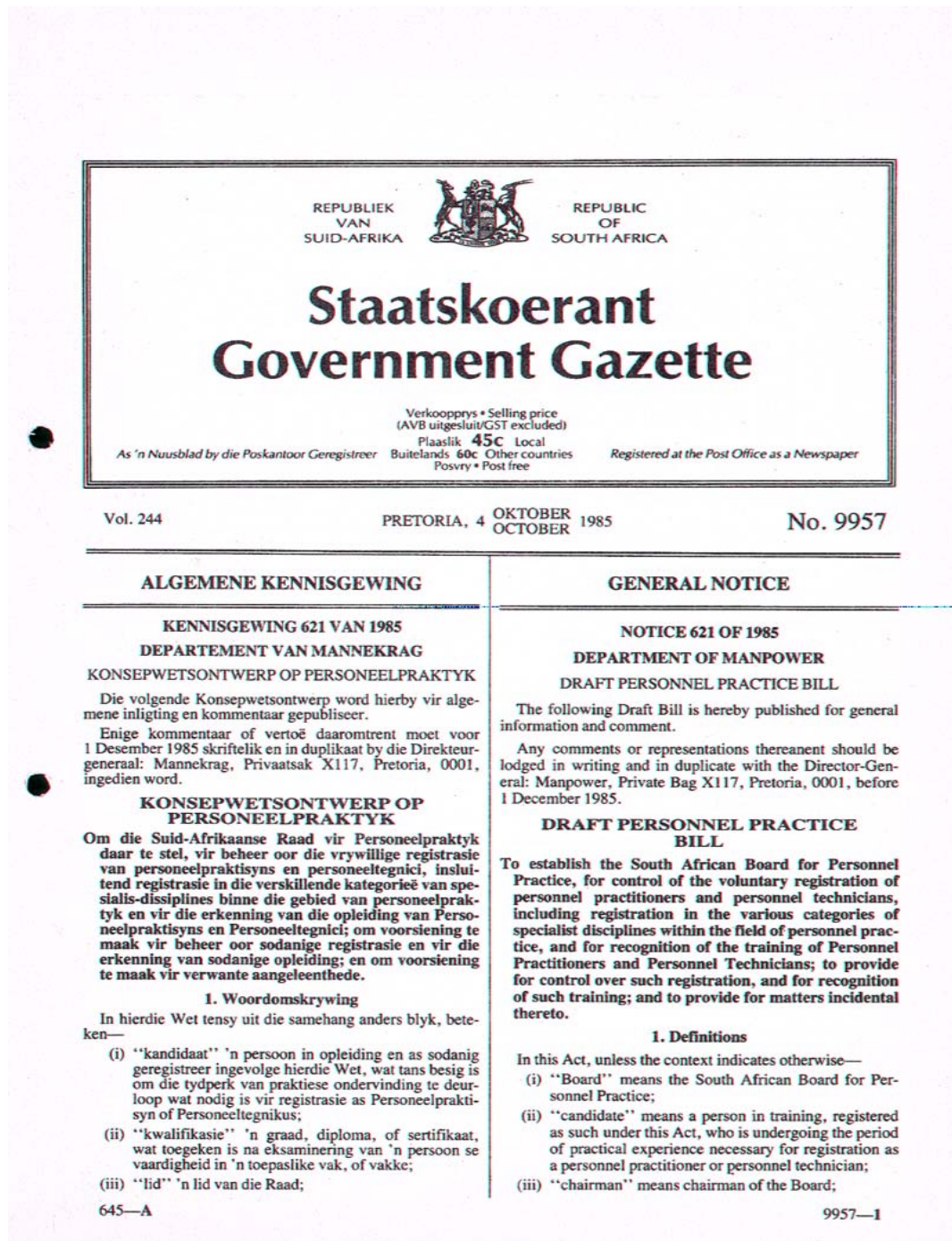
Recognition of the IPM Diploma, so that IPM diplomates could register, was seen as an important goal. It was agreed that the IPM Diploma would be submitted to



the Human Sciences Research Council and SABPP's Education and Training Committee for evaluation of education level and relevancy.

3.1.6 1985 – 1986 : Furthering statutory recognition

Figure 3.3 First page of 1984 Government Gazette



- **The Draft Personnel Practice Bill**

Official recognition for the HR profession was seen as a major goal of the SABPP from inception. After being inaugurated in 1982, the Board immediately began working towards statutory recognition. A memorandum was addressed to the Director General of Manpower, outlining the implications of statutory recognition for human resource professionals. Much of the Board's time was spent on drawing up a Charter and Regulations in preparation for statutory status. The first Charter of the Board was published in the Government Gazette number 9957 Vol 244 of 4 October 1985..

At the September Board meeting in 1983, it was reported that a meeting had been held with Dr Piet van der Merwe of the Department of Manpower in Cape Town on 18 June 1983. Dr. van der Merwe had urged the SABPP to prepare draft legislation regarding statutory recognition for 1985. This proposal was welcomed and it was agreed that Dr. van der Merwe should be requested to go through the legislation with the Committee set up to deal with the matter.

A meeting was arranged with the Minister of Manpower. After some negotiation with the Minister (P du Plessis), the Personnel Practice Bill was published on 4 October 1985 in the Government Gazette, the front page of which is replicated above. Some opposing parties lobbied against the Bill on the premise that this would make human resources exclusive and expensive. It was decided in Cabinet that in the climate of deregulation, it would not go ahead with statutory recognition and the then Minister of Manpower officially declined to table the Bill in Parliament.

By the end of 1986, the number of registered practitioners stood at 3,491.

3.1.7 1987 : Voluntary professionalism

A letter from the first Registrar to the Board dated 4 February 1987 read:

"As it now appears that statutory recognition will not be realised within the short or medium term, the Executive Committee recommends that the SABPP registers as a company not for gain (article 21 company). The Draft

Legislation has therefore been converted back to the original Charter of the SABPP.”

As it became clear that the Board would have to rethink its entire position, which up to this point revolved around statutory recognition, voluntary professionalism was investigated and discussed by the Board. Both the NPI (the National Productivity Institute) and NOSA (National Occupational Safety Association) were visited - it was reported in the minutes of February 1987, that both these organisations enjoyed official recognition without having statutory recognition.

The Board now investigated the establishment of the Board as a Section 21 company, this step was, however, not recommended and the Board remained an Association Not For Gain. During this time, an intensive public relations campaign was launched to inform employers of the work and aims of the Board.

The Board was restructured to make room for representatives from other bodies. Institute representatives were appointed as follows:

- The Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) – 2 members;
- The Institute of Industrial Psychology (IIP) – 1 member.

Employer organization representatives as follows:

- The Federated Chamber of Industries (FCI) – 1 member;
- The Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI) – 1 member;
- The National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC) – 1 member;
- The Commission for Administration (CoA) – 1 member;
- The Associated Chamber of Commerce (ACC)– 1 member;

Two ministerial representatives were appointed.

This change in the structure of the Board was reported in the following year in the Sunday Times of 20 November 1988: *“The most recent development is that representatives of the Ministry of Manpower and all five major employer organisations have joined the SA Board for Personnel Practice.”* *“Inclusion of*

these members has added to the board's ability to influence the development of the personnel profession, of which it is the regulating body."

- First election of an SABPP Board

Notice of the election of the second Board was posted to registered professionals on the 20th February 1987. As the first Board was appointed by the IPM, this was the first election called. The election proceeded smoothly and the following Board members became the first elected members of the Board:

Mr. M.B. Burgess

Mr.W.S.de Villiers

Dr.J.S.Gouws

Mr.M.S.Khumalo

Prof.H.P.Langenhoven

Mr.Z.W. Ntuli

Prof.I.van W.Raubenheimer

Mr.P.W.G.Rossouw

Mr.M.Thantsa

Mr.G.van der Straaten

Mr.G.S.Whyte (unanimously re-elected as Chairman of the Board)

Nomination of the representatives from other bodies at that stage included:

Cdre.R.Eberlein and Prof.C.D.Pottas (IPM); Dr.C.Schilbach (IIP); Mr.N.E.Seaber (Assocom); Mr.T.van den Bergh (FCI).

By the first meeting of the Board nominations from the Commission for Administration (Mr.J.H.C.Kastner); Manpower (Messers K.W.du Toit, R.M.Dilman); Nafcoc (Mr.M.Sebesho) and AHI (Mr.G.M.Albertyn) were finalised. The composition of the second Board was only completed in early 1989 when Cdre.Ray Eberlein replaced Mr.Mike Burgess on his resignation as an elected member and Mr.Wilhelm Crous who resigned as Registrar, became a member of the Board, as the representative of the IPM.

A request was received for the SABPP to allow representation on the Board for each specialist category so that the interests of each specialist could be adequately monitored. It was decided that this would make the Board too large and the suggestion was rejected. A further suggestion along these lines, representation for higher education institutions with HR programmes, was also rejected on the same grounds.

- **An HR Candidateship**

A Candidate Programme, completed for the South African Defence Force (SADF) under the leadership of Eberlein was formally submitted to the Education and Training Committee for approval. The SADF programme, stretching over a two year period, was accepted by the Board. This decision was communicated to the SADF and it was reported in the minutes that a Gen.S.Meyer Chief of Staff Personnel wrote to thank the Board.

In the Human Resource Management of May 1989 this development was reported as follows:

“Rear Admiral Ray Eberlein says the SADF is forging ahead with plans to uplift the role of its personnel staff to the same professional level as that demanded in the private and public sectors. The Admiral, who is the SADF’s Chief Director of Manpower Development, says the move is a clear indication of the change in personnel requirements in the armed forces.”

3.1.8 1988 : Basics reviewed

At the first meeting of the fully constituted second Board of 1988, the Executive Committee was constituted, consisting of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Registrar.

- **Objectives for term of office**

The objectives set for the term of office 1988 – 1991 and approved by the Board were as follows:

- Identify, analyse and verify the acceptability of formal qualifications available locally to applicants;
- Specify the types of experience acceptable for registration;
- Develop a formal examination for doubtful candidates;
- Publication and marketing of benefits of registration;
- Conduct a campaign to register candidates studying in the HR field.

Various aspects of professionalism now received attention from the Board. The issue of granting post-nominal designations was investigated and three pre-conditions determined:

- The registration process must be well established;
- The standards of registration should have been clearly defined, and tested in practice;
- A significant number of people should have been registered.

The Board deemed these conditions to have been met and proceeded with official application. An announcement of the application for legal protection of the names “Registered Personnel Practitioner RPP” and “Registered Personnel Technician RPT” appeared in the Government Gazette number 11643 of 30 December 1988. Registered in terms of the Heraldry Act 1962, Certificate Number 903/3/89 gives legal protection to the terms:

“South African Board for Personnel Practice”;

“Registered Personnel Practitioner – post-nominal title RPP”;

“Registered Personnel Technician – post-nominal title RPT”.

- A Board examination proposed

Extensive discussions were held around the registration criteria of HR practitioners. At inception, the Board had instituted a “Grandfather” clause to accommodate senior HR practitioners who did not have the necessary, relevant qualifications for the initial intake of registrations. With the termination of the Grandfather clause, which was envisaged for end 1988, it now became clear that the need for some mechanism to deal with this component of people practising in the personnel field

without qualifications, may always be necessary. Registration on the basis of qualifications and experience only, did not meet this need. The institution of a Board Examination was tabled for the first time and it was decided to examine the process used for Chartered Accountants. The Board would continue, through the years, having to deal with applicants who did not have relevant academic qualifications. Today, the process of Recognition of Prior Learning is used.

- **Personnel Management versus HR in the SABPP name**

It is apparent from the minutes of the Board, that from as far back as 1978, requests were received to substitute the term “personnel” with the term “human resources”. A paper was produced by Cdre Ray Eberlein, Chairman of the Registration Committee on the subject, and Prof Frank Horwitz wrote an article for the IPM Journal of May 1988. In the 1988 newsletter, a brief summary of the Board’s conclusions read:

- “We believe that the “Human Resource Management’ is a **general** description of those activities carried out in an organisation, by **any** manager, designed to optimise the contribution of the Human Resource to the achievement of the organisation’s objectives.
- We believe that the term ‘Personnel Management’ is a **specific** description of those activities carried out by **qualified specialists**, designed to apply a defined body of knowledge (drawn from the Social Sciences) to the maintenance, utilisation and development of the Human Resource within the work environment.
- Furthermore, your Board is reluctant to use the term ‘Management’ in the context of its name, since many of the specialists referred to above are not managers: in fact, the only person who should logically carry the title ‘Personnel Manager’ is a person who exercises line authority over others **within** the personnel function.”

The Board’s decision to continue to use the name South African Board for Personnel Practice was announced to the fraternity.

During this time, disciplinary procedures and the ethical code were reviewed. It was confirmed that the Board's code covered all aspects of the American HR Code and that of the South African Psychological Association. At the time these criteria were considered to be sufficient to measure a Code for the HR profession.

A survey of top executive salary increases and other benefits showed that personnel executives had soared from bottom place to top (growth percentage-wise) in just four years, according to an article by Stan Kennedy published in the Saturday Star of 15 October 1988. This indicated the growing emphasis on the "people side of business". This came from a survey carried out by PE Corporate Services and included chief, financial and marketing executives. The article further quoted Garry Whyte, the Chairman of the SABPP, as saying: *"The Board will no longer register candidates unless they meet the registration requirements for a personnel practitioner which will comprise a four-year academic qualification, recognised by the controlling board of SABPP, as well as a two-year supervised candidatedship of practical training and experience in the field."*

In the interview, Whyte was further quoted as saying: *"The skills of personnel management are a critical issue in the private and public sectors. There is a new breed of personnel manager. The work is much more sophisticated and the issue of competence is vital"*.

The Board decided to promote liaison with tertiary educational institutions offering qualifications in the field of human resources, not to dictate to the educational institutions, but rather to keep them informed of the requirements in the marketplace in which their students would be employed once they qualified. Prof. Chris Pottas was appointed to undertake a survey to establish exactly what educational qualifications were being offered in the HR field. The registration of the HR programmes of higher education institutions with the Board was discussed.

According to the minutes of 8 February 1988, the marked slow-down in the number of new applications for registrations, plus annually a large number of non-payers, perhaps indicated that a saturation point had been reached. It was noted that the

significant number of non-payers annually might have been an indication that members were not aware of the work of the Board and what had been done for the professionalisation of HR. It was decided to start with the publication of a quarterly newsletter and to produce articles for publication in the press.

An extract from article in the Business Times of 2 October 1988 read:

“The Personnel profession is being jacked up to meet the growing challenge posed by the rapidly changing socio-political scene. In response to calls from employers to raise levels of competence in the industry, the South African Board for Personnel Practice is imposing stringent qualification standards on new entrants. It will no longer register candidates unless they have met the stiffer qualifications – which include post-graduate specialist studies.”

The register of the Board was computerised in 1988 and a public relations firm, Tony White & Associates, was appointed by the Board, on a retainer basis. The number of registered people remained in the region of 3,350 with the number of new intakes more or less equalling the number of non-payment drop-offs.

3.1.9 1989 : A period of consolidation

The Board’s Executive Committee was expanded to include the Chairmen of each of the Committees of the Board.

Eberlein wrote in the Board’s Newsletter of November 1989, that professional registration had become a sign of professional ability and performance. Voluntary registration with a professional body as proof of ability, had taken the place of statutory recognition. He further said that *“in discussions with line people as to what they expect of their personnel professionals it became clear that they do not expect miracles, but they do expect certain results, with the emphasis on results! Too many of us talk well but achieve little!”*

- **An upgrade process is established**

Serious consideration was given, in the first Board meeting of 1989, to establish a bridging facility for a Personnel Technician to upgrade to Personnel Practitioner. It was proposed and accepted that:

- The IPM Diploma should be recognised as an M+3 level qualification and that a higher diploma should be instituted which could be acknowledged at M+4 level.
- Technikons and other qualifying institutions should offer a higher diploma at M+4 level.
- A person registered as a Personnel Technician and who had obtained a recognised higher diploma acknowledged by the Board, would be able to apply for an upgrade to Practitioner level.

In exceptional cases, a Board Examination might be made available. An examination commission was appointed and stringent entry criteria were laid down, stipulating that the person had to be a graduate and had to have at least 10 years of relevant experience.

- **Charter Regulation amendments**

In the minutes of the 18th July 1989, an amendment of the Regulations of the Charter of the Board was approved as follows:

“Special Regulations regarding registration:

In addition to the general regulations outlined in 4(a), (b) and (c), the Board may:

- *Upgrade to Personnel Practitioner a person who is already registered as a Personnel Technician: provided that person has obtained a four-year post-matriculation qualification, recognised by the Board; has served an additional period of practical training and experience in Personnel work (which may, at the discretion of the Board, be a lesser period than two years) under the supervision of a registered Personnel Practitioner who shall endorse the eventual application for registration; and who has successfully undergone a Board Examination.*

- *Register as a Personnel Practitioner a person:*
 - *without a tertiary educational qualification, but with at least twelve years relevant practical experience in Personnel work; and who has successfully undergone a Board Examination, or*
 - *who is a graduate, or has a qualification deemed by the Board to be of an equivalent level, even though this is not a discipline or disciplines relevant to the field of Personnel Practice; who has at least eight years relevant practical experience in Personnel work; and who has successfully undergone a Board Examination.*

Note: The Board Examination may take the form of written essays, papers, standardised tests and/or research reports on a topic or topics determined by the Board; together with a professional interview.”

These decisions of the Board were announced by newsletter, in the IPM Journal and to the various tertiary institutions by letter.

It was decided that the students of those universities which had submitted their programmes to the Board for approval, would be registered automatically and Universities were approached with an invitation to apply for accreditation. The first University to accept this invitation was the University of Pretoria through Prof Leopold Vermeulen. In November 1989, the Board was able to report that six of South Africa's leading universities, as well as the IPM, had requested the Board to accredit their personnel programmes.

- **First full-time Registrar appointed**

After an extended period of recruitment, the first full-time Registrar Ms Huma van Rensburg was appointed by the Board on the 1st of May 1989. She took over from the first, part-time Registrar, Wilhelm Crous. The Board occupied a board room within the IPM suite of offices.

- **Statutory recognition removed from the agenda**

In the minutes of the 18th July 1989, the decision was recorded to remove the matter of statutory recognition from the agenda of the Board. It was however, noted that it might be raised again should a more positive climate develop. An annual meeting with the Minister of Manpower was suggested and approved.

- **SABPP participation in WFPMA survey**

In the Sunday Times – Business Times of 10th September 1989, the participation of the SABPP in the survey of the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA) was reported. South Africa was seen in this report as second to none in its approach to professionalism in personnel practice. Whyte was quoted as saying that South Africa's input to the report was markedly different from the rest of the world because of several factors which affected its thinking on personnel practice. The report highlighted the fact that African representatives rated academic and professional training far higher, on a list of major concerns, than any other region.

According to Whyte "SA personnel practitioners are much more in the firing line than in other parts of the world. This is in the sense that a lot of our society's problems reflect back into our organisations as personnel management issues. That provides a compelling reason for our personnel practitioners to be highly competent."

- **Register for Training Instructors**

During this period, setting up a separate register for the registration of training instructors was discussed. This move was supported by the National Training Board, on condition that the SABPP maintained its independence. Despite this promising start, the matter was taken no further and trainers remained on the general register, to be reviewed when the numbers of trainers registering with the SABPP increased substantially.

- **Report on the SABPP delivered at the IPM Convention**

At the IPM convention of 1989, Whyte gave an extensive report on the work and decisions of the Board. He mentioned four main accomplishments (SABPP Newsletter Nov 1989):

- ***“Firstly:*** *We in the Personnel Fraternity now UNAMBIGUOUSLY regard ourselves as professional people; and concepts like “professionalism” and “professional standards” have assumed a central role in our thinking. This was not the case when the Board was established in 1982.*
- ***Secondly:*** *We now comprehend, very clearly, the difference between the term “Personnel Practice” (which describes our unique role as functional specialists), and the term “Personnel Management” (which refers to the generic role of managing people at work – a task performed by almost every executive). This was also not the case in 1982.*
- ***Thirdly:*** *And in similar vein, words like “Practitioner”, and “Technician”, and “Generalist”, and “Specialist”, have become common currency in the language of our profession and it was the Board that formulated and propagated the concepts underlying these words.*
- ***Fourthly:*** *And with increasing frequency, one finds in job descriptions, in selection specifications, and in job vacancy advertisements, reference to registration with the Board as an expression of desired performance standards and the concomitant of this is that personnel people are increasingly making reference in their CVs to the fact of their professional registration.”*

The number of registered people reached a peak around 3,554 registered professionals. During the nineties, a steady decline of registered professionals became the norm as political realities overtook the events of the day.

3.1.10 1990 : Accreditation and research

- Accreditation of tertiary training institutions

The first audits of the curricula of tertiary training institutions were done. Such audit teams comprised and were led by, a senior academic from another institution and the team further consisted of the Registrar of the Board and at least two senior practitioners in the field. In the Newsletter of August 1990 the following accreditation of curricula was announced:

“On recommendation of the Education and Training Committee, the curricula of the following Universities were accredited by the Board for a period of three years, to the end of 1993:

University of Fort Hare

University of Orange Free State

University of Port Elizabeth

University of Potchefstroom

University of Pretoria

University of Stellenbosch

University of South Africa

University of Witwatersrand”

- Technikons and IPM

The diplomas in Personnel Management offered by the Technikons and the IPM were accepted for registration to Personnel Technician level. After a meeting attended, in 1991, by leading academics in the field such as Prof. Naas Raubenheimer, Prof. Stephen Bluen, Prof. Leopold Vermeulen and others, the B.Tech offered by Technikons was accepted for registration of Practitioners by the Board.

- Reporting on Human Resources in Annual Reports of companies

Garry Whyte became a strong proponent for the full disclosure of human resource data in the annual reports of companies.

In Management Today of May 1989, Whyte was quoted as saying:

“Company chairmen often say their people are their greatest asset, but this is only lip service as the state of the human resource function in the company remains unclear. An annual report containing vital human resource information can become a very powerful tool.”

Whyte further stated that an annual report would become a much more powerful tool if it provided information on such issues as labour productivity, relations with unions and workforce morale. He went on to say:

“Some companies pay lip service to black advancement. But what are they really doing to address the problem? It is a core issue for the future viability of every South African organisation.”

The first formal Annual Report of the SABPP (for the fiscal year 1989) was published to express the Board’s support for transparency regarding all its processes and finances. These reports have continued to be published annually ever since.

- First Board Examinations

The Board’s intention to set a Board Examination to enable people who satisfy other stringent criteria to become personnel practitioners was reported on in the Sunday Times – Business Times of 15 October 1989. Prof Chris Pottas, chairman of the Board’s Education and Training Committee was quoted as saying:

“The decision in no way means a lowering of registration standards. In fact, the introduction of a Board examination is designed to ensure the maintenance of the highest professional standards.”

In 1990, Board Examinations were undertaken by the first candidates as a means of entry to the professional ranks for very experienced HR practitioners who lacked the necessary academic qualifications. Admission requirements were strictly applied, and only nine examinees were accepted for the first group. The examination format, which equated roughly to an Honours programme, was as follows:

- The written examinations consisted of five papers of not more than 10,000 words each (not including index, headings, figures and bibliography). Four assignments could be selected from alternatives set, and one was mandatory.
- Candidates also appeared before a panel of examiners for an oral examination.
- A candidate was required to pass the written part of the examination before being admitted for oral examination.
- An accepted method of referencing, such as the Harvard Method, had to be used. A list of the sources consulted had to appear at the end of each assignment.
- A period of six months was allowed for completion of the assignments.
- A candidate who failed the examination (written or oral) was allowed to apply for re-examination once only.

- Visit to the Minister of Manpower

The Chairman and the Registrar of the Board met with the Minister of Manpower in August 1990. An extract from a communiqué issued by the Public Relations Officer in the Ministry of Manpower on 21 August 1990 read:

“Manpower Minister Eli Louw has praised the Personnel profession for what he called its ‘very significant contribution’ towards resolving some of South Africa’s pressing socio-political and socio-economic problems, as they reflect in the work place.” The Minister was speaking during a meeting with the SABPP. He said further that *“Less than 20 years ago, the Personnel practitioner was barely recognised as being a relevant part of the relationship between employers and employees. Today, he is very much one of the key players.”*

- **First Position Paper of the Board - A Generic Competency Model**

In 1990, the SABPP in collaboration with Eskom, published a Generic Competency Model for Human Resource Practitioners. This work, in turn, was foundational in the later work of the Standards Generating Body for HR Management and Practice, in delineating the field and the writing of the first unit standards.

- **Bio-demographic survey**

A bio-demographic survey of registered practitioners commenced in 1990 and 2065 returns were received. The results were published in a Newsletter of the SABPP dated November 1991. The profile that emerged indicated that the large majority of registered human resource professionals (76.24%) had formal qualifications. Males still clearly dominated the profession and Afrikaans (50.60% and English (45%) were the major languages used.

It would be interesting to do a comparative study of today's registered professionals. At the point that the survey was undertaken, it seemed that the South African HR practitioner who was registering professionally, not only compared very favourably with overseas colleagues, but was, in fact, on the whole better qualified. Looking at this survey today, it is possible to make an estimate of some of the changes. The increasing numbers of Chartered and Master HR Practitioners registered with the Board today, gives some indication that the number of practitioners with post graduate qualifications has increased.

Based on the increasing number of women enrolled for HR qualifications at tertiary institutions, it is thought that the role of women in human resources has grown considerably. The use of the English language has become almost universal in the business environment.

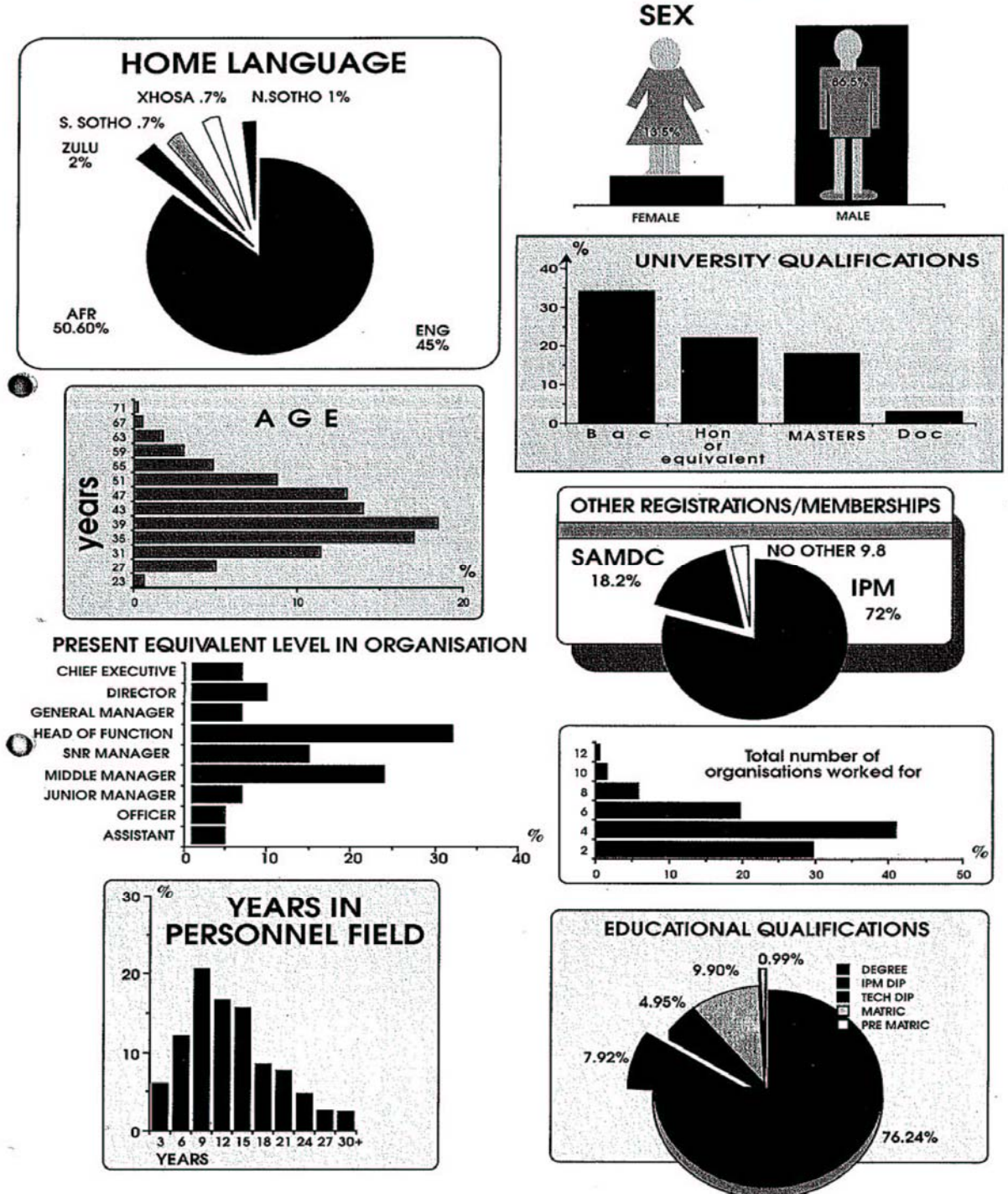
The uniquely South African development has, however, been the emergence of a large number of young and well qualified black HR Practitioners presenting themselves for professional registration. HR is the one profession in South Africa that is well on its way to becoming the most racially representative profession.

Figure 3.4

Bio-demographic survey results

Bio-Demographic Survey Results

We would sincerely like to thank our registered members for the magnificent response to our survey. We received an incredible 2065 returns. Some of the interesting details are below. Should there be a demand for the complete statistics, we will consider publishing a booklet.



- **Serving on Sertec**

Due to the fact that the SABPP accredited Technikons to train human resource practitioners, the SABPP was invited to serve on the Certification Council for Technikon Education. The Board served on this body until it was discontinued to make way for the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC).

- **The End of an era**

Figure 3.5 **Garry Whyte**

The first Chairman of the Board, Garry Slessor Whyte passed away on 27 February 1991. The last public statement he made was recorded in the Sunday Times of 3 February 1991:



“Board Chairman Garry Whyte says: Business leaders have been paying lip service to black empowerment for a long time. Now they have got to stop talking about it and do something significant.” “Business has been talking about this subject ‘seriously’ – I put the word ‘seriously’ in inverted commas – for at least a decade. But when we look at our track record little of significance has happened in the formal sector. If one looks at the numbers of blacks who are directors, managers and shareholders in, or suppliers to our large companies, one sees that the figure is very small.” “Personnel Practitioners are directly involved with the advancement of blacks to directorial and managerial rank and with employee participation programmes. Therefore, if little progress has been made in these areas, personnel people must take a large share of the blame.”

Wilhelm Crous was elected as the second Chairman of the Board in 1991.

At this point, the official documentation of the establishment and early history of the SABPP from 1977-1990 ends.

The highlights of the next years (1991 – 2009) as well as the current work and position of the Board is recorded briefly in Annexure C.

Many of the founding fathers of the SABPP are no longer with us. Chapter 3 was distributed to four people who were present at the beginning or joined in the work in the first years.

Prof. Johann Coetzee, a member of the first Board of the SABPP commented:

"Huma,

Dankie dat jy aan my jou hoofstuk 3 deurgestuur het.

Dit was nie net interessant en stimulerend om dit te lees nie, maar inderdaad nostalgies en selfs emosioneel. Soos wat jy weet is van die lede van daardie eerste werkspan al oorlede en die meeste al afgetree.

Dankie dat jy hierdie notule opteken wat as 'n kleinood vir baie van ons op die rak sal staan. Maar, veel meer belangrik, gelukgewens met 'n keurige samestelling en wetenskaplike formulering. Ek glo dat dit 'n uiters sinvolle bydrae gaan lewer en dat almal betrokke in die toegepaste gedrag wetenskap, en veral, in menslike hulpbronbestuur met groot waardering kennis neem van jou poging.

Maak asseblief seker dat ek 'n eksemplaar van die finale produk kry.

Seënwense

Johann"

Judy Norris (ne Townsend), a member of the first Board of the SABPP commented:

"This work is an interesting and informative history of the development of professional Personnel Practice in South Africa between 1977-1990 and the many challenges that had to be faced along the way. The rationale underlying many of the decisions taken, provide guidance for human resource practices in South Africa today".

Wilhelm Crous took the time to go through the history and met with the researcher to point out that the contribution of certain people were underplayed (Mr. Dick Sutton and Mr. Piet Rossouw) and to confirm that the document was accurate.

Dr Ray Eberlein read the history as documented and sent a brief confirmation that he was happy that the history has been depicted accurately.

The current position and work of the SABPP can be found in Annexure C attached.

3.2 Implications

The HR profession in South Africa is alive and well.

The role, the responsibility for good governance and ethics, and the emphasis on partnering with business, gives an indication of awareness and concern. We do not grow in isolation, but in conjunction with the management and decision sciences in the economy.

If one considers how many years the four major professions, examined in this study, took to develop to the current level of sophistication, we need reminding that HR is a fledgling profession. Much has been accomplished. Much more is demanded.

Nevertheless the conclusion that HR is a profession in every sense of the word, is inescapable. Against every measurement identified and examined, HR meets the criteria.

While regulation will assist in defending our borders from the “dumping” practices of companies where incompetent and often unqualified people are appointed in HR, the profession itself must take every possible measure to ensure that only competent people are appointed. The profession has much to be proud of and much work to do to clean up the HR act in South Africa.

CHAPTER 4

GOVERNANCE IN OTHER LEADING PROFESSIONS

4.1 The origins of professions – an historical perspective

In the middle-ages those sharing the same work protected their common interests by the forming of guilds. These evolved over time into either unions or professional bodies.

According to Burton and Marique writing in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1910:911), the word guild was derived from the Anglo-Saxon *gildan* meaning “to pay”, whence came the noun *gegilda*, the subscribing member of a guild.

Craft guilds arose when men first made one specific form of industry into the occupation of their lives (surgeons, apothecaries, bakers and others). Basti (1986:1) defines a guild as “...a body of men associated together under oath for a common purpose.”

Not only mutual aid and protection of interests motivated these guilds, the “honour” of the craft defined the purpose for which guilds existed. Black (1984:14) recorded that there was a sense of pride in the special technique and skill known only to oneself and one’s colleagues, and in the excellence of the finished article. To be a skilled craftsman was to occupy and fulfil a recognized role with its own dignity. In this way, professions began to acquire something of the status of vocations. Only trained men were accepted into guilds. Lord Williams, in a debate in the UK House of Lords mentioned “*the old craft unions, which insisted on severe standards for their members.*” (Hansard 1992:20)

According to Richardson (2005), guilds that wished to develop respected reputations, had to get all members to sell superior merchandise. To convince members to cooperate and advance their common interests, guilds formed stable, self-enforcing associations that possessed structures for making and implementing collective decisions. A hierarchy existed in large guilds. Masters were full members

who usually owned their own workshops, retail outlets, or trading vessels. Masters employed journeymen, who were labourers who worked for wages on short term contracts or a daily basis (hence the term journeyman, from the French word for day). Journeymen hoped to, one day, advance to the level of master

In England, the guilds obtained their charter from the monarch. In 1560 this was formalized by the Court of Aldermen who had to be satisfied that “... *a number of men of good repute from some trade or mystery(sic) not already represented by an existing guild have joined together for a time sufficiently long to justify the belief that they will continue to hold together and are not likely to fall apart from lack of interest or support.*” (Bunson 1995:1). Today the Royal Charter which was granted to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in 2000 bears some resemblance to this ancient practice.

According to the section on “Guilds” of the Colombia University Electronic Encyclopaedia (2007), membership was by profession or craft, and the primary function was to establish local control over that profession or craft by setting standards of workmanship and price, by protecting the business from competition, and by establishing status in society for members of the guild. In the Western world today, the term *guild* is used for certain associations that have little connection with the medieval institution. Some of the great professional associations (e.g., in medicine and law) fulfil some of the functions of the old guilds but are rarely given that name.

Thus the origin of professional bodies stems from the guild system in medieval times. The aspect of “closed shop” or keeping the unqualified out was undeniably part of this system. The negative face of professionalism has the selfish greedy exclusivity of an empowered elite over those who are not initiated, preventing dilution of income.

Another reason, however, behind this control of the basics of a profession was to ensure that professionals would be regarded with respect and trusted (a form of

social contract) to perform sensitive, skilled and important tasks such as medical operations, legal actions, engineering feats or accounting practices.

The Chambers Concise Dictionary (1988:788) defines professionalism as follows:
“The status of professional; the competence, or the correct demeanour, of those who are highly trained and disciplined: the outlook, aim, or restriction of the mere professional”.

Here we find words such as “status, competence, demeanour, highly trained and disciplined, outlook and restrictions” being connected to the state of professionalism.

The Oxford English Dictionary (1989:949) gives the following working definition of the word “profession”:

“An occupation whose core element is work, based on the mastery of a complex body of knowledge and skills. It is a vocation in which knowledge of some department of science or learning, or the practice of an art founded on it, is used in the service of others. Its members profess a commitment to competence, integrity, morality, altruism, and the promotion of the public good within their domain. These commitments form the basis of a social contract between a profession and society, which in return grants the profession autonomy in practice and the privilege of self-regulation. Professions and their members are accountable to those served and to society.”

The Oxford’s definition of profession finds that:

- The core element is work;
- There is a mastery of a complex body of knowledge and skills;
- It is a vocation in the service of others;
- Knowledge of some area of science or learning is assumed;
- There is commitment to things such as integrity, morality, altruism and the promotion of the public good;
- There is a social contract between a profession and society;
- Society grants the profession its status;

- The profession is granted autonomy in practice and the privilege of self-regulation
- Professionals are accountable to those served and to society

It is of interest to note that an aspect neglected in this comprehensive definition is the right to earn a living paid for by the fruits of labour.

Lewis (2001:5) puts it quite succinctly:

“Professions, then, are occupations whose members receive their licenses in return for their pledge, their profession, to put the interests of the served society above their own self interest while acting in the licensed role.”

Baker (1999:2) identifies a profession as an occupation whose members have special obligations to those whom they serve. Bayles (1981:71) contends that practising as a professional should be considered a privilege and not a right. The burden is therefore on the person practising to prove that they are qualified.

Because of the regulation of professions, there is historically, the perception among the public that using the services of a “professional” guarantees a minimum standard of knowledge, competence and ethics. This perception has added stature and respect to professions, something which is jealously guarded by all major professions. There is, for instance, a continued scrutiny by professional bodies of professional practices, currency of knowledge and the enforcement of ethical codes of conduct through disciplinary procedures and disbarment or de-accreditation procedures in order to safeguard the reputation of the professions.

Professions place an emphasis on moral aspiration as identified by the ancient Greeks, whose word *arete* translates into English as either “excellence” or as “virtue.” The word “ethics” is derived from the Greek word *ethos* (character), and from the Latin word “*mores*” (customs). They combine to define how individuals choose to interact with one another. Ethics inform the philosophy of what is good for the individual and for society and establish the nature of duties that people owe to themselves and one another.

In the Human Resources Glossary, Tracey (1998:177) provides a definition for the science of ethics: *“A major component of philosophy that is concerned with judgments about “right” and “wrong,” “good” and “bad” conduct or behaviour of individuals and groups. Ethics involves both the how and the what of behaviour and conduct; that is, the means by which actions are carried out are ethically just as important as the ends those acts are intended to achieve.*

The Chambers Concise Dictionary (1988:330) defines ethics as follows:

“The science of morals that branch of philosophy which is concerned with human character and conduct: a system of morals, rules of behaviour.”

To quote Paul Kearns on value: *“It is the very process of articulating value, in clear, unambiguous terms, that makes it such a powerful motive force for meeting society’s needs with limited resources.” and again “We all do what we value. It is the most powerful motive force of all. All society has to do is harness that force.”*(2007:29, 77).

In a debate in the UK House of Lords (Hansard 1992:8), Lord Benson listed the nine obligations of professions to the public as:

- A governing body must control the profession, which directs the behaviour of the members;
- This body must set adequate standards of education as an entry condition;
- Ethical rules and professional standards are to be observed by its members;
- These rules should benefit the public and not be for the personal advantage of its members;
- Disciplinary action must be taken, if necessary.
- Work should be carried out only by persons with the requisite training, standards and discipline;
- Fair and open competition must be guarded by the governing body;
- Professionals must be independent thinkers, willing to speak out without fear or favour;
- A profession must provide leadership in its field of learning.

Against this background, four major professions are investigated by looking to their publications, their fundamental values, how they organise themselves and their route to recognition for new entrants into the profession.

4.2 Professionalism in the legal arena

4.2.1 Background

Roscoe Pound (1953:5), the longest serving and most prolific dean in the history of Harvard Law School defines the term professionalism as pertaining to *“a group calling in the spirit of public service which may also provide a living”*.

In the search for insight into the value placed on professionalism in the legal arena, it becomes clear that professionalism is one of the major and on-going concerns, particularly well articulated in the USA. A visit to the American Bar Association’s website reveals that this body has its own Center for Professional Responsibility. The Center provides national leadership and vision in developing and interpreting standards and scholarly resources in legal ethics, professional regulation, competence, professionalism and client protection mechanisms. It also lists 25 State-based professionalism commissions and detailed advice on setting up such commissions for States who have not yet formed one. Several of these commissions take responsibility for designing and sponsoring continuing legal education courses (CPD) that focus on aspects of lawyer professionalism.

There is every indication that the legal profession is seriously concerned about its public image. Newton (1989:3) expresses alarm at the growing disillusionment of the public with the legal profession. A resolution taken at a Conference of Chief Justices in 1996 of the American Bar Association reads: *“there is the perception and frequently the reality that some members of the bar do not consistently adhere to principles of professionalism and thereby sometimes impede the effective administration of justice.”*

Newton (1989:1) points out that most lawyers are of the opinion that the legal profession is in crisis. He goes on to list the three grounds on which lawyers base their claim of professional status namely special educational requirements, then self-governance and finally a duty to the public to secure legal rights and benefits.

In an article in the Bar News, Schroeter (1999:1) mentions a heightened concern among lawyers about the future of the legal profession and the perception of a lack of public confidence, distrust and even hatred of lawyers and the law. The very concept of being a lawyer and the meaning of professionalism is questioned today. He goes on to say that *“for the better part of the first half of this century, the powerful American bar leadership was perceived by many attorneys, and much of the public, as elitist, racist, sexist, anti-Semitic and reactionary”*.

This is then clearly a matter receiving the on-going active attention of the legal profession. Some of the underlying reasons for the “fall from grace” is outlined by Schroeter (1999:2) when he argues that members of the bar did not hold a position of independence between the wealthy and the people, willing and able to curb the excesses of either. Instead able lawyers have allowed themselves to become adjuncts of great corporations and have neglected their obligation to use their power for the protection of the people. He quotes Harlan F. Stone, Dean of Columbia University Law School and later Supreme Court Justice who characterized the bar leadership as *“the mere hired man of corporations.”* Schroeter (1999:4) asks *“has our profession abandoned principle for profit? professionalism for commercialism?”*

According to another Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Burger (1994:11), the reputation of the legal profession is *“at its lowest ebb since I first started practicing law more than 60 years ago.”* He claims that the public is questioning the competence, integrity and honesty of lawyers. He mentions that both judges and lawyers have in the recent past been guilty of self-dealing and other forms of professional misconduct both inside and outside of the courtroom. This not only diminishes the public’s confidence in the profession, it undermines the public’s respect for the rule of law.

In a debate in the UK House of Lords (Hansard 1992:19) Baroness Hamwee said that the emphasis by their Legal Aid Board on quality “*is becoming an emphasis on speed and high volume, and that there is a risk of creating a second-class service:* She further states “*we should trumpet our sense of duty and service to the community.*”

The solution offered by Burger (1994:11) is that lawyers should re-commit to the higher meaning of professionalism at the various meetings of Bar Associations.

The following Statement of Professionalism was adopted by the Oregon State Bar on 23 January 1991:

“As members of the Oregon State Bar, we belong to a profession devoted to serving both the interests of our clients and the public good. In our roles as officers of the court, as counselors, and as advocates, we aspire to a professional standard of conduct. With adherence to a professional standard of conduct, we earn a reputation for honor, respect, and trustworthiness among our clients, in the legal community, and with the public.

Professionalism includes integrity, courtesy, honesty, and willing compliance with the highest ethical standards. Professionalism goes beyond observing the legal profession’s ethical rules: professionalism sensitively and fairly serves the best interests of clients and the public. Professionalism fosters respect and trust among lawyers and between lawyers and the public, promotes the efficient resolution of disputes, simplifies transactions, and makes the practice of law more enjoyable and satisfying.”

The President of the Colorado Bar Association, Briggs (2005:23), describes the traits of a much revered colleague as someone who used his wealth, his time and his wisdom to serve in countless ways, serving his clients with passion and treating the opposing client and counsel with patience, honesty and unfailing courtesy. In this article the concept of civility, respect and gracious courtesy is seen as a cornerstone of professional behaviour.

In an article published in the American Bar Association Journal, Shestack (1998) identified six components of professionalism: *“Ethics and integrity, competence combined with independence of judgment, meaningful continuing learning, civility, obligations to the justice system and pro bono service.”*

4.2.2 Values and ethics

In the Texas Lawyer's Creed (1989:1) the following statement is found:

“I am a lawyer; I am entrusted by the People of Texas to preserve and improve our legal system. I am licensed by the Supreme Court of Texas. I must therefore abide by the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct, but I know that Professionalism requires more than merely avoiding the violation of laws and rules. I am committed to this Creed for no other reason than it is right. A lawyer owes to the administration of justice personal dignity, integrity, and independence. A lawyer should always adhere to the highest principles of professionalism -

- 1 *I am passionately proud of my profession. Therefore, “My word is my bond.”*
- 2 *I am responsible to assure that all persons have access to competent representation regardless of wealth or position in life.*
- 3 *I commit myself to an adequate and effective pro bono program*
- 4 *I am obligated to educate my clients, the public and other lawyers regarding the spirit and letter of this Creed*
- 5 *I will always be conscious of my duty to the judicial system.”*

Of particular significance in the above Creed, is the admission that professionalism entails more than merely avoiding violation of laws and rules, but that it is first and foremost because it is right to adhere to the highest principles.

Finally, reaching back to the very foundations of law, two items from the transcript of the Magna Carta (1215) are given :

- “35. Let there be one measure of wine throughout our whole realm; and one measure of ale; and one measure of corn, to wit, the London quarter*
- 40. To no one will we sell, to no one will we refuse or delay, right or justice.”*

Going a little further afield, in the European context there seems to be an absence of a set of shared assumptions within the judicial family. The only published code is the Code of Conduct for Lawyers in the European Union (Conseil des barreaux européens or CCBE) which is the model code for all lawyers in the European Union and the European Economic Area. Similar to the American Bar Association Model Rules of Professional Conduct, the CCBE represents only the minimum standard of ethics and is not an expression of aspirational goals of professionalism.

This European Code of Conduct espouses the following general principles:

- Independence (free from all other influence, pressure or personal interest)
- Trust and Personal Integrity
- Confidentiality
- Respect for the Rules of other Bars and Law Societies
- Personal Publicity
- Acting in the Client's best interests

A brief foray into Asian law to gauge the level of engagement with legal professionalism and ethics indicates that the Chinese Bar is currently caught between traditional values, the Communist ideology and capitalist forces, and faces a value crisis.

Looking at what is written and resolved in the legal arena, there is a clear acknowledgement that ethics and professionalism are inextricably bound together. There may even be a closer relationship between professionalism and ethics in the legal profession than in other professions because of the very nature of the work, which operates within the framework of morality, crime, fairness and justice. There is concern within the profession with public disillusionment with the legal profession as a whole, in particular in America. There is a lack of world-wide cohesion and an international set of standards.

4.2.3 **Body of knowledge**

In every Bar Association examined, a recognised qualification in Law is taken for granted, with admission to the Bar, internships, student loans etc. being fully organised. As regulating body the American Bar Association currently approves a total of 194 law schools. In Britain, the General Council of the Bar is the governing body and the Bar Standards Board runs the regulation side of the Bar, operating a Rules Committee, a Conduct Committee, a Qualifications Committee and a Monitoring Committee. The legal profession is well organised and well structured as far the basic knowledge component is concerned. Prominent throughout their documentation are the elements of service, pro bono work and duty to society.

The situation in South Africa to become a member of the bar is as follows (extracted from the official website of the General Council of the Bar of South Africa).

- *“ To become an advocate you must be ‘admitted’ to the Roll of Advocates, a statutory register kept by the official of the High Court.*
- *You must apply to the High Court, on affidavit, stating that you are honest, have not committed any criminal offences, have an LLB degree and are ‘fit and proper’ to be an advocate.*
- *You must appear before the High Court to promise to uphold the Constitution, after which you may call yourself an advocate”.*

Or elsewhere on the website more specifically:

- *“Either a four year LLB or a three year undergraduate degree (BA, BCOM, or a BSC) plus a two year LLB from any South African university”.*

4.2.4 **Summary of core values**

From the above the following could be regarded as important elements of the professional values and ethics in the medical profession:

- Subordinating narrow self-interest in the pursuit of public service

- Serving interests of clients
- Integrity, honesty, and willing compliance with the highest ethical standards
- Character, fairness, competence
- Respect for the rule of law, the courts, clients, other lawyers, witnesses and unrepresented parties
- The fostering of respect and trust among lawyers and between lawyers and the public
- Civility and courtesy
- A commitment to develop one's skills to the fullest
- Applying those skills responsibly
- Independence of judgement
- Meaningful continuing learning
- Obligations to the justice system
- Pro bono service
- Performing work as cost-effectively as possible
- Confidentiality

4.3 Professionalism in the engineering profession

4.3.1 Background

Engineering has many branches. For this study the workings of civil and mechanical engineering only are examined.

Reviewing the publications of eminent professionals in engineering, it is clear that this profession is also vested in ethics and professionalism. According to Oates (1993:44), professionalism extends beyond the mere knowledge of ethics. It includes both in public and in private life, upholding the laws, ethical codes, and moral standards that society expects from professionals. Oates points out that professional engineers should work for the welfare of the public as they are often in the position and have the resources to improve society.

Williams (1997) defines professionalism as the “*the capacity to make competent and unbiased judgments consistently.*” According to Williams, professionalism practised in this way brings favour on both the practitioner and on the profession, whether engineers, doctors or lawyers. Like Oates, he is of the opinion that the betterment of humanity is a primary focus for engineers. They are also expected to advance the integrity, honour and dignity of their profession by being honest and impartial and by serving with fidelity, the public, their employers and their clients.

Koehn (1993:402) divides ethics into four primary theories – rights ethics, duty ethics, utilitarianism and virtue ethics. In addition, four secondary theories are mentioned – ethical egoism, corporate egoism, ethical relativism and divine-command ethics. Koehn mentions three issues that are considered serious by the engineering fraternity, namely technical incompetence or misrepresentation of competence; failure to protect public health, safety or welfare; and poor quality control or quality of work

Engineering encompasses values such as basic standards of safety and efficiency, the character of engineers and advanced skill combined with commitment to the public good. (Martin 2004:4). In engineering, as in other professions, excellence and ethics go together. According to Martin, ethics involve much more than problems and punishment, duties and dilemmas. Ethics involve the full range of moral values to which one aspires in guiding endeavours and in structuring relationships and communities.

Harris, Rabins and Harris (2004:18) make the point that professional ethics is not simply a gloss on professional education but is intimately related to what it means to be a professional. They postulate that engineering ethics is about standards and how to apply standards in particular situations to promote responsible engineering practice and preventive ethics to avoid serious problems later.

Whitbeck (1998:20) mentions among others that the consideration of human rights provides a necessary backdrop for the discussion of professional ethics within engineering. She argues that the international recognition of human rights

provides endorsement of a standard for ethical behaviour that transcends cultural differences and can be applied to the ethical problems of engineers.

As a sub-sector of both engineering and geology, engineering geology is currently in a process of formalising the work of engineering geologists in Europe. Their work in this process of professionalization is of interest. In his keynote address, Norbury (2004) raises interesting issues around the formalisation of engineering geology, their professionalism, registration or licensing, titles and whether voluntary or statutory registration would be the way to go. The profession of geology is regulated in only two countries within the European Union, namely Italy and Spain. Norbury gives a definition of a competent person which relates to this investigation into perceptions of professionalism in other professions:

“A Competent Person is a corporate member of a recognised professional body relevant to the activity being undertaken, and with enforceable Rules of Conduct. A Competent Person should have a minimum of five years experience relevant to the style of mineralisation and type of deposit under consideration. If the Competent Person is estimating or supervising the estimation of Mineral Resources or Mineral Reserves, the relevant experience must be in the estimation, evaluation and assessment of Mineral Resources or Mineral Reserves respectively.”

With the focus of Norbury’s address on professional practice, this definition highlights the fact that being a member of *a recognised professional body* with enforceable rules of conduct is the mark of a person that can be regarded as competent within the profession.

According to Engineering Council UK (ECUK), their mission is to set and maintain realistic and internationally recognized standards of professional competence and ethics for engineers, technologists and technicians, and to license competent institutions to promote and uphold the standards. Under its Royal Charter, ECUK regulates the engineering profession in the UK and formally represents the interests of UK engineers abroad. It is a Designated Authority under the current

General Systems Directive, a system followed in British engineering. The UK engineering profession has accredited a large number of academic qualifications, which either fully or partially satisfy the education requirements for registration.

The American Society of Civil Engineers distinguishes between fundamental principles and fundamental canons (ASCE website). Engineers uphold and advance the integrity, honour and dignity of the engineering profession by the values and ethics as detailed below.

4.3.2 **The values and ethics of the Engineering Profession**

Fundamental Principles

- using their knowledge and skill for the enhancement of human welfare and the environment;
- being honest and impartial and serving with fidelity the public, their employers and clients;
- striving to increase the competence and prestige of the engineering profession; and
- supporting the professional and technical societies of their disciplines.

Fundamental Canons

- Engineers shall hold paramount the safety, health and welfare of the public and shall strive to comply with the principles of sustainable development in the performance of their professional duties.
- Engineers shall perform services only in areas of their competence.
- Engineers shall issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner.
- Engineers shall act in professional matters for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees, and shall avoid conflicts of interest.
- Engineers shall build their professional reputation on the merit of their services and shall not compete unfairly with others.

- Engineers shall act in such a manner as to uphold and enhance the honour, integrity, and dignity of the engineering profession and shall act with zero-tolerance for bribery, fraud, and corruption.
- Engineers shall continue their professional development throughout their careers, and shall provide opportunities for the professional development of those engineers under their supervision.

The second last of the Fundamental Canons in the Code of Conduct of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) listed above, relates specifically to ethical conduct as expanded on below:

“Engineers shall act in such a manner as to uphold and enhance the honour, integrity, and dignity of the engineering profession and shall act with zero-tolerance for bribery, fraud, and corruption:

- *Engineers shall not knowingly engage in business or professional practices of a fraudulent, dishonest or unethical nature.*
- *Engineers shall be scrupulously honest in their control and spending of monies, and promote effective use of resources through open, honest and impartial service with fidelity to the public, employers, associates and clients.*
- *Engineers shall act with zero-tolerance for bribery, fraud, and corruption in all engineering or construction activities in which they are engaged.*
- *Engineers should be especially vigilant to maintain appropriate ethical behaviour where payments of gratuities or bribes are institutionalized practices.*
- *Engineers should strive for transparency in the procurement and execution of projects. Transparency includes disclosure of names, addresses, purposes, and fees or commissions paid for all agents facilitating projects.*
- *Engineers should encourage the use of certifications specifying zero-tolerance for bribery, fraud, and corruption in all contracts.”*

On the website of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers the following core values are espoused:

- Embrace integrity and ethical conduct;

- Embrace diversity and respect the dignity and culture of all people;
- Nurture and treasure the environment and our natural and man-made resources;
- Facilitate the development, dissemination and application of engineering knowledge;
- Promote the benefits of continuing education and of engineering education;
- Respect and document engineering history while continually embracing change
- Promote the technical and societal contribution of engineers.

4.3.3 **The body of knowledge of the Engineering Profession**

Once again, knowledge and skills are prerequisites for joining this profession. There is a properly constituted and state-recognized regulating body. There is an emphasis on values, service to society and continued professional development as with the legal profession. One element that has not been found explicitly (although this may have been implied) in the other professions is that the engineer must be prepared to assume responsibility for the subsequent impact of a task, if any. The safety, health and welfare of the public takes on particular significance if the work of an engineer is considered, as does the requirement of performing services only in the areas of their competence.

Unlike the three other major professions being discussed, (law, medicine and accountancy), the engineering profession seems to have largely escaped the growing public dissatisfaction with perceptions of self-interest and lack of integrity.

It is interesting to note the high standard that is required in order to practise, for instance, as a water resources engineer in the USA. At issue is not so much the academic requirement, although this is very high, but accompanying emphasis on licensing, currency, experience and reputation of professional and ethical standing. The American Society of Civil Engineers lists the following requirements for this specialty certification:

- A bachelor's degree in engineering or related science acceptable to the Board, and:
 - A master of engineering degree in water resources; or
 - A doctoral degree in water resources engineering; or
 - A minimum of 30 graduate level semester hours related to water resources engineering.
- A valid *license to practice* professional engineering in the U.S. or equivalent license issued by a foreign country;
- 10 or more years *progressive professional experience* in water resources engineering;
- *Current active engagement* in the professional practice of water resources engineering;
- Written *recommendations* endorsing the application from three peers who possess a valid professional engineering license and are aware of the applicants professional experience;
- *High professional ethical standing in the profession*;
- *Agreement in writing to adhere* to the ASCE Code of Ethics;
- An *oral assessment*, passed in a manner satisfactory to the AAWRE Board of Trustees.

4.3.4 Summary of core values

From the above, the following could be regarded as important elements of the professional values and ethics in the engineering profession:

- Specialized knowledge and skills;
- Used to benefit humanity;
- Honesty and impartiality in providing services;
- A consistent interest in improving the profession;
- An understanding of obligations to society and to other practitioners;
- The capacity to accept individual responsibility;

- The capacity to maintain confidentiality;
- The willingness to advance professional knowledge, ideals and practice;
- Scrupulous and meticulous honesty in the handling of monies;
- Transparency;
- Respect for the dignity and culture of all people
- Respect for the history of the profession while embracing change.

4.4 Professionalism in the Medical Profession

4.4.1 Background

As ancient as law, the medical tradition goes back to Hellenic Greece and the Hippocratic Oath or its modern derivative. The medical profession obviously also has extensive descriptions of professional conduct and ethics. As in the legal profession, there is an acute awareness that times are changing and that fundamental values are being shaken.

Sox (2002:243) introduces the 2002 Physician's Charter with the words:

"Changes in the health care delivery systems in countries throughout the industrialized world threaten the values of professionalism. The document conveys this message with chilling brevity. The authors apparently feel no need to defend this premise, perhaps because they believe that it is a universally held truth. The authors go further, stating that the conditions of medical practice are tempting physicians to abandon their commitment to the primacy of patient welfare. These are very strong words. Whether they are strictly true for the profession as a whole is almost beside the point. Each physician must decide if the circumstances of practice are threatening his or her adherence to the values that the medical profession has held dear for many millennia."

With Sox (2002:243) as the editor, this Charter was published for the first time in February 2002 in both the medical publication the Lancet and the Annals of Internal Medicine. There is an attempt to engage with physicians throughout the world in a dialogue to progress in understanding how physicians in different cultures approach their commitments to patients and the public. The Charter sets

out three Fundamental Principles, namely the primacy of patient welfare which dates back to ancient times, patient autonomy which espouses the more recent view that the physician is an advisor, often one of many, to an autonomous patient and social justice which relates to the fair distribution of health care resources.

While discussing the practical implications of putting the Physician's Charter into practice, Cruess and Cruess (2003:851) touch on the social contract with society, and indicate that society has every right to expect that medicine will meet societal expectations while medicine can also rightfully expect certain actions by the society it serves. They point out that the nature of the contract has changed dramatically over the past 150 years. Up until World War II, medicine largely determined public policy, controlled the health care marketplace, exercised great authority and was given responsibility for the health care systems in the developed world.

However, during the past 50 years, health care has changed from a cottage industry to a complex activity consuming a substantial portion of the gross domestic product of most countries. The increasing power of both the state and the marketplace was noticeable together with the concomitant weakening of medicine's influence. Cruess and Cruess postulates that while society's expectations of medicine has not changed much, both the state and the marketplace began to exert authority over the structure of the system. Clearly the medical profession now feels undervalued, threatened, and at times unable to deliver appropriate care. It would like greater influence over public policy, and a health care system in which its expertise is recognized and used. Along with the loss of influence has come a well-documented loss of trust in the profession. *"If the profession is to have significant input into public policy (the social contract), it must be trusted."* (Cruess et al 2003:851).

In an article printed in the Australian Medical Journal, Cruess, Johnston and Cruess (2002) write about aspects of professionalism in medicine. They mention that in society, a physician is a healer and a professional: a healer empowered by science and a professional governed by a code of ethics. The medical profession is granted a monopoly over the use of a body of knowledge and the privilege of

self-regulation. The profession reciprocates by guaranteeing professional competence, integrity and the provision of altruistic service.

As the above discussion of the legal profession indicates, Cruess et al (2003:851) also point out that societal attitudes to professionalism have changed from being supportive to being more and more critical of self-interest and failings in self-regulation. In the article referred to above, they state however that *“as control of healthcare has passed from medicine to the State and the corporate sector, so has the blame for defects in the healthcare system.”*

There is an interesting correlation in the sentiments expressed by the medical profession that social change has not been beneficial for the profession, and the indication by the legal profession that the influence exerted on them by big corporations has been detrimental in particular to the ethics of the profession.

4.4.2 **The values and ethics in the Medical Profession**

The Policy of the World Medical Association amended in Pilanesberg, South African on October 2006, states under Duties of Physicians in General:

A physician shall:

- Always exercise his/her independent professional judgment and maintain the highest standards of professional conduct;
- Respect a competent patient's right to accept or refuse treatment;
- Not allow his/her judgment to be influenced by personal profit or unfair discrimination;
- Be dedicated to providing competent medical service in full professional and moral independence, with compassion and respect for human dignity;
- Deal honestly with patients and colleagues, and report to the appropriate authorities those physicians who practice unethically or incompetently or who engage in fraud or deception;
- Not receive any financial benefits or other incentives solely for referring patients or prescribing specific products;

- Respect the rights and preferences of patients, colleagues, and other health professionals;
- Recognize his/her important role in educating the public but should use due caution in divulging discoveries or new techniques or treatment through non-professional channels;
- Certify only that which he/she has personally verified;
- Strive to use health care resources in the best way to benefit patients and their community;
- Seek appropriate care and attention for mental or physical illness;
- Respect the local and national codes of ethics.

The Declaration of Geneva – adopted Switzerland 1948, amended Australia 1968, Italy 1983 and Sweden 1994 requires the following personal declaration:

At the time of being admitted as a member of the medical profession:

- I solemnly pledge myself to consecrate my life to the service of humanity;
- I will give to my teachers the respect and gratitude which is their due;
- I will practice my profession with conscience and dignity;
- The health of my patient will be my first consideration;
- I will respect the secrets which are confided in me, even after the patient has died;
- I will maintain by all the means in my power, the honour and the noble traditions of the medical profession;
- My colleagues will be my sisters and brothers;
- I will not permit considerations of age, disease or disability, creed, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, affiliation, race, sexual orientation, or social standing to intervene between my duty and my patient;
- I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from its beginning even under threat and I will not use medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity.

I make these promises solemnly, freely and upon my honour.

Robert (2004:1) is of the opinion that the core of professionalism constitutes

"... those attitudes and behaviours that serve to maintain patient interest above physician self-interest. Accordingly, professionalism ... aspires to altruism, accountability, excellence, duty, service, honour, integrity, and respect for others."

He argues that ethics is something that has to be attempted, striven for as in an earnest exertion in order to achieve something. It refers to ways of understanding what is good and right in the human experience. Words such as discernment, knowledge, self-reflection are appropriate in this context. Ethics needs to be sustained through seeking, clarifying, translating. *"Ethics is about meaning and it is about action."* Once again professionalism and ethics are inextricably intertwined. While the scientific body of knowledge is the starting point of the medical profession, it is not professionalism. There is a continuous effort to articulate, clarify and explain the concept and to encapsulate the ideal.

4.4.3 **Body of knowledge**

Long periods of education and training are required due to the complexity of the medical body of knowledge, as with other professions. World and national regulating bodies determine licence to practise. Continued professional development is prescribed and controlled. While Engineering, Accountancy and Law are also continually renewing and modernising, it is the field of Medicine which is dynamically changing and where new developments and research results are published on a daily basis. Keeping current entails, according to the British Medical Association:

- Attending courses;
- Reading specialist journals;
- Setting up a personal development plan;
- Attending local, national and international conferences;
- Presenting at conferences and publishing papers;
- Reflecting on medical issues.

According to the American Medical Association, direct credits may be claimed for Continuing Medical Education for learning that occurs as a result of teaching, presentations, attending seminars, published articles, medically related advanced degree, maintenance of certification, etc.

4.4.4 **Summary of core values**

From the above, the following could be regarded as important elements of the professional values and ethics in the medical profession:

- Primacy of patient welfare
- Autonomy of the patient
- Fair distribution of health care resources
- A social contract with society
- Independent professional judgment
- Certify only what has personally been verified
- A strong service orientation
- Confidentiality
- Discernment,
- Self-reflection
- Currency of knowledge
- Accountability
- Honour and integrity
- Respect for others

4.5 **Professionalism in accounting**

4.5.1 **Background**

In a timeline of the development of the accountancy profession in the United Kingdom, the following broad guidelines are given by the Library & Information Service of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales:

Table 4.1 : *Development of Accountancy Profession in England and Wales – broad guidelines*

| Dates | Important events |
|-----------|---|
| 1853-1880 | The founder bodies and local societies emerge. Accountancy takes form as an organised profession. A Royal Charter is granted. |
| 1881-1913 | Setting the standards of professional conduct. |
| 1914-1938 | The first women admitted to the profession |
| 1939-1967 | The first Member's Handbook is published. |
| 1968-2003 | Enron and the collapse of US Andersen. Adoption of International Accounting Standards. |

According to the official website of IFAC The International Federation of Accountants was founded on October 7, 1977 in Munich, Germany at the 11th World Congress of Accountants. The organization's headquarters have been based in New York City since its founding.

IFAC was established to strengthen worldwide accountancy profession in the public interest by:

- Developing high quality international standards and supporting their adoption and use;
- Facilitating collaboration and cooperation among its member bodies;
- Collaborating and cooperating with other international organizations; and
- Serving as the international spokesperson for the accountancy profession

Beginning with 63 members in 1977, IFAC's membership now includes 158 members and associates in 123 countries worldwide. Interestingly, it was also in the late seventies that the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations was established by HR bodies.

In the Accountancy Profession, GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) has become an international benchmark. It is a common set of accounting principles, standards and procedures used to compile financial statements.

Boudreau and Ramstad (2007:16) make a distinction between accounting (the professional practice) and finance (the decision science) and goes on to say that

the decision science requires the professional practice and *“that professional practice must, in fact, precede the decision science”*.

The financial tsunami of Enron has called for a thorough review of accounting ethics. McGee (2004:80) quotes the calls of Fox and others to *‘...include leadership, integrity and ethical training as priorities in business and accounting education.’*

In a speech, Graham Ward (2006:1), President of IFAC (International Federation of Accountants) refers to the lessons learned from Enron, WorldCom, Tyco and other companies around the world. These regrettable ethical lapses have underlined the fact that ethics is a driver both of business stability and business success. *“Without a strong ethical foundation, companies and their management are more likely now, than ever before, to find their customer base eroded and their profit margins narrowed.”*

Ward goes on to say that future lapses in company management and those that support management, such as lawyers, investment managers and professional accountants must be prevented. He documents three fundamental preventative steps:

- Establish realistic business objectives;
- Develop a transparent business culture; and
- Promote and enforce a corporate code of ethics among employees and require their service providers to do the same.

As an aside on professionalism, Ward says: *‘And by the way, the title ‘accountant’ should only apply to members of recognised institutes, to protect and reassure the public that all those known as accountants are bound to follow the IFAC ethics code’*. (Ward 2006:4).

In an article titled “Shame About Standards”, Hussey (1999) argues that although for many years, the various accountancy bodies around the world have worked

together, through IFAC, to set standards that can apply internationally, standard-setting is not enough. He concludes that it is essential to move into standards compliance with compliance surveys done and published, “*which would require not only extensive technical expertise and competence, but also strength of character, integrity and gritty political will.*” Such compliance league tables could effectively shame national economies and affect external trust.

Kultgen (1988:5) expresses the view that it is a mistake to think of professionals as the sole authors of their ethical principles. Professionals compose partnerships with their clients and with their employers. This issue is critical to professionals employed by others.

The discussions above indicate again a major, respected and statutory profession under the glare of public scrutiny in the light of serious breaches of ethical conduct. The will to reform and do better is clearly articulated by the international regulatory bodies.

4.5.2 Values and Ethics

On the website of the International Federation of Accountants, it is possible to establish how various aspects of this profession functions internationally.

Their fundamental principles are detailed in their Code of Ethics (2005):

- Integrity – straightforward and honest in performing professional services;
- Objectivity – fair, should not allow prejudice or bias, conflict of interest or influence of others to override objectivity;
- Professional Competence and Due Care – and a continuing duty to maintain professional knowledge and skill to ensure that a client or employer receives the advantage of competent professional service based on up-to-date developments in practice, legislation and techniques;
- Confidentiality – respect confidentiality of information acquired during course of services and not use or disclose without proper and specific authority or unless there is a legal or professional right or duty to disclose;

- Professional Behaviour – act consistent with the good reputation of the profession and refrain from any conduct which might bring discredit to the profession;
- Technical Standards – Professional services should be carried out in accordance with the relevant technical and professional standards.

Looking at the professional values, one finds a directive to comply with relevant local codes of ethics, the coverage of values and attitudes in education programs leading to a commitment to:

- The public interest and sensitivity to social responsibilities
- Continual improvement and lifelong learning
- Reliability, responsibility, timeliness, courtesy and respect and
- Laws and regulations.

The International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants has pronounced on the code of ethics:

“The Code establishes ethical requirements for professional accountants and provides a conceptual framework for all professional accountants to ensure compliance with the five fundamental principles of professional ethics. These principles are integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality, and professional behaviour. Under the framework, all professional accountants are required to identify threats to these fundamental principles and, if there are threats, apply safeguards to ensure that the principles are not compromised.”

The accounting profession is also concerned with social responsibility which is defined by Kok et al (2001:287) as *“the obligation of the firm to use its resources in ways to benefit society, through committed participation as a member of society, taking into account the society at large, and improving welfare of society at large independently of direct gains of the company.”*

4.5.3 **Body of knowledge of the Accountancy Profession**

As with the other major professions, accountancy is well structured both nationally and internationally as far as the body of knowledge is concerned. The title of CA is jealously guarded and entry into the profession can only be gained by sitting for an examination set by the profession.

The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) requires a B Com (honours) or equivalent, some 3 – 5 years of experience and the prescribed examinations of the professional body SAICA.

A brief extract from the history of Chartered Accounting in South Africa has been extracted from the SAICA website:

“In 1950 all theoretical teaching and examining was handed over to universities, but the profession retained the right to set the qualifying examination. The first CTA examinations were held in 1951. The Public Accountants and Auditors Act was also promulgated in 1951 and it brought into place the regulation of accountants and auditors in public practice. The General Examining Board continued to set the qualifying examination until 1957 when it was taken over by the Public Accountants' and Auditors' Board (PAAB)”.

In an article in the Sunday Times of December 16 2007, Matthew Lester, who is a professor of taxation studies at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, remarked on his personal experience of becoming a CA in South Africa. His CA career started with a well-known accounting firm who gave him a study bursary. They not only paid his University fees for four years, but also gave him a vacation job to earn money and find out about basic audit processes. They provided in-house training to assist with the CA board examination, a loan to pay the entrance fees, three weeks paid study leave and moral support. *“I was put under the wing of the patron saint of South African CAs, Charles Hattingh, for four months of preparation for the mother of all examinations.”* He mentions the people who mentored him in the technical stuff, tax, ethics, practice, cash flow management, social etiquette, how to be a marketer and a gentleman.

Lester then goes on to contrast this with the situation as it stands today:

“Today, I wouldn’t have a hope in hell of getting a study bursary from any CA firm. Forget the exams. Requirement one for the CA qualification seems to be ‘Can Mom and Dad pay?’ Most firms don’t employ vacation students. He concludes his article: “Yes, today’s prospective CA is a very different animal to the one of 25 years ago. Standards have not dropped, they are higher than ever”.

4.5.4 **Summary of core values**

From the above, the following could be regarded as important elements of the professional values and ethics in the medical profession:

- Integrity
- A transparent business culture
- Professional competence
- Objectivity
- Confidentiality
- Professional conduct
- Extensive technical expertise

4.6 **The pillars of professionalism**

Taking into account the premises which the four major and recognised professions have identified as foundational in their writings, it is a fair assumption to say that professionalism rests on the pillars of:

4.6.1 **Mastery of a particular intellectual skill, acquired by training and education**

- Each profession has a history of educational requirements;
- There is constant vigilance to keep the education relevant to the changing environment;
- Training by experience hones competence and is part of the package of producing proficient practitioners;

- Continued professional development is usually compulsory and often the area of need or new development is identified by the regulatory body and prescribed.

4.6.2 **Adherence by its members to a common code of values and conduct**

- A code is not only a practical guide, it is often aspirational and sets an ideal;
- Detailed guidance and examples may be given and examples of threats to compliance are identified together with safeguards;
- Disciplinary procedures are put in place to deal with breaches and compliance failures.

4.6.3 **A regulating or administering body**

- Recognised by government and society;
- Functioning as a watchdog and enforcing body ;
- Pointing to the ideal;
- Functioning as a network to exchange ideas and solutions.

4.6.4 **Acceptance of a duty to society as a whole**

- By professionals functioning within their competence parameters
- By doing pro bono work
- By ensuring public safety, health and welfare
- By respecting human rights and dignity
- By using specialised skills to benefit humanity
- By maintaining and respecting confidentiality of information

4.7 **Comparing the regulatory frameworks**

Below are some of the details of the regulatory frameworks of the four major professions studied as they are regulated locally.

Table 4.2 *Comparative matrix of regulatory framework of the legal, engineering, medical and accounting professions in South Africa.*

| | LEGAL | ENGINEERING | MEDICAL | ACCOUNTING |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Regulating Body | General Council of the Bar | Engineering Council of South Africa | Health Professions Council of SA + Prof Boards | SA Institute of Chartered Accountants |
| Professional Title | Advocate | Civil Engineer | Psychologist | Accountant |
| Education | LLB (4 yr) | Degree in Civil Engineering | Masters degree in Psychology | BCom Hons |
| Requirements for Accreditation | Bar Examination | Professional Review | National Examination of the Board | 2 CTI Examinations |
| Internship or Experience required | 1 year pupillage | Training to ECSA Schedule | 1 year internship | 3-5 years |
| CPD | Required | Required | Required | Required |
| Code of Ethics | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Act | Admission of Advocates Act, 74 of 1964 | Engineering Profession Act, Act 46 of 2000 | Health Professions Act no. 56 of 1974 | The Public Accountants and Auditors Act No 80 of 1991 |

These professions all have the basic pillars of professionalism in place. There is a regulating body which determines the designations, educational requirements, professional accreditation requirements, internship or experience required, CPD and a Code of Ethics. The professional education required, is in all cases, either a degree, honours and higher and with the exception of engineering, a professional examination is required.

4.8 The shared values of the four professions

The various value elements described in this chapter of the study, can also be compared. The table 2.3 below summarizes the values espoused by different professional bodies. The first column details the values found in the codes of various professions. Because the final list is an extraction and compilation of the

various elements appearing in the codes, and the actual value may be described in slightly different terms, the matrix reflects an approximation of the acceptance of the values by the different professions.

It is possible to state these basic elements positively as well as negatively.

While the terms Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics are used interchangeably by most of the authors and sites cited, Craig Nordlund, Associate General Counsel and Secretary at Hewlett Packard suggests that codes of conduct specify actions in the workplace and codes of ethics are general guides to decisions about those actions (McNamara 1997:15).

These articulated values have evolved over many years of iteration and refinement. There are subtle differences in wording and different emphases. If values are not marked on the matrix, it does not imply that they are not also held dear. Yet on the whole there is a remarkable consensus as to what are basic, foundational good ethics to live by. Personal character, honour and integrity, so difficult to instil, are given the highest value of all. Professions can but hope to attract, through the way their professions are perceived, persons of high personal morals.

The three values espoused explicitly by them all are:

- Sound moral character (integrity/honour/honesty)
- Maintaining the good reputation and prestige of the profession
- Mastering the skills of the profession by education and training

Table 4.3 *Comparative matrix of values of the four major professions:*

| Values | Legal | Engineering | Medical | Accounting |
|---|-------|-------------|---------|------------|
| Sound moral character (integrity/honour/honesty) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Maintaining the good reputation and prestige of the profession | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mastering the particular intellectual skills of the profession acquired by training and education | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Respect for human dignity | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

| Values | Legal | Engineering | Medical | Accounting |
|--|-------|-------------|---------|------------|
| Confidentiality | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Adhering to the common code of values and conduct of the profession | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Improving and growing the profession | | ✓ | | |
| Exposing those who engage in fraud and deception | | ✓ | | |
| Not permitting motives of profit to influence the free and independent exercise of professional judgment | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Dedication to service / pro bono service | ✓ | | | |
| Acceptance of duty to society as a whole | | | | ✓ |
| Holding paramount the safety, health and well-being of the public | | ✓ | | |
| Serving with fidelity the public, employees & clients | ✓ | | | |
| Willing to subordinate self-interest in pursuit of the more fundamental goal of public service | | ✓ | | |
| Certifying only what has been personally verified | | | ✓ | |
| Maintaining and enhancing work systems (IT etc) | | ✓ | | |
| Prepared to assume responsibility for subsequent impact of a task | | ✓ | | |
| Always acting as faithful agent or trustee | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| A dedication to providing competent service | | | | ✓ |
| Avoiding conflict of interest | | | | ✓ |
| Adopting responsible behaviour | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Respecting the rights of others | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Maintaining an objective outlook | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Rendering service in accordance with the relevant technical and professional standards | | | | ✓ |
| Building professional reputation on the merit of services rendered | | ✓ | | |
| Issuing public statements only in an objective and truthful manner | | | | ✓ |
| Continued concern for professional competence | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Recognizing personal limitations and consulting with other experts | | | ✓ | |
| Keeping up to date on developments in practice, legislation and techniques | | | | ✓ |
| Continuing to develop professional knowledge and skill throughout career | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| A concern for development and progress / research | | ✓ | ✓ | |

4.8.1 The values grouped in themes

Having studied the nature of the four statutory professions, the following common elements were found in codes and values and grouped together into major **themes** found throughout:

- Fundamental personal values;
- Ethical and professional conduct;
- Knowledge and skills;
- Professional attributes or characteristics;

These themes should, in fact, be found in work fields which have achieved professional maturity. They should also be found in Human Resources in order to be identified as more than a technology or a quasi-profession. Trades may also be sub-professions and quasi- or half-professions may have lost their energy for full development. There may also be under-developed professions or warped ones which developed anti-social credo's (like the mafia).

Below is a list of values and ethics identified in the literature review.

4.8.2 Fundamental personal values

The following fundamental personal values were isolated:

- Honour
- Integrity
- Respect for human dignity
- Altruism
- Caring
- Compassion
- Honesty
- A dedication to serving humanity
- Loyalty
- Sound moral character

4.8.3 Ethical and professional conduct

The following elements of ethical and professional conduct were isolated:

- Adherence to the common code of values and conduct of the profession
- Acceptance of duty to society as a whole
- A dedication to providing competent service
- Responsible behaviour

- Acting only in the client's interest
- Recognizing personal limitations and consulting with other experts
- Not enticing clients away from colleagues
- Certifying only what has personally been verified
- Respecting the rights of others
- Promotion of justice
- Promotion of the public good
- Maintaining the integrity of work systems
- Contributing to the efficient and effective use of an organisation's resources
- Ensuring sound internal control systems enhancing the reliability of information
- Maintaining an outlook which is essentially objective consisting of impartiality, intellectual honesty and freedom from conflict of interest
- Not allowing bias, conflict of interest or external influences to override objectivity
- Acting as faithful agents or trustees,
- Avoiding conflict of interest
- Taking due care
- Respecting, safeguarding and maintaining confidentiality – disclosing only with proper and specific authority or if there is a legal or professional right or duty to disclose
- Acting consistent with and maintaining the good reputation of the profession
- Striving to increase the competence and prestige of the profession
- A consistent interest in improving the profession
- Refraining from any conduct which might bring discredit to the profession
- Rendering service in accordance with the relevant technical and professional standards
- Not permitting considerations of age, disease, disability, creed, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, affiliation, race, sexual orientation or social standing to intervene in matters of duty
- Exposing those in the profession who engage in fraud and deception
- Using knowledge and skill for the enhancement of human welfare
- Serving with fidelity the public, employees and clients
- Holding paramount the safety, health and welfare of the public

- Performing services only in the areas of competence
- Building professional reputation on the merit of services rendered
- Associating only with reputable persons or organizations
- Issuing public statements only in an objective and truthful manner
- Always maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct
- Not permitting motives of profit to influence the free and independent exercise of professional judgement
- A willingness to subordinate narrow self-interest in pursuit of the more fundamental goal of public service
- Prepared to assume responsibility for the subsequent impact of a task

4.8.4 Knowledge and skills

The following elements of knowledge and skills were isolated:

- Mastery of a particular intellectual skill acquired by training and education
- The attainment of specialized knowledge and skills
- The willingness to advance professional knowledge, ideals and practice
- Professional competence
- A duty to maintain professional knowledge and skill
- Continue professional development throughout career
- Competent professional service based on up-to-date developments in practice, legislation and techniques
- A commitment to develop skills to the fullest
- Scholarship
- Communication

4.8.5 Professional attributes or characteristics

The following professional attributes or characteristics were isolated

- Excellence in practice
- The capacity to accept individual responsibility
- The capacity to maintain confidentiality
- Accountability
- Leadership
- Independent functioning and thought

- Judgment
- Engendering confidence
- Credibility
- Public service
- Service to clients
- Objectivity
- Fairness
- Respecting and honouring teachers
- Practicing with conscience
- Practicing with dignity
- Impartiality
- An understanding of obligations to society and other practitioners
- Discretion
- Judgment

The purpose of identifying these elements is to use them as the basis for a research questionnaire. The results will be used in formulating a new Code of Conduct for the South African Board for Personnel Practice.

4.9 Regulatory Bodies

The governing bodies of professions are formed by the members of a profession in order to regulate practices, to keep unqualified or incompetent people from practising and to order the disciplinary functions to protect the Code of Conduct.

All the professional bodies examined in the study, also monitor the content of education programmes to ensure competent practitioners and currency of skills and knowledge. Most professions have formalized continued professional development in the form of update courses and required reading.

One of the major functions of the professional body is to ensure that the status of the profession is elevated by the careful measurement of entrants in order to register qualifying applicants at the appropriate level.

The regulatory bodies investigated in the major recognized professions above have the following functions (among others):

- They set and evaluate the standard of required education for the profession. This is done both for the protection of the public as well as the protection of the quality of delivery by the professionals.
- They register individual practitioners who have met the standards for professional registration set by the regulating body.
- They identify threats to professional compliance that arise due to changing circumstances or shifting paradigms in society, such as self-interest, self-review, advocacy, familiarity or intimidation and devise the necessary safeguards.
- They deal with disciplinary issues related to their code of conduct and have the authority to de-bar, de-register or remove license to practice from an individual.
- More lately, with the huge increase in knowledge and technology, the regulating bodies put measures in place to ensure currency and continued professional development through lifelong learning.
- Regulatory bodies also undertake the support of research, benchmarking, documenting best practice and dissemination of pertinent information.

Regardless of educational, training and experience requirements for entry into a profession, corporate governance regulations, professional standards, continued professional development requirements, monitoring and disciplinary procedures and external reviews, at the heart of professionalism lies an individual value-system. It is worthwhile to quote William Sullivan (1995:16), a prominent sociologist: *“Neither economic incentives nor technology nor administrative control has proved an effective surrogate for the commitment to integrity evoked in the ideal of professionalism”*. He points out that there are substantial advantages to society in preserving professionalism as an effective value-based system

4.10 Implications

From the study of four major professions in this chapter, it can be concluded that they have values and ethics in common, although each has unique as well as common elements. It can also be seen that the times we live in have made it more difficult than ever to honour the professional commitment. This implies that a code of ethics that is living and practised is foundational to the health of a profession.

What also emerges from this chapter is the fact that while most values are held in common, every profession performs a different service. This necessitates a unique centre of gravity in each profession. Thus, by virtue of the nature of the legal profession, the lawyer is closest to even-handed justice and an appreciation of the rule of law. The engineer on the other hand, may favour standards of public safety and functionality and values technical competence very highly. The doctor may concentrate on respect for human life, dignity and autonomy whereas the accountant may value objectivity, honesty and due care in the performance of professional services.

The need for open-minded innovation within a profession is clearly demonstrated by the unfolding realisation of threats to the environment and human well-being caused by scale escalation associated with specific professions.

All professions are continually evolving and therefore have to renew. It is important that currency of knowledge in education, training and continued professional development as well as new solutions through research, receive constant and vigilant attention.

CHAPTER 5

PROFESSIONALISM OF HUMAN RESOURCES : INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

5.1 Human Resources – the changing role

5.1.1 A historical perspective

The professions studied in chapter 2 are recognized as major and respected professions world-wide. Having investigated what professionalism means in the legal, medical, engineering and accounting arenas, the next step is to look at the standing of human resources internationally and locally. This chapter starts off in sub-section 3.1 looking at the historic to modern day role of HR, then focuses on three HR regulatory bodies in the UK, USA and Canada. To gain a wider perspective, a brief look is taken at Australia, Germany, Italy and China and the role of the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA).

Unlike the other professions, the human resource profession is a more modern phenomenon. A brief look at the origins of human resources, brings to light that the personnel function emerged as an accepted administrative function, early in the twentieth century. In fact according to Ulrich, Brockbank, Johnson, Sandholtz and Younger (2008:5) the National Cash Register Company established the first personnel department after a particularly rancorous strike in 1901. *“Originally, HR professionals were expected to be administrative experts who facilitated transactions related to people and handled workforce grievances”* (2008:6).

In an historical perspective by Ungerer, Herholdt and Uys (2006:13), the development of people management can be placed in a broader socio-economic context and into two of three distinctive eras:

- The first wave of the Agricultural Era: 8000 BC – 1650;
- The second wave of the Industrial Era: 1650 – 1955;
- The third wave of the Information Era: 1955 – 2030.

There are, of course, always exceptions to the broad generalisation above. One thinks of large military forces moved across vast and difficult areas as well as monuments and buildings such as the pyramids etc., which necessitated logistics and management skills on a large scale.

Unlike medicine, law, engineering and accountancy which already existed in the first era, human resources developed in the late Industrial era and now lies squarely in the Information era.

According to Ungerer et al (2006:17), the Industrial era brought in business practices such as standardisation, specialisation, synchronisation, maximisation and centralisation which led to the rise of bureaucracy.

Maynard & Mehrtens (1996:38) comment about the industrial era: *“They produced some of the biggest, most rigid, most powerful bureaucratic organisations the world has every seen, leaving the individual ... (feeling) oppressed and overpowered.”*

The industrial era divided knowledge into specialised disciplines and split jobs into fragments. Other by-products mentioned by Ungerer et al (2006:17) are stress, power plays at the office, keeping up with the Joneses, rush-hour traffic, time-compressed lifestyles, etc.

Taking the economic developments as described above into consideration, it is clear why human resources became entrenched as an important part of managing people in the context of growing bureaucracy with its side-effects and psychological stress induced by the conditions at the workplace.

With the ushering in of the third era (the Information Age), further dramatic changes underlined the inevitable rise of the importance of good people management. In this era, Ungerer et al (2006:18, 20) point to the fact that for the first time in history white-collar and service workers outnumbered blue-collar workers. Knowledge has become the pre-eminent economic resource, being seen as more important than land, raw materials or money.

Stewart (1997:12) states that “*Knowledge has become the primary ingredient of what we make, do, buy and sell. As a result, managing it (which includes finding and growing intellectual capital), storing it, selling it and sharing it, have become the most important economic tasks of individuals, businesses and nations.*”

In a keynote address by Bob Schuetz from Mercer at the HR Institute of New Zealand Conference (2006), he sketches the evolution of Human Resources in his presentation in Table 3.1 below.

In this table there are notable shifts in needs and values. This indicates that a people management profession does what society demands in a specific context. The changes in the appropriateness of the code and delineation of the relevant body of knowledge are clearly governance considerations.

Table 5.1 *Historic evolution of HR*

| The Period | The Issue | The Result |
|--------------------|--|--|
| The 1920's | Fair Labour treatment | Bureaucratic controls / rules |
| The 1930's – 50's | Policy development / implementation | Personnel function |
| The 1960's – 80's | Workforce welfare, regulation, reporting requirements | HR function emerges |
| The 1990's | Consulting, administrative effectiveness | HR as business partner / leader |
| The new millennium | Transactional and strategic services are essential to business success | The HR role bifurcates <i>(Human Capital)</i> |

Keynote address by Bob Schuetz from Mercer at the HR Institute of New Zealand Conference (2006),

In this table we see that areas of expertise such as labour law then a systems theory approach, community support, then communication and finally decision making levels were all, in turn, required. In the final block under the new millennium where Schuetz placed the bifurcation of the HR role, the CIPD's research, reported in *Evaluating Human Capital* (Scarborough and Elias 2002) indicates that there is widespread acceptance across all industrial sectors that the

know-how, imagination and creativity of employees are becoming at least as critical to business success as other, 'hard' assets.

This view of the evolution of HR is supported by Cannell (2004) in his brief history of personnel management featured as a fact sheet of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in the UK. Cannell mentions that jobs with the titles of 'labour manager' or 'employment manager' emerged in large factory environments during the 1920's. Use of the term 'personnel management' surfaced in the 1930's, mainly confined to the newer, emergent industries such as plastics etc. Between 1945 and 1979, employment management and welfare work had become integrated under the broad term 'personnel management'. The industrial unrest and the resulting adjustment of labour legislation of the 1960s and 1970s led to the adding of labour relations to the responsibilities of the personnel function.

Furthermore, Cannell is of the opinion that by the end of the seventies the main features of personnel management, as it appears today, were in place:

- The collective bargaining role;
- The implementer of legislation role;
- The bureaucratic role;
- The social conscience of the business role;
- A growing performance improvement role.

He points out that the term 'human resources' seems to suggest that employees were an asset or resource – like machines. According to Ogier (2003:32), personnel officers were administrators who checked that the rules were being followed. HR managers on the other hand, were professionals. In some organisations there was a hard edge to human resource management (HRM), due to some extent to its perceived role in reducing union influence. This coincides with the insights brought by Ungerer et al (2006:17), that the rising standardisation, centralisation and bureaucracy were creating problems in the workplace. This has also been accompanied by a rise in specialisation such as training, reward,

resourcing and diversity. Industrial relations also re-emerged as an important part of the personnel role.

In another source, Hunter, Saunders, Boroughs and Constant (2006:4) write that before the 1960s, Personnel was seen as an administrative function (for example payroll or time-keeping administration). Industrial unrest and the rapidly changing labour legislation of the 1960s and 1970s changed the role of the Personnel function to a 'policemen' of labour relations in the workplace. It was not until the early 1980s that a new approach to Personnel started to develop. This period saw the rise of HRM. From being reactive, by typically responding to requests made by their customers, HR has moved towards actively seeking to anticipate and shape requirements (Hunter et al 2006:5). What is beginning to emerge today is a new science of human capital management, with practitioners versed in analysis and measurement to complement traditional HR skills. These individuals are combining skills and knowledge from labour economics, work psychology, corporate strategy, financial and statistical modelling. (*The CIPD's research, reported in Evaluating Human Capital (Scarbrough and Elias 2002)*).

From staff administrator, labour manager and employment manager to personnel manager, human resource manager and human capital manager, the evolving titles depict the changing roles of the HR practitioners. It can also not be denied that as the competence of people employed, impacts ever more heavily on the success of companies, human resource practitioners become key employees, managing a valuable asset. "*What more and more companies are beginning to understand is that when you make someone responsible for identifying mission critical personnel, that person instantly becomes mission critical as well*" (HR Certification Institute Chair R Gregory Green USA).

Ulrich et al (2008:3) postulates that there is dramatic growth in numbers, global reach and scientific sophistication in the HR profession. They further state that there has been an explosive growth of women in the profession since 1987 (2008:29).

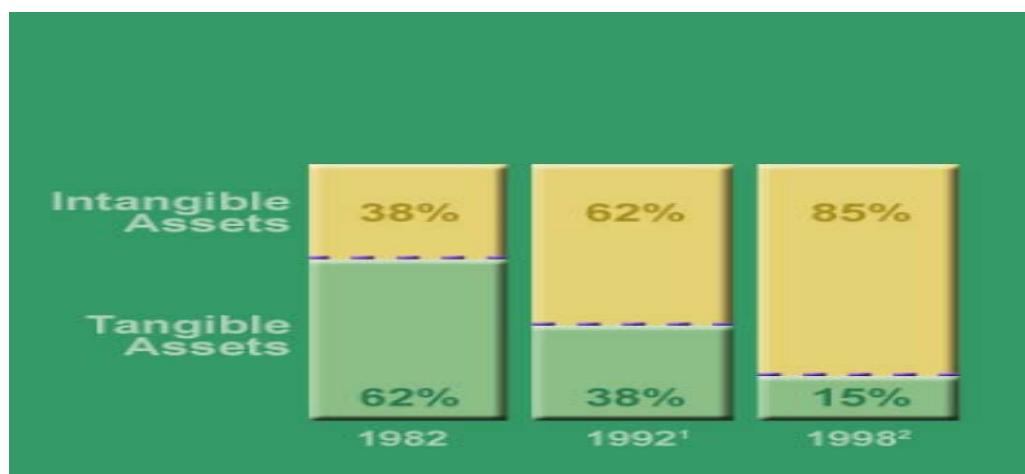
5.1.2 Human Capital emerges

In a recent view of changes affecting HR, Losey et al (2005:409) summarise the new trends in HR internationally as:

- Demographics – the labour force is changing;
- Technology – new technology is forcing changes in strategy and product mix;
- Globalisation – organisations compete globally for talent;
- Competitiveness – HR must be able to respond quickly to customer expectations which become increasingly flexible.

In his work “Harnessing the Elusive Asset”, David Forman (2004:1) says that there is virtually universal agreement that today’s economy is driven by the talent and intangible capital of organizations. *“The competitive strength of companies and even countries is not tied to physical resources but to the knowledge and skills of its employees. It is now clear for example, that 80% of a company’s market value is not determined by buildings, cash or equipment, but by its people. The “market to book” ratio of the Standard and Poor 500 companies reached a value of 6.0 in 2001. This ratio suggests that for every \$6 of market value, only \$1 represents financial and physical assets (Weatherly, 2003). This fact is not lost on CEOs and top executives who see managing intangible assets as one of the top three issues that they face (Hills, 2004) as quoted by Forman 2004:1)*

Figure 5.1 The changing environment



By permission of Jeff Sacht of HCI (Africa)

5.1.3 Definitions of Human Capital

Looking at the different definitions for human capital helps to understand the changing nature and complexity of the work of the HR professional. In her doctoral thesis, Dr Ya-Hui Ling cites among others the following definitions:

“Human capital refers to the knowledge, education, training, skills, and expertise of a firm’s workers, and it is more important than it has ever been before.” (Crawford 1991).

“Human capital includes three components: competence, attitude, and intellectual agility. Competence includes skills and education. Attitude covers the behavioural component of the employees’ work. Intellectual agility is the ability to innovate and change practices, to think laterally about problems and come up with new and innovative solutions.” (Roos et al. 1998).

“Human capital embraces all the skills and capabilities of the people working in an organization, it can be seen as an inventory of individual’s skills and knowledge within an organization.” (Lynn 2000).

“Human capital is the stock of personal skills that economic agents have at their disposal, in addition to physical capital.” (Piazza-Georgi 2002).

“Human capital is defined as investments made by company in talents and technologies that benefit competitive advantage, are valuable and unique, and should be kept out of reach of other companies.” (Chen and Lin 2003)

According to Ling, important human capital dimensions might include workforce composition, human capital investment, research and knowledge leadership and human capital ROI.

5.1.4 HR's role in corporate governance

In an article in Australia's "Human Resources" Craig Donaldson examines the role of HR in corporate governance. A number of HR issues arise, such as a transparent and thorough appointment process for senior executives, executive remuneration structure and public reporting of reward policies. According to Donaldson *"As board remuneration and nomination committees become more sensitive to risk"* John Egan says, *"they're going to look to HR for guidance and counsel in some areas. HR is going to be more involved because that's what shareholders are requiring."*

5.2 Human Resources in three countries – an overview

In order to investigate the standing of human resources internationally, three countries were chosen for analysis. These countries are the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA) and Canada. The organization of human resources is also briefly reviewed in Australia, Germany, Italy and China to give a wider backdrop. The choice of countries was based on the fact that;

- HR is highly developed in these countries;
- They have some of the largest bodies representing human resource practitioners;
- Their history of HR development can be easily traced.

The national organizational structures in the UK, the USA and Canada, are compared at the end of this chapter to gain understanding of international trends. The certification or registration models for HR in these countries are compared. An indication of the percentage of human resource practitioners participating in the formal organisation of the profession will be given.

The information below has been gathered from the official websites and documentation of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development in the United Kingdom (CIPD – www.cipd.co.uk), the Human Resource Certification

Institute in the United States (HRCI – www.hrci.org) and the Canadian Council of Human Resource Associations (CCHRA – www.cchra.ca).

5.3 Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) in the United Kingdom (UK)

5.3.1 A brief history of the regulatory body, CIPD

According to CIPD information brochures, the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) was established in Britain in 1946 and had its origins in welfare and labour movements from as early as 1913. A professional body has existed in the UK for over 90 years, operating under a number of names including (from 1945 - 1994) as IPM. In 1994, they merged with the Institute for Training and Development (ITD), to form the IPD, and then gained their Royal Charter in 2000 and took the current name of Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). Today with its just on 128,000 members it dominates the HR landscape in the UK.

Whittaker (2003:1) explains this move towards greater recognition as follows:

“The word ‘chartered’ has long been the hallmark used by accountants and engineers to make clear their qualifications and status. It shows an individual has met an established, up-to-date and externally verified set of professional standards, that they have the experience to apply their knowledge in the workplace and have made a lifetime commitment to their own continuing professional development.”

The Royal Charter in the UK was granted to the CIPD in July 2000 by the Privy Council, which is an advisory body appointed by the Sovereign and which includes Government Ministers. Such a Charter is very highly regarded in Britain and clearly, the stature of human resource professionals has been greatly enhanced by this decision of the Privy Council.

Following approval from the Privy Council, individual full members of the CIPD are entitled to use the title ‘chartered’ when they describe their membership status.

An historic press release was made in London on the 5th June 2003, signalling an important change in the status of human resource practitioners, much more closely aligned to stature accorded to the major professions:

“Members vote “yes” to individual chartered status.

CIPD Director General Geoff Armstrong said: “In July 2000 we received our Royal Charter in recognition of our contribution to the field of people management. At that time we made an important promise - to seek approval to award individual chartered title when the time was right.

“The title ‘chartered’ will confirm to employers that they are employing a knowledgeable people management professional, who understands the wider business context and who is committed to continuing professional development.”

A formal letter has now been sent to the Privy Council seeking approval to change the CIPD’s byelaws. Assuming approval, the CIPD expects that all existing full members and those who become full members after 1st October this year (2003), will be able to call themselves chartered from this date.

The CIPD intends that the new chartered status will act as a trigger to encourage an even greater commitment to continuing professional development (CPD). CPD will be a key requirement for chartered members and the CIPD will continue to sample the development activity of members on a regular and random basis.

Chartered membership of the CIPD will become a hallmark in the same way it is for other professionals including accountants and engineers.

The Institute will also be working with recruitment agencies to ensure that individual chartered status is used in adverts aimed at recruiting experienced people management professionals.

During this press release (2003) Armstrong added: “This title makes it much more straightforward for employers searching for experienced practitioners. It tells them

that an individual using the title has reached an externally verified set of standards, that they understand the theory of people management and most importantly that they can apply it in practice.

“This is particularly important in today’s knowledge economy, where effective management and development of people is the key to sustainable future.”

5.3.2 Levels and criteria

There are 3 levels of programme standards:

- **Certificate level programmes**, at the level of NVQ3, in Personnel Practice, Training and Development, Recruitment and Selection, Employment Law and Relations, and Coaching and Mentoring, each of which leads to Associate membership of CIPD. The programmes require 240 learning hours, but are usually undertaken by attending a college once a week over 8 or 9 months. Assessment is via assignments and projects. Each year, about 5,000 individuals embark on these certificate programmes.
- **Post-graduate level programme**, requiring the completion of a post-graduate Diploma or Masters degree, covering subjects in Leadership and Management, and a choice of specialist areas in Employee Resourcing, Employee Development, Employee Relations and Compensation and Benefits. The programmes require 1200 learning hours, but are usually undertaken part-time over 2 - 3 years by attending a university. Assessment is via examinations, assignments and a management report of 7,000 words+. Each year, about 3,500 individuals embark on these post-graduate Diploma or Master degree programmes.
- **Advanced practitioners standards**, aimed at strategic level practitioners in areas such as Strategic HRM, Organisational Development, International HRM etc. These standards are often integrated into Masters programmes, or used as the basis for doctoral study.

Criteria for Chartered status, can be summarized as follows:

- **The Chartered Member (Chartered MCIPD)**, the lowest level for Chartered status, is available by upgrading only. Individuals must be Graduate members and able to demonstrate three years' relevant experience at management level, of which one year may be in general management. They must also demonstrate their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) over the last year and a development plan for the coming year and make a commitment to provide records and plans for each of the next two years.
- **The Chartered Fellow (Chartered FCIPD)** is also available by upgrading. Individuals must be at Chartered Member grade and must be able to demonstrate ten years' relevant experience at management level of which up to three years may be in general management. Current and more recent roles must be at senior or strategic management level, confirming a career progression through the period concerned. Individuals must also demonstrate their CPD over the last year and submit a development plan for the coming year. They must also make a commitment to provide records and plans for each of the next two years in order to be eligible.
- **Chartered Companion (Chartered CCIPD)**, the highest level, is gained by invitation only. It is awarded in recognition of significant contribution to the profession or the Institute.

The membership is divided into two classes of members: Full or voting members (the three Chartered levels detailed above) and four levels of non-voting members (Graduate member; Licentiate member; Associate member and Affiliate).

The CIPD acknowledges both generalists and specialists in human resources. The specialist categories are:

- Managing diversity and equal opportunities;
- Selection and assessment;
- Career management and development;
- Management development;
- Managing organisation learning & knowledge

- Managing training and development;
- Designing and delivering training;
- Employee benefits and pensions;
- Performance management;
- Employee relations and law;
- Health and safety.

In the South African context there are currently eight specialist categories and greater details of how these are organized locally will be found in **Annexure C**.

The CIPD in the UK sees effective HR performance as including the following:

- Offering a high level of expertise;
- Understanding the objectives of the organisation;
- Importing good practice;
- Building strategic capabilities;
- Developing and articulating values of organisations;
- Making a contribution to profit;
- Facilitating survival of organization;
- Assisting progress towards goals;
- Aligning to organisation's mission;
- Having customer focus;
- Undertaking continuous improvement;
- Having personal flexibility.

The UK HR profession is highly organized and centralized in the CIPD, more so than in almost any other country.

5.3.3 The CIPD body of knowledge

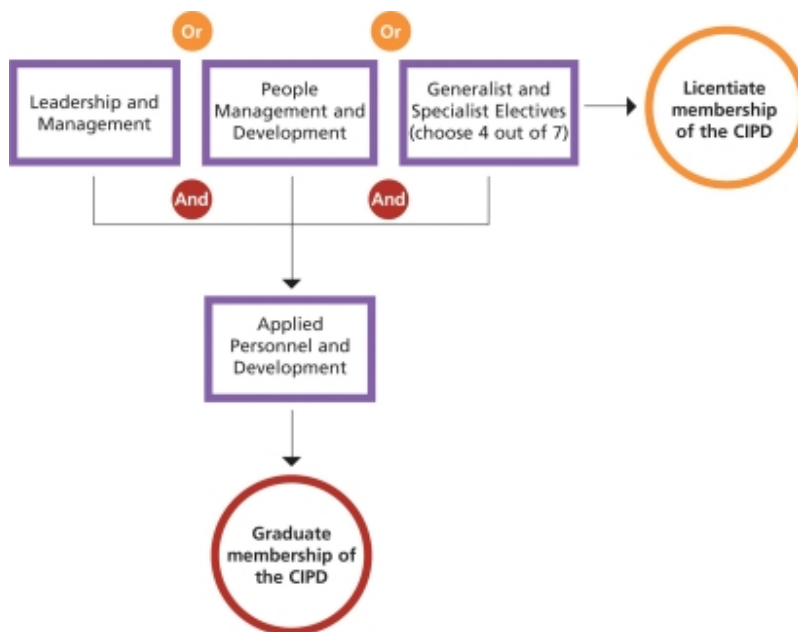
A short summary of the HR subjects for graduate level qualification as per their official information, is given below. More information is provided in **Annexure D**.

The CIPD Professional Development Scheme (PDS) is a postgraduate programme, however there are no formal entry requirements. There are four fields of study, each based on the CIPD's professional standards:

- Leadership and Management
- People Management and Development
- Generalist and Specialist Electives
- Applied Personnel and Development Standards

Successful completion of all four areas means you have completed the PDS qualification, giving you graduate membership of the CIPD.

Figure 5.2 A schematic representation of the CIPD postgraduate programme



From the CIPD website : www.cipd.co.za)

5.3.4 The CIPD Code of Conduct

The CIPD Code of Professional Conduct articulates the mission, the objectives, the purpose of the code and the standards of professional conduct. The following elements were extracted:

- To provide specialist professional knowledge, advice, and management competence by:
 - Enhancing the standing and good name of the profession;
 - Seeking continually to improve and update performance, skills and knowledge;
 - Seeking fullest possible development of people;
 - Adopting the most appropriate processes and structures;
 - Promoting and maintaining fair treatment of people;
 - Removing unfair discrimination;
 - Respecting legitimate confidentiality;
 - Using due diligence.
- To be committed to the highest possible standards
 - By exercising integrity, honesty, diligence and appropriate behaviour;
 - By acting within the law.

The complete Code can be read on the official CIPD website (www.cipd.co.za). A detailed explanation of the disciplinary procedure is also given.

5.4 HR Certification Institute (HRCI) in the USA

Dixon (2006:1,2) says in a recent press release of the HRCI: *“I have found that certified HR professionals have a better grasp of the theoretical and practical demands of our work. Additionally, certified professionals “seem to possess a higher level of motivation to continue to learn once on the job.”*

5.4.1 A brief history of the regulatory body, HRCI

Leonard (2004) gives a brief history of the organisation which began certifying HR professionals in 1976 on the official website of the HRCI. According to him, discussions began in 1967 on definitions of the HR professions and its common

body of knowledge at a three-day conference co-sponsored by American Society for Personnel Administration (ASPA), the forerunner of the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the School of Industrial Relations at Cornell University. It was agreed, at a follow-up meeting held in 1968 that the following five characteristics defined a profession:

- A profession must be full-time.
- Schools and curricula must be aimed specifically at teaching the basic ideas of the profession, and there must be a defined common body of knowledge.
- A profession must have a national professional association.
- A profession must have a certification program.
- A profession must have a code of ethics.

At this conference, Drew Young, one of the participants and later president of ASPA said *“we met all the criteria except the defined body of knowledge and the certification program. To really be considered a profession, ASPA had to establish a certification program.”*

From these early beginnings, the HRCI was established as the regulatory body for human resources in the United States of America in 1973. The HRCI began certifying HR professionals in 1976. The number of professionals certified by the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI) has almost doubled from 48,000 in 2000 to 87,000 in 2004, giving a clear indication of the escalating value placed on qualifying for professional status.

It is interesting to note that in a study done in 1994 by Carolyn Wiley and published in 1999, she notes that no more than 10% of the total number of active HR practitioners in the USA actually presented themselves for certification. The latest figures of their Department of Labor indicates that about 820,000 jobs were held in 2004 in human resources, training and labour relations in the USA. This, again, points to just on 10% opting for professional certification.

The HRCI vision is simply: *“Every HR professional will be credentialed by HRCI”*.

The HRCI has a single route to certification in the form of an examination given twice annually as follows:

- 225 multiple-choice questions;
- Duration 4 hours;
- Administered by computer;
- Possible 700 points;
- Passing score 500.

5.4.2 Levels and criteria

Certification according to the HRCI is done at three levels as given below:

The **PHR** (Professional HR):

- Focuses on program implementation;
- Has tactical/logistical orientation.;
- Has accountability to another HR professional within the organization;
- Has two to four years of exempt-level generalist HR work experience but because of career length may lack the breadth and depth of a more senior-level generalist;
- Has not had progressive HR work experience by virtue of career length;
- Focuses his or her impact on the organization within the HR department rather than organization-wide;
- Commands respect through the credibility of knowledge and the use of policies and guidelines to make decisions.

Tracey (1998:417) gives the following definition of a Professional in Human Resource (PHR):

“A designation awarded by the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI) to HR practitioners, educators, researchers or consultants who have a minimum of four years of exempt-level HR experience, mastered the body of knowledge that constitutes the human resource profession, and are currently working the field. Mastery is demonstrated by successful completion of a written examination covering management practices, selection and placement, training and

development, compensation and benefits, employee and labour relations and health, safety and security. Recertification is required every three years”.

The **SPHR** (Senior Professional HR):

- Designs and plans rather than implements;
- Focuses on the “big picture” ;
- Has ultimate accountability in the HR department;
- Has six to eight years of progressive HR experience;
- Has breadth and depth of HR generalist knowledge;
- Uses judgment obtained with time and application of knowledge;
- Has generalist role within organization;
- Understands the effect of decisions made within and outside of the organization;
- Understands the business, not just the HR function;
- Manages relationships; has influence within overall organization;
- Commands credibility within organization, community and field by experience;
- Possesses excellent negotiation skills.

The **GPHR** (Global Professional HR):

- Establishes HR policies and initiatives that support the organization’s global growth and reputation as an employer;
- Designs organizational structures, programs and processes to achieve worldwide business needs;
- Oversees international assignment strategies and policies;
- Develops, implements and evaluates programs, processes and tools to ensure that they align with competitive practice, the organization’s objectives and legal requirements;
- Oversees the processes and practices that ensure favorable employment conditions balancing employer needs with employee rights and needs;
- Has core knowledge of the organization’s international HR activities.

Each country recognises slightly different Human Resource specialist functions but are on the whole, in agreement as to what constitutes HR specialist categories.

The functional or specialist areas recognized by HRCI include:

- Employment, placement and planning;
- Training and development;
- Compensation and benefits;
- Health, safety and security;
- Employee and labour relations;
- Management practices.

As far as Generalist and Specialist categories are concerned, the HRCI found that more than 80% of certification applicants were generalists. This led to the HRCI deciding to discontinue the registration of specialists in 1988, today only certificating generalists. This is in contrast to the CIPD discussed above as well as the SABPP which continues to register HR specialists albeit not exactly the same specialisations.

5.4.3 **The HRCI body of knowledge**

According to Ulrich et al (2008:208), an HR professional who wants to serve people and deliver on business results must start by learning the language of both people and business. *“In the field of HR there is a body of knowledge that needs to be understood”*. They go on to say that certification programmes such as the HRCI Certification ensure a minimal competence in the HR theory and research that has formed this profession. *“In the field of business, any HR professional needs to know how to read a balance sheet, income statement, strategic plan, and marketing analysis. An HR professional should understand and be able to present the state of business to a board of directors....”*

The subjects required for professional certification in the USA as found in the HRCI Certification Handbook of 2005 are given below in bullet form (and more completely in Annexure D):

- Strategic Management;
- Workforce Planning and Employment;
- Human Resource Development;
- Compensation and Benefits;
- Employee and Labour Relations;
- Occupational Health, Safety and Security.

The following list is regarded as the core knowledge required by HR professionals:

- Needs assessment and analysis;
- Third-party contract management, including development of requests for proposals;
- Communication strategies;
- Documentation requirements;
- Adult learning processes;
- Motivation concepts and applications;
- Training methods;
- Leadership concepts and applications;
- Project management concepts and applications;
- Diversity concepts and applications;
- Human relations concepts and applications;
- HR ethics and professional standards;
- Technology and human resource information systems (HRIS) to support HR activities;
- Qualitative and quantitative methods and tools for analysis, interpretation and decision-making purposes;
- Change management;
- Liability and risk management;
- Job analysis and job description methods;
- Employee records management;
- The interrelationships among HR activities and programmes across functional areas.

5.4.4 Code of Conduct : The HRCI Model of Professional Excellence:

The following information was received from the HRCI by email on Fri 29th September 2006, as their Code of Conduct is not available on the official website:

“The personal standards of honor and integrity of certified HR professionals must, at all times, be above reproach and conduct should be in a manner that reflects favorably on the profession.

By adhering to the highest standards of honor and integrity, HR professionals create an ethical climate within their organizations. HR professionals have a duty to protect the interests of employees, the organization and society and to promote and encourage:

- *Honesty and trustworthiness in all working relationships;*
- *Reliability in performing assigned responsibilities;*
- *Truthfulness and accuracy in what is said and written;*
- *Constructiveness and cooperation in working relationships;*
- *Fairness, consideration and nondiscrimination in how we treat others;*
- *Adherence to the law in all activities;*
- *Economical use of resources;*
- *Commitment to excellence in the performance of work;*
- *Respect for the privacy of others.”*

The HRCI has disciplinary and appeals processes in place.

5.5 Canadian Council of HR Associations (CCHRA) in Canada

5.5.1 A brief history of the regulatory body

The Canadian Council of Human Resource Associations is the national body which is acknowledged in all autonomous provinces in Canada.

An interesting aspect of the Canadian human resource landscape is the individual development of human resource bodies in each of the Canadian provinces. In

Ontario, for instance, their origins go back to 1936 and through several name changes. In 1990, under an Act of the Ontario Legislature, the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario (HRPAO) is recognised as the body to grant and regulate the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation in Ontario. The subsequent development of the national body, with CHRP becoming a national designation, is documented above.

Their website indicates that the origins date back to 1992, when several provincial associations recognized the need to collaborate on national issues and share information. The organization also facilitated coordination of the CHRP designation, which has been adopted by several provinces. In 1996, Canada's first national Human Resources Association was formally established.

5.5.2 Levels and criteria

There is only one level of registration namely that of a Certified Human Resources Professional.

The first national examinations for Certified HR Professional (CHRP) were taken in 2004 and the first people to receive the CHRP status were announced in August 2004.

5.5.3 CCHRA body of knowledge

In Canada the basic required capabilities for professional HR can be summarized as:

- Providing strategic and business linkages;
- Understanding business fundamentals;
- Managing client relationships.

The following Canadian Human Resources Professional Capabilities Profile has been sourced from the website of CCHRA. More information is provided in Annexure D.

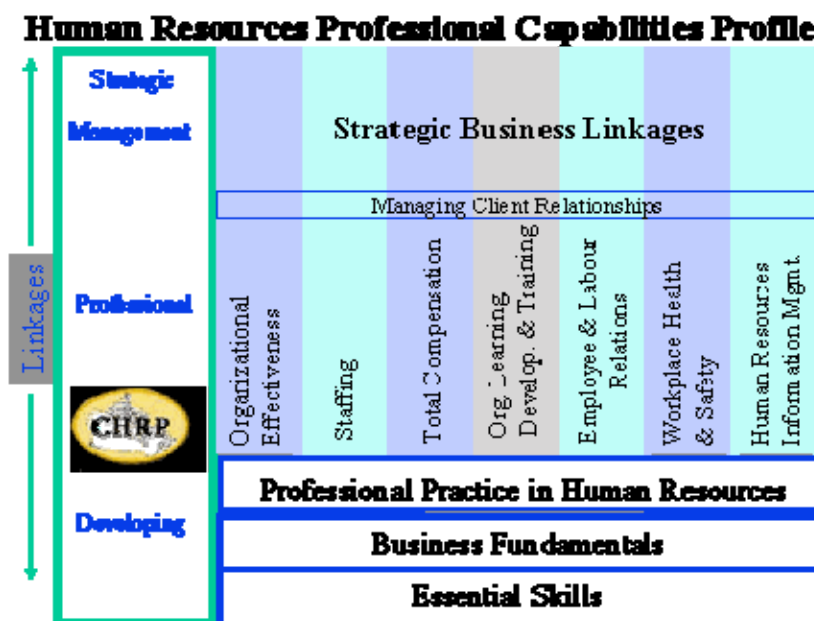
The HR professional requires a broad range of capabilities, many of which are shared with or derived from other disciplines. The exact mix of capabilities that an

HR professional must bring to a business problem is a function of the size and nature of the organization.

In developing this profile for the Canadian HR profession, required professional capabilities were broken into seven functional areas of practice, and an additional cross-functional area was added, referred to as Professional Practice in Human Resources.

Some of the capabilities are very specific to a functional area, while others are widely shared across several functional areas. Rather than restate these capabilities in each area where they are required, they are listed only once. The HR profession is characterized by the interweaving of these eight functional areas, and the crossover use of capabilities is itself a defining characteristic of HR practice.

Figure 5.3 The Canadian HR Professional Capabilities Profile



(From the CCHRA website- www.cchra.ca)

5.5.4 The CCHRA Code of Conduct

The Canadian Council of HR Associations has a comprehensive Code of Conduct. The following elements have been extracted to reflect the main emphasis:

- Competence – maintain competence and practice within limits of knowledge, experience and skill;
- Adhere to all legal requirements;
- Support and promote human rights, equity, dignity and respect;
- Balance organisational and employee needs;
- Hold in strict confidence all confidential material;
- Avoid or disclose potential conflict of interest;
- Maintain personal and professional growth.

They have an enforcement process consisting of a Complaints, Investigation and Disciplinary Committee and an Appeals Committee.

5.6 THE ORGANISATION OF HR IN THE UK, USA AND CANADA

5.6.1 These Institutes in summary:

Table 5.2 *Regulation structures – UK, USA, Canada*

| | UK | USA | CANADA |
|---------------------|--|--|--|
| Regulated by | Royal Charter | Voluntary certification | Voluntary National Council |
| Body | CIPD Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development | HRCI Human Resource Certification Institute | CCHRA Canadian Council of HR Associations |

While UK and USA (and South Africa) chose to organize HR nationally from inception, Canada with its largely autonomous provinces, saw each province making its own decisions on organising HR. In the province of Ontario for

instance, an HR Professions Act was promulgated in 1990. Their national Canadian Council of HR Associations is a more recent development.

5.6.2 The dates that these organizations were established:

Table 5.3 *Establishment dates of HR structures.*

| | UK CIPD | USA HRCI | CANADA CCHRA |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Established in | 1946 | 1973 | 1994 |
| Started awarding Chartered or Certificate status to HR practitioners | July 2000 | September 1976 | August 2004 |

5.6.3 A comparison of member numbers:

Table 5.4 *Membership numbers of certified/chartered professionals*

| | UK CIPD | USA HRCI | CANADA CCHRA |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| MEMBERS Up to 2000 | 75,000 | 48,000 | 15,000 |
| MEMBERS Up to end of 2007 | 127,800 | 89,000 | 24,000 |

Of the 127,800 members of the CIPD, some 47,300 are Chartered Members or Fellows, which could be equated to registered professionals in the South African context. (Doggett :2007) (Email from Phil Doggett received 12 April 2007, Membership and Education CIPD).

We note with interest, the increase in professional credentialing as indicated by the growth in numbers that these bodies have experienced over the past 7 years. This may be an indication of the natural maturation of HR. This movement towards professional recognition seems to be in line with the trend in other European countries, where the levels and criteria for professional registration have only

recently been put on the table. In South Africa, a renewed effort to gain statutory recognition for the HR profession was initiated in 2004 and continues to this day.

5.6.4 Professional levels recognized:

Table 5.5 *From lowest to highest levels*

| | UK CIPD | USA HRCI | CANADA CCHRA |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Full or professional members | Member of CIPD Fellow of CIPD Companion of CIPD | Professional Senior Professional Global Professional | - Certified HR Professional |
| Designations | MCIPD FCIPD CCIPD | PHR SPHR GPHR | CHRP |

5.6.5 Values espoused by HR

Table 3.6 *Values in HR in UK, USA and Canada*

| Values | CIPD UK | HRCI USA | CCHRA Canada |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Maintaining the good reputation and prestige of the profession | ✓ | | |
| Maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct | | ✓ | |
| Dedication to service / pro bono service | | ✓ | |
| Serving with fidelity the public, employees & clients | | ✓ | |
| Promoting the public good / development of people | ✓ | | |
| Maintaining and enhancing work systems (IT etc) | ✓ | | |
| Acting as faithful agent or trustee in all circumstances | | ✓ | |
| A dedication to providing competent service | | ✓ | |
| Promoting justice and fairness | ✓ | | |
| Avoiding conflict of interest | | | ✓ |
| Mastery of a particular intellectual skills of the profession acquired by training and education | | ✓ | |
| Continued concern for professional competence | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Keeping up to date on developments in practice, legislation and techniques | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Continuing to develop professional knowledge and skill throughout career | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Sound moral character (integrity/honour/honesty) | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Respect for human dignity | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Confidentiality | | | ✓ |
| Loyalty to profession | ✓ | | |
| A concern for development and progress / research | ✓ | | |

Table 5.2 Comparing South African conduct issues with UK, USA and Canada

| Values | Professional bodies in the HR field | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------|--------------|----------|
| | CIPD UK | HRCI USA | CCHRA Canada | SABPP SA |
| Maintaining the good reputation and prestige of the profession | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Improving and growing the profession | | | | ✓ |
| Maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Adhering to the common code of values and conduct of the profession | | | | ✓ |
| Dedication to service / pro bono service | | ✓ | | |
| Serving with fidelity the public, employees & clients | | ✓ | | |
| Promoting the public good / development of people | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Maintaining and enhancing work systems (IT etc) | ✓ | | | |
| Prepared to assume responsibility for subsequent impact of a task | | | | ✓ |
| Acting as faithful agent or trustee in all circumstances | | ✓ | | |
| A dedication to providing competent service | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Promoting justice and fairness | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Avoiding conflict of interest | | | ✓ | |
| Adopting responsible behaviour | | | | ✓ |
| Respecting the rights of others | | | | ✓ |
| Maintaining an outlook which is essentially objective | | | | ✓ |
| Rendering service in accordance with the relevant technical and professional standards | | | | ✓ |
| Playing a positive and constructive role where deviation from reputable practices occur | | | | ✓ |
| Mastery of a particular intellectual skills of the profession acquired by training and education | | ✓ | | |
| Continued concern for professional competence | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Keeping up to date on developments in practice, legislation and techniques | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Continuing to develop professional knowledge and skill throughout career | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Sound moral character (integrity/honour/honesty) | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Respect for human dignity | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Confidentiality | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Loyalty to profession | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| A concern for development and progress / research | ✓ | | | ✓ |

The various value elements can also be compared. The table above summarizes the various values espoused by the HR bodies studied. The first column details the values found in the codes of various bodies. Because the final list is an extraction and compilation of the various elements appearing in the codes, and the

actual value may be described in slightly different terms, the matrix reflects an approximation of the acceptance of the values by the different bodies. Interestingly, no single value is espoused by all.

5.6.5 Differing approaches to structuring human resources

Each of the three organizations compared above have unique professional levels, criteria for professional recognition and codes of conduct. Their structures historically developed independently and they enjoy differing levels of acceptance in their economic societies.

The CIPD in the UK not only sets the standards in personnel management, but it also accredits and enforces its own standards. In the USA, the forerunner of the members body, the Society for Human Resource Management, then ASPA, established the certification body to function separately from the members' body, and this is still the case.

In Canada the national body was a collaborative effort of all the human resource associations across Canada and has representation on its board of these different associations.

It may be appropriate to quote from the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations on HR Competencies and Professional standards (2000:2): *“As organisations become more global it can be argued that the need for standardisation within the HR profession is growing.”*

In an update of this WFPMA Competencies project, published by the CIPD in January 2004, a very interesting development was reported by Poland, where the Ministry of the Economy and Labour was undertaking a standardisation process of 250 professions, including human resource management. The Polish HR Association (PHRA) then intended to prepare a learning model, at a number of different levels, and develop certification based on these. European social funding was supporting this project. According to this analysis paper of the WFPMA, this

process in Poland where government action is influencing the development of qualifications, is an interesting contrast to the common situation in Western countries where any action has depended on the activities of the professional association itself. China also has a government driven system as discussed under China below.

Ulrich et al (2008:34) identify six competency domains within HR:

- **Credible Activist.** The credibility of the HR professional is recognised and he/she is active in the sense of offering a point of view, taking a position, challenging an assumption.
- **Culture and Change Steward.** The HR professional is able to appreciate, articulate and help shape a company's culture. They also develop disciplines to make change happen.
- **Talent Manager / Organization Designer.** Theory, research, and practice is mastered in both talent management and organization design. Talent management focuses on competency requirements. Organization design focuses on how a company embeds capability.
- **Strategy Architect.** The HR professional plays an active part in establishing an overall strategy to "win" in the marketplace.
- **Operational Executor.** The operational aspects of managing people and the organization is executed by the HR professional, which ensures credibility if done well.
- **Business Ally.** HR professionals contribute by knowing the social context or setting in which their business operates.

5.7 Australia, Germany, Italy and China

Apart from the three main countries (UK, USA and Canada) surveyed above, some details of HR governance structures in four other countries are given for the purpose of a comprehensive understanding of HR worldwide.

5.7.1 Australian HR Institute (AHRI)

Some of the early practitioners began meeting in 1943 in Australia. It became an established association and went through several name changes. From the original Personnel and Industrial Welfare Officers Association to the Personnel Officers Association (1949), to the Federal Institute of Personnel Management of Australia (1954) and finally the Australian Human Resource Institute (1992). In 1999, the Institute became insolvent. According to Maddin (2006:1) Deakin University purchased the insolvent AHRI in 1999 and in 2006 returned AHRI to its members, as a viable organisation.

According to its national President, Peter Wilson, AHRI will now focus on four key areas:

- Broadening the range of services to members, including areas such as risk management, aligning HR and business strategy, managing change and working across different cultures.
- Deepening the program offerings, including the development of advanced programs in all areas.
- Strengthening AHRI's links with and involvement at senior levels of business and government.
- Taking on a greater public and advocacy role.

According to the official AHRI website, the Institute has the following three membership levels:

Member (MAHRI)

Professional membership of AHRI is available to those who have completed an AHRI accredited or relevant undergraduate qualification, or who have equivalent knowledge, skills and experience.

Certified Professional (CAHRI)

Certified Professional membership is available to members who have held professional Member (MAHRI) status for two+ years, have completed an AHRI accredited or relevant postgraduate qualification (or equivalent knowledge, skills and experience) and have five or more years of relevant experience.

Fellow (FAHRI)

Fellow membership is available to members who have held Certified Professional (CAHRI) status for more than two years, have demonstrated leadership to the business community and have eight or more years of relevant experience with a minimum of two years focusing on leadership or strategic management.

Table 5.7 *Summary of levels acknowledged in Australia*

| <u>Member (MAHRI)</u> | <u>Certified Professional (CAHRI)</u> | <u>Fellow (FAHRI)</u> |
|--|---|---|
| Relevant undergraduate qualification or equivalent knowledge skills and experience. | Relevant postgraduate qualification or equivalent knowledge, skills and experience | Relevant postgraduate qualification or equivalent knowledge, skills and experience |
| No minimum year's work experience required | Minimum five year's relevant work experience | Minimum eight year's HR experience with minimum two years in a senior strategic management position |
| | Member (MAHRI) of AHRI for a minimum two years. | Certified Professional (CAHRI) of AHRI for minimum two years. |
| Evidence of over 90 hours of CPD over a three year period | Evidence of over 90 hours of CPD over a three year period | Evidence of over 90 hours of CPD over a three year period |

5.7.2 The German Personnel Association (DGFP)

Böhm (2003:6) describes the evolution of Germany's new professional HR standards and the certification programme which was implemented in 2003. The Deutschen Gesellschaft für Personalführung (DGFP) celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2002. He says that the understanding of what constitutes good HR management varies a lot in Germany: in some companies the role is very

administrative task-orientated, while in others, it is more entrepreneurial and integrated into strategy development.

The new professional HR standards of the German personnel association came into effect in May 2003. Conscious that other country associations do have clearly defined professional standards, the DGFP set up a working party to develop professional standards that would be acceptable throughout Germany. The group concluded that the HR manager of the future had to be able to fulfil different roles, such as:

- Mediator of ethics and values;
- Creator of added value;
- Manager of change;
- Designer of social partnerships within the organization;
- Conveyor of the entrepreneurial point of view to all employees.

A strong and influential HR leader at the top of the organization was regarded as a prerequisite. The group produced a set of standards, with associated learning objectives, for each of the levels of HR professionals within an organization. More information is given in **Annexure D**.

5.7.3 HR in Italy

In an article that appeared in Worldlink (2003), Barbara Stein says that “*The HR function in Italy remains in most cases very administrative and dominated by payroll and trade union relations. There is still not a strong managerial mindset. One significant problem with HR in Italy is the degree of specialization or segmentation of the function. So for each particular specialism, whether recruitment, training or compensation, this vertical-orientation works well, but who really has the big overview? This sharing of general information for HR would require a new HR figure/role to develop with a horizontal perspective.*”

5.7.4 HR in China

Not much is known about the standing and development of human resources in China. However, the South African Board of Personnel Practice received two delegations of Chinese academics and practitioners in 2005. It was clear that HR in the Chinese context was very much an administrative and technical function. They were amazed at the strategic level of operation of the people function in South Africa.

Reporting on her survey of the professional culture within human resources Claus in the WFPMA report (2004:6) found that an accountant in China had more in common with an accountant in another country than with a fellow Chinese individual who is not an accountant.

To forward the formalisation and credentialing of the HR profession lends itself both to recognition of stature as well as to creating barriers for entering the profession. The survey shows that there is a conflict for HR in this area, with practitioners favouring recognition but not wanting to go through a certification process.

5.8 The World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA)

The WFPMA is a global network of professionals in people management. Its members are made up of more than 70 national personnel associations representing over 400,000 people management professionals and it runs an international congress every two years..

The World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA) was founded in 1976 with the stated aim of '*aiding the development and improving the effectiveness of professional people management all over the world*'. According to the WFPMA website the founding members were:

- European Association for Personnel Management (EAPM);
- InterAmerican Foundation of Personnel Administration (FIDAP);
- American Society for Personnel Administration (now SHRM – the US Society for Human Resource Management).

The WFPMA has a regular newsletter, Worldlink, and has done some definitive research in the HR field over the years. Of particular importance to this study is the research report “*HR Competencies and Professional Standards*” of June 2000.

5.9 Identification of the pillars of a profession

Having looked at how human resources is practiced internationally, it is now possible to identify in at least the three countries analysed in detail the same main pillars of professions found in all major professions, also present in human resources -

- Mastery of a particular intellectual skills, acquired by education and training;
- The adherence by members to a common code of values and conduct;
- A regulating or administrating body;
- Acceptance of a duty to the public and society as a whole.

5.10 Implications

At this point in the investigation of the problem of whether human resources can be described as a profession, the following conclusion can already be made, given the structuring of other major professions and the structuring of human resources internationally and in the light of evolving practices in the countries discussed above:

Human Resources is practised worldwide and recognized as an integral part of the business environment. It has formalized its own structures, to a greater and lesser degree, in the various countries. It has identified its main elements of practice,

defined the roles and functions of human resources and organized a method of recognition of competence which is layered from senior to lower levels.

Problems in Human Resources being recognized as a profession that have been identified at this point:

- There is unwillingness among practising HR professionals to present themselves to be measured for professional registration.
- HR is populated by diversely educated professionals who master the body of knowledge in unique ways, starting at different levels. This diversity causes identification with differently constituted professions, e.g. Industrial Psychology, Labour Law, Industrial Sociology etc.
- There is no uniformly or internationally recognized body of knowledge required for entry into the profession. Each country has its own preferences.
- There are multiple points of entry into the profession from other disciplines.
- Organisations employing HR practitioners have differing criteria for appointment to HR
- An obligation to society does not seem to be at the same aspirational level as was found in the four major international professions of law, medicine, engineering and accounting.

Despite the confirmation of eminent writers in the HR field that HR is a profession of increasing importance (Kearns, Ulrich, Losey, Boudreau et al), HR in the USA, in the UK and in Europe has not taken the final and logical step to being a fully fledged profession. Perhaps the reason for this phenomenon lies elsewhere.

HR functions both as a profession and a management science. Boudreau and Ramstad (2007:16) postulate that the decision sciences evolve from professional practice. They make a clear distinction between the professional practice (accounting) and the decision science (finance) in, for instance, the accounting field. They find that there is an equally clear distinction between the professional practice of sales and the decision science of marketing. Taking this interesting concept through to HR:

“The historical lessons from finance and marketing suggest that today’s HR challenges will not be addressed merely through incremental improvements in the professional practices of HR, as important as such practices will remain. Today’s HR functions typically create value by focusing on delivery of HR practices (staffing, development, compensation, labour relations, etc), based on professional and often well-researched principles. ... Finance and marketing provide reliable and profoundly logical frameworks that connect financial and customer capital to the organisation’s sustainable strategic success. Strategic decisions must go beyond generic best practices to create a unique and sustainable competitive position for the organisation.” (2007:16,18)

Such a distinctive framework is not yet visible in Human Resource Management. This may be worth investigating.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Purpose of the study

For the purpose of establishing whether human resources can be regarded as a profession, the following goals have been set:

- The first goal of the study is to describe and document the historic development of professional human resources in South Africa with specific reference to the history of the establishment of the SABPP, as it contributed to professionalization of HR in South Africa.
- The second goal is to identify the foundational principles or pillars of professionalism and the ethical professional conduct issues (including values) which are embraced by internationally recognised professions, including HR.

6.1.2 Research Questions

From the purpose of the study (par 1.3) several clearly formulated research questions emerged (par.1.4). Given these questions, the following four aspects should be attended to in the results:

- The history of the development of professionalism in Human Resources in South Africa;
- The foundational principles or pillars on which professionalism is based;
- The ethical professional conduct issues (including values) which are embraced by internationally recognized professions;
- The ethical professional conduct issues (including values) that should drive Human Resources in South Africa.

6.2 Historic development of professionalism within HR in South Africa

The purpose of the study is to firstly describe and document the historic development of professional human resources in South Africa with specific

reference to the history of the establishment of the SABPP, as a contribution to professionalization of HR in South Africa.

6.2.1 Results from the documentation of the SABPP history

Documenting the founding of a professional body gives some insight into the thinking at the time, the motivation and the resultant processes and actions. It is interesting to note that both the establishment of the IPM in South Africa and the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee to set up the SABPP were in synchronisation with the development of human resource bodies in major economies. The UK body now known as the CIPD was established in 1946 and the HR Certification Institute in the USA was established in 1976 parallel to the establishment of the IPM (mid forties) and SABPP (late seventies) in South Africa.

The following steps were followed to establish the professional body:

- Consultation with leading business and HR people
- The setting up of an Ad Hoc Committee
- Research
- Confirmation from stakeholders through an HR fraternity survey
- The official inauguration
- Appointment of the first Board
- Appointment of the first Registrar
- Establishment of first levels and criteria of registration
- First Code of Conduct
- Registration commences

The history of the establishment of the SABPP is documented in Chapter 3, and constitutes the first result of the study. The source materials used were the official minutes of the SABPP, all newsletters published by the SABPP, news clippings filed by the SABPP and interviews with two of the main figures who participated in the establishment and launching of the South African Board for Personnel Practice. The interviews were structured to give the researcher a broader understanding of the background factors that contributed to the final decision to go ahead.

The interviews also shed some interesting light on the original intent of the IPM and the way in which the young professional body was supported by the IPM, accommodating the first office of the SABPP on its own premises for many years. In later years, as the IPM changed, there was an attempt to incorporate the SABPP into the IPM. However, by that time the SABPP had become the statutory standards and qualification body under the SAQA Act and risked losing this status. Achieving this status was achieved by building relationships of trust with tertiary institutions, evaluating and accrediting as from 1990 the Departments who delivered an incoming generation of HR practitioners. The fact that the SABPP had never been a training institution, but had always kept strictly to its original brief of standards and quality, ensured its recognition and listing as both the Professional Body and ETQA by Government through the SAQA Act.

The completed chapter has been read by people who were present at the founding of the SABPP or part of the first years, and who could confirm the veracity and accuracy of the record presented in this study. Dr Ray Eberlein, Mr Ivan Lätti, Prof Johann Coetzee, Ms Judy Norris and Mr Wilhelm Crous assisted in this regard.

6.3 Foundational principles of professionalism and ethical professional conduct issues

The second purpose of the study can be broken down as follows:

- The identification of the foundational principles of professionalism and the ethical professional conduct issues (including values); which are embraced by internationally recognised professions;
- Investigating the structures of Human Resources in a few countries;
- Compiling a database of the conduct issues of all the above bodies, in order to contribute to the development of a code of conduct for HR professionals in South Africa.

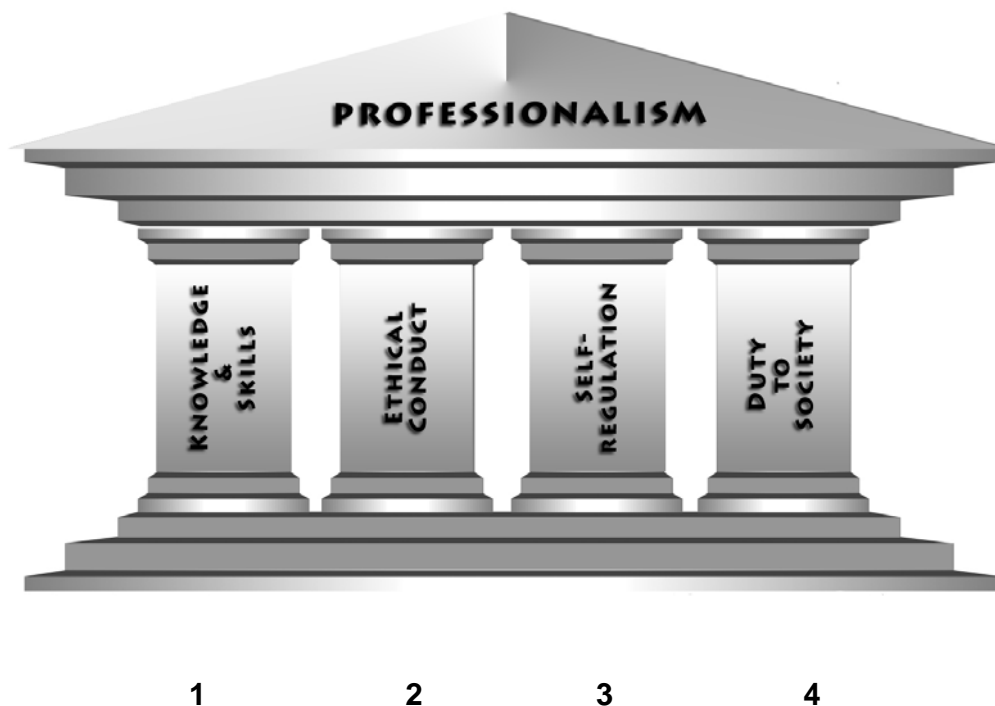
By approaching this study mainly qualitatively it was possible to obtain a wider understanding of the world of professionals and to explore the real problems facing professions in general and HR in particular.

6.3.1 Results of the qualitative analysis of the four major professions

In Chapter 4 the literature about the origins of professions in general, was explored and a brief history written up. Thereafter the literature on four major professions namely the legal, engineering, medical and accounting professions, was reviewed to find the common denominators. Use was made of the websites of the regulating bodies and books and articles by prominent authors within these professions. The result of this investigation was to establish that all recognised, major professions had amongst others, the following core elements in common (described in 4.6.1 to 4.6.4, p 109,110). This can be referred to as the four pillars of professionalism:

- 1. A mastery of a complex body of knowledge and skills;**
- 2. A commitment to integrity and morality through a Code of Conduct;**
- 3. Autonomy in practice and the privilege of self-regulation;**
- 4. Acceptance of a duty to society as a whole.**

Figure 6.1 Pillars of professionalism



There were other features in common, but the above four principles can be described as the main Pillars on which the four major professions under investigation, built their identity over many years (more details about the Pillars are given in paragraphs 4.6.1 to 4.6.4 p109,110). Table 6.1 gives an overview of the structuring of these professions in the South African context.

This table indicates how each profession regulates entry to the profession. In all cases an academic qualification is the starting point of the career. There is a period of training that takes place under supervision as required by the individual bodies. There is also a final hurdle that needs to be taken, in the form of an examination or a professional review, underpinned by an Act.

In the case of human resources there is a regulating body, a qualification requirement, an experience component and professional peer review before registration. Code of Conduct and a structured CPD process is in place. There is, however, not an Act in place recognising the professional status.

6.3.1 Results of qualitative analysis of four major professions

It was not possible to look at all the different careers within these professions and a choice was made to use only the advocate in the legal arena, the civil engineer in engineering and the psychologist in the medical arena.

Table 6.1 *Regulatory frameworks of the legal, engineering, medical and accounting professions in South Africa.*

| | LEGAL | ENGINEERING | MEDICAL | ACCOUNTING |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Regulating Body | General Council of the Bar | Engineering Council of South Africa | Health Professions Council of SA + Prof Boards | SA Institute of Chartered Accountants |
| Professional Title | Advocate | Civil Engineer | Psychologist | Accountant |

| | LEGAL | ENGINEERING | MEDICAL | ACCOUNTING |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| Requirements for Accreditation | Bar Examination | Professional Review | National Examination of the Board | 2 CTI Examinations |
| Internship or Experience required | 1 year pupillage | Training to ECSA Schedule | 1 year internship | 3-5 years |
| CPD | Required | Required | Required | Required |
| Code of Ethics | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Applicable Act | Admission of Advocates Act, 74 of 1964 | Engineering Profession Act, Act 46 of 2000 | Health Professions Act no. 56 of 1974 | The Public Accountants and Auditors Act No 80 of 1991 |

In the table below, the conduct issues (including values) found in the literature of each of the four professions, were recorded in order to compile a database of the issues that each of the professions gave prominence to in their writings and codes.

Table 6.2 Comparative matrix of values of the four major professions:

| Values | Legal | Engineering | Medical | Accounting |
|--|-------|-------------|---------|------------|
| Sound moral character (integrity/honour/honesty) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Maintaining the good reputation and prestige of the profession | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mastering the particular intellectual skills of the profession acquired by training and education | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Respect for human dignity | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Confidentiality | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Adhering to the common code of values and conduct of the profession | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Improving and growing the profession | | ✓ | | |
| Exposing those who engage in fraud and deception | | ✓ | | |
| Not permitting motives of profit to influence the free and independent exercise of professional judgment | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Dedication to service / pro bono service | ✓ | | | |
| Acceptance of duty to society as a whole | | | | ✓ |

| Values | Legal | Engineering | Medical | Accounting |
|--|-------|-------------|---------|------------|
| Holding paramount the safety, health and well-being of the public | | ✓ | | |
| Serving with fidelity the public, employees & clients | ✓ | | | |
| Willing to subordinate self-interest in pursuit of the more fundamental goal of public service | | ✓ | | |
| Certifying only what has been personally verified | | | ✓ | |
| Maintaining and enhancing work systems (IT etc) | | ✓ | | |
| Prepared to assume responsibility for subsequent impact of a task | | ✓ | | |
| Always acting as faithful agent or trustee | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| A dedication to providing competent service | | | | ✓ |
| Avoiding conflict of interest | | | | ✓ |
| Adopting responsible behaviour | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Respecting the rights of others | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Maintaining an objective outlook | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Rendering service in accordance with the relevant technical and professional standards | | | | ✓ |
| Building professional reputation on the merit of services rendered | | ✓ | | |
| Issuing public statements only in an objective and truthful manner | | | | ✓ |
| Continued concern for professional competence | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Recognizing personal limitations and consulting with other experts | | | ✓ | |
| Keeping up to date on developments in practice, legislation and techniques | | | | ✓ |
| Continuing to develop professional knowledge and skill throughout career | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| A concern for development and progress / research | | ✓ | ✓ | |

The only three values in the above table which are held by all of the professions (four out of four) are “sound moral character” (ethical conduct), “maintaining the good reputation and prestige of the profession” (self-regulation) and “mastering the particular intellectual skills of the profession acquired by training and education” (knowledge and skills). This confirms that the first three Pillars of professionalism have been correctly identified

- 1 A mastery of a complex body of knowledge and skills;
- 2 A commitment to integrity and morality through a Code of Conduct;
- 3 Autonomy in practice and the privilege of self-regulation;

The fourth Pillar: Acceptance of a duty to society as a whole, is implied in other highly rated values, namely “respect for human dignity” and “confidentiality” (three out of four). “Acting as a faithful agent”, “adopting responsible behaviour”,

“respecting the rights of others” and “objectivity” all imply a concern for the public or the client (two out of four).

Table 6.2 demonstrates that the professions have a great deal in common as far as the acceptance of basic values go. The basic building blocks of a profession are clearly visible, even if they are verbalised slightly differently by the four professions.

Concerns identified. From the qualitative analysis of the four professions the following concerns about professional practice in a modern context emerged:

- Professions are often called upon to defend their professional judgment and their position of independence in the face of corporate greed;
- There is a general concern that a decline in “old-fashioned” mores such as honesty, integrity and honour might affect professionalism;
- Professions often have to share their responsibility with other, perhaps less rigorously regulated or ethically sensitised parties, such as employers, clients and other stakeholders;
- Self-regulation does fail at times, with the public left with the perception that professions at times protect their members and not always the public;
- There is an increased loss of control over basic professional decisions, taken over by the state, the corporate sector or other forces;
- The professional requires inner strength and resolve to hold an opinion or a viewpoint of independence in the face of employer needs, pressures or even corporate greed;
- Not enough research is being done on compliance to Codes of Conduct and league tables, to test results, are lacking.

6.3.2 Results of the qualitative analysis of Human Resources globally

The development of human resources as a profession in South Africa has been documented in Chapter 3 and the findings on the major professions documented in Chapter 4. The next step was to review the existing literature on the role and position of human resources in the international arena and within the context of the constantly changing environment. Again the websites of the major HR bodies of

three countries were used as well as the writings of prominent authors in the field. An informal survey was conducted with a number of senior HR professionals to establish representative views on subjects pertinent to this study. The results are given below.

The brief investigation into the development of human resources internationally resulted in the conclusion that the role of this relatively young profession in the modern economy is growing in importance. According to Ulrich et al in HR Competencies *“the HR profession is growing dramatically in numbers, global reach and scientific sophistication. Demands on HR continue to increase, and the expectations on HR professionals have changed dramatically Today, HR professionals in leading firms sit at the table and have opportunities to participate fully in business discussions”* (2008:5,6).

This change is summarised in the table below used by Schuetz at a New Zealand conference.

Table 6.3 *Historic evolution of HR*

| The Period | The Issue | The Result |
|--------------------|--|--|
| The 1920's | Fair Labour treatment | Bureaucratic controls / rules |
| The 1930's – 50's | Policy development / implementation | Personnel function |
| The 1960's – 80's | Workforce welfare, regulation, reporting requirements | HR function emerges |
| The 1990's | Consulting, administrative effectiveness | HR as business partner / leader |
| The new millennium | Transactional and strategic services are essential to business success | The HR role bifurcates <i>(Human Capital)</i> |

Keynote address by Bob Schuetz from Mercer at the HR Institute of New Zealand Conference (2006),

In the four tables below three countries were chosen for more detailed analysis based on the fact that HR is highly developed in these countries and they have self-regulating bodies. The following tables summarise the differences and similarities in the different countries:

Table 6.4 *Regulation structures – UK, USA, Canada*

| | UK | USA | CANADA |
|---------------------|--|--|--|
| Regulated by | Royal Charter | Voluntary certification | Voluntary National Council |
| Body | CIPD Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development | HRCI Human Resource Certification Institute | CCHRA Canadian Council of HR Associations |

While UK and USA (and South Africa) chose to organize HR nationally from inception, Canada with its largely autonomous provinces, saw each province making its own decisions on organising HR. In the province of Ontario, for instance an HR Professions Act was promulgated in 1990. Their national Canadian Council of HR Associations is a more recent development (2004).

Table 6.5 *Establishment dates of HR structures.*

| | UK CIPD | USA HRCI | CANADA CCHRA |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Established in | 1946 | 1973 | 1994 |
| Started awarding Chartered or Certificate status to HR practitioners | July 2000 | September 1976 | August 2004 |

The parallel South African bodies were established around the same time as the UK and USA bodies, indicating an awareness in South Africa of worldwide trends.

Table 6.6 *Membership numbers of certified/chartered professionals*

| | UK CIPD | USA HRCI | CANADA CCHRA |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| MEMBERS Up to 2000 | 75,000 | 48,000 | 15,000 |
| MEMBERS Up to end of 2007 | 127,800 | 89,000 | 17,000 |

* These numbers can only be regarded as an approximation because they are constantly changing .

Of the 127,800 members of the CIPD, some 47,300 are Chartered Members or Fellows, which could be equated to senior registered professionals in the South African context. (Doggett :2007) (Email from Phil Doggett received 12 April 2007, Membership and Education CIPD).

There is an increase in professional credentialing as indicated by the growth in numbers that these bodies have experienced over the past 7 years. This is an indication of the natural maturation of HR. This movement towards professional recognition seems to be in line with the trend in other European countries, where the levels and criteria for professional registration have only recently been put in place. In South Africa, a renewed effort to gain statutory recognition for the HR profession was initiated in 2004 and continues to this day.

Table 6.7 *Membership levels from lowest to highest levels*

| | UK CIPD | USA HRCI | CANADA CCHRA |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Full or professional members | Member of CIPD Fellow of CIPD Companion of CIPD | Professional Senior Professional Global Professional | - Certified HR Professional |
| Designations | MCIPD FCIPD CCIPD | PHR SPHR GPHR | CHRP |

Interestingly enough the older bodies, including the SABPP, all rank their members at various levels of seniority. The most modern body, the Canadian CCHRA has opted for one level only, namely Certified HR Professional. Much the same is done by Chartered Accountants with CA as the benchmark for the profession. This has worked very well for the CA's and this approach may be worth considering. The SABPP has aligned its levels of professional registration with the National Qualification Framework (NQF) in South Africa with a view to create a career ladder for the profession. This has been a deliberate move to build the profession and gain recognition for standards.

6.3.3 Contextualising human resources in South Africa:

Eighteen senior registered practitioners serving as Mentors of the SABPP were approached with questions regarding their views on human resources today (see **Annexure E**).

The core results of the interviews that were analysed qualitatively are reflected in the summary below. A major theme that emerges from these interviews is the deep concern about the reputation of HR which is directly linked to incompetent people in practice. Professionalising HR will go some way towards solving many of the issues of the profession. An acceptance by industry of the standards set by the professional body may assist even more in lifting the standard of practice.

Question 1: How important is competent and strategic HR in companies today?

The majority of respondents were of the opinion that the role human resources is becoming increasingly important. Factors influencing this view were:

- International competitiveness;
- Increased productivity requirements;
- Retaining young talent or high talent individuals;
- Knowledge property becoming the only competitive edge;
- A recurring skills shortage requiring HR interventions;
- Governments increasingly requiring competent and strategic HR services.

Question 2: Is there an awareness of the importance of the professionalisation of HR?

The view that emerged strongly here was that the functions of HR were not understood by people generally. There is a clear understanding of the function of an engineer, a doctor, a lawyer or an accountant. This is not the case in HR, where the concepts of performance management, change management, talent management, skills audits, organizational structuring, coaching, mentoring, employee wellness and employee relations are not understood to be part of HR or even understood at all.

Defining the scope of HR and marketing this, would assist recognition of HR as a profession. One respondent made the point that if the HR Executive of a company is not truly professional, the rest of the company will follow suit. HR has a role to play in corporate governance. The human capital report to Boards and stakeholders should be as structured and standard as the reports by the other entities. The King III recommends that all entities disclose which principles or practices they have decided not to apply and why. (Temkin 2009:2).

Question 3: What about accountability and ethical conduct?

There was consensus that this was an area of deep concern among the respondents. The following points were made:

- Untold damage is done by leading HR players acting dishonestly or incompetently;
- Accountability is a concept that hardly exists in South Africa;
- The Code of Conduct is critical and must be internalised;
- Communication, training and investment is required in this area;
- Senior people must “walk the talk”;

Question 4: Comment on a vision for HR in South Africa

Strong views emerged to this request. Senior HR practitioners are clearly passionate and also deeply concerned about the role of HR. The following main points emerged:

- The HR profession must now be regulated in some form or another;
- HR has an important contribution to make to sound corporate governance;
- There is an embarrassing number of HR people who still do not know the basics;
- The HR profession should be more of a conscience to organisations;
- The universities must become seriously involved in professionalising HR.

From the qualitative analysis of HR globally and from the interviews conducted with mentors of the profession and in the light of the identified pillars on which professions are built, a conclusion can be reached that Human Resource Management can indeed, be regarded as a profession.

6.3.4 A contribution towards a new Code of Conduct for the SABPP

In Annexure B the complete history of the development of a new Code of Conduct for the South African Board for Personnel Practice is documented. This study contributed towards the result through:

- Identification of the conduct issues (including values) that needed to be addressed;
- Designing of a questionnaire;
- Sending out of the questionnaire to a number of registered professionals;
- Presenting the results of the survey to the Board of the SABPP.

The process of drawing up and approving of the new Code of Conduct was taken on, from that point, by a working committee of the SABPP. The new Code can be found in **Annexure B**.

6.3.5 Summary of values

The various conduct and value elements described in chapters 4 and 5 of the study can also be compared. This overarching table summarizes the various values espoused by different professional bodies which include the four major professions as well as the four HR professions examined.. The first column details the values found in the codes of various professions. Because the final list is an extraction and compilation of the various elements appearing in the codes, and the actual value may be described in slightly different terms, the matrix reflects an approximation of the acceptance of the values by the different professions.

Table 6.8 *Overarching comparative matrix of conduct issues*

| Conduct issues (values and ethics included) | The four major professions investigated | | | | Professional bodies in the HR field | | | |
|---|--|------------------|--------------|-----------------|--|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| | Legal | Engineer- ing | Medi- cal | Accoun- ting | CIPD UK | HRCI USA | CCHRA Canada | SABPP SA |
| Maintaining the good reputation and prestige of the profession | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Improving and growing the profession | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ |
| Maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Exposing those who engage in fraud and deception | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Not permitting motives of profit to influence the independent exercise of professional judgment | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Adhering to the common code of values and conduct of the profession | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ |
| Supporting the system to allow for quality entrants | | | | | | | | |
| Dedication to service / pro bono service | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Acceptance of duty to society as a whole | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| Holding paramount the safety, health and well-being of the public | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Serving with fidelity the public, employees & clients | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Promoting the public good and development of people | | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Willing to subordinate self-interest in pursuit of public service | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Acting in the client's interest | | | | | | | | |
| Certifying only what has been personally verified | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Maintaining and enhancing work systems | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | |
| Prepared to assume responsibility for impact of a task | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ |
| Acting as faithful agent or trustee in all circumstances | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | |



| Conduct issues (values and ethics included) | The four major professions investigated | | | | Professional bodies in the HR field | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| A dedication to providing competent service | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Promoting justice and fairness | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Avoiding conflict of interest | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Adopting responsible behaviour | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ |
| Respecting the rights of others | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| Maintaining an outlook which is essentially objective | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| Rendering service in accordance with the relevant technical and professional standards | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| Building professional reputation on the merit of services rendered | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Issuing public statements only in an objective and truthful manner | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Playing a positive and constructive role where deviation from reputable practices occur | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| Mastery of a particular intellectual skills of the profession acquired by training and education | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Continued concern for professional competence | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Recognizing personal limitations and consulting with other experts | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Keeping up to date on developments in practice, legislation and techniques | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Continuing to develop professional knowledge and skill throughout career | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Sound moral character (integrity/honour/honesty) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Respect for human dignity | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Confidentiality | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Loyalty to profession | | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Concern for research | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ |

Interestingly no single value or conduct issue is espoused by all, but sound moral character is almost universally accepted as a value of major if not the highest importance. The moral fibre so readily embraced has sadly been eroded in many of the professions under discussion. Professions are clearly sensitive about their reputation. Perception plays a major role in how professions are viewed by both the public and the media. Jokes about lawyers (mostly in the USA) tell its own tale about public perception of this profession today.

Another value that is highly rated, is respect for human dignity. In many of the professions, the ordinary man in the street may not always be in a position to defend himself against misconduct or blunders. It seems that professions are sensitive to this and therefore emphasize respect for human dignity.

Other values shared by most professions are a concern with maintaining the highest standard of professional conduct and also the requirement of mastery of the particular body of knowledge. There is recognition of the necessity of continued updating of information, skills and competence and finally maintaining confidentiality is rated highly as a professional value.

6.4 Results from the Quantitative study

Most aspects looked at in the questionnaire comes from the identified values discussed and enumerated in tables 6.2 and 6.8. For the purposes of this study the questionnaire is intended to test the view of the HR community whether the identified elements are important for the regulation and building of the profession. It is therefore important to obtain a representative sample (see pages 38 and 40).

The core result of the survey in which we are interested (given the purpose of the study) is whether the identified elements that are important for the building and regulation of the HR profession, are also regarded as important by the HR community in South Africa. The “content validity ratio” (CVR) of Lawshe (1975) has been calculated for this purpose.

The rating scale used in the questionnaire, is a five (5) point Likert scale. 1 depicts “not essential” and 5 “essential”. This scale was intended to assist in determining the weight placed by the respondent on each identified conduct issue. In order to analyse the data and using Lawshe’s technique, 1 and 2 are put together to obtain a single value and 4 and 5 are put together to obtain a single value, reducing the five point scale to a three point scale.

For a panel of 78 respondents all CVR values greater than .20 can be seen as an indication that the elements are deemed to be important ($P = 0,05$). (Negative values indicate the opposite. The value was extrapolated to 80 subject matter experts by using the formula $y = 0,9568 \left(\frac{x}{5}\right)^{-0,5873}$ ($y \rightarrow$ experts; $x \rightarrow$ minimum value). The result is that the CVR value for 80 experts is 0,20 (Lawshe 1975).

6.4.1 Bio-demographics of responses

Of the responses received, just more than half (57%) of the respondents were males and 43% females. This ensured a fairly balanced and representative view of the values, ethics and responsibilities.

6.4.2 Fundamental personal values

The fact that every value listed in the questionnaire was already a proven value in some other code, has made widely diverse choices unlikely and has influenced the rating scale. Figure 6.9 below illustrates this phenomenon.

Table 6.9 Descriptive Statistics of Basic Fundamental Personal Values of Professionals

| Identifying Elements | Descriptives | | | Lawshe Frequencies | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------|---------------|---|--|---|
| | N | Mean | Std Deviation | Frequency of Items Perceived as Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Useful But not Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Not Necessary |
| Sound moral character | 79 | 4.6709 | 0.61439 | 73 | 6 | 0 |
| Respect for human dignity | 78 | 4.5897 | 0.69199 | 71 | 6 | 1 |
| Altruism | 78 | 3.9103 | 1.02166 | 55 | 14 | 9 |
| Loyalty | 78 | 3.8077 | 1.06975 | 51 | 17 | 10 |
| Concern for development and progress | 78 | 4.2436 | 0.80881 | 62 | 15 | 1 |

Table 6.10 Content Validity Ratio (Lawshe) of Basic Fundamental Personal Values of Professionals

| Identifying Elements | Ne | N | CVR |
|--------------------------------------|----|----|--------|
| Sound moral character | 73 | 79 | 0.8481 |
| Respect for human dignity | 71 | 78 | 0.8205 |
| Altruism | 55 | 78 | 0.4103 |
| Loyalty | 51 | 78 | 0.3077 |
| Concern for development and progress | 62 | 78 | 0.5897 |

CVR values > 0,20 are significant on p0,05

From the above tables it is clear that all the values are regarded by the HR community (respondents) as very important indeed for a healthy profession. The respondents had to weigh each element and consider the importance in the light of what constituted good governance in a profession.

It is very interesting to see that “sound moral character” and respect for human dignity are regarded as the most important personal values for an HR professional. The first relates to the second identified Pillar of professionalism - *a commitment to integrity and morality through a Code of Conduct*. The second, and almost as highly rated, element of “respect for human dignity” ties in with the fourth Pillar - *acceptance of a duty to society as a whole*. Even the three elements that received the lowest values, were still significant.

This view of the importance of sound moral character in the practice of a profession is widely held, not only in the HR fraternity, but in the other major professions as well. According to Robert (2004:1) in the context of the medical profession: “*Professionalism... aspires to altruism, accountability, excellence, duty, service, honour, integrity, and respect for others.*” See also other examples in Chapter 4.

King III says that good governance is about “responsible leadership, which calls for integrity, transparency and accountability. (Temkin 2009:1)

6.4.3 Desirable professional qualities

Table 6.11 *Descriptive Statistics of Desirable Professional Qualities*

| Identifying Elements | Descriptives | | | Lawshe Frequencies | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------|---------------|---|--|---|
| | N | Mean | Std Deviation | Frequency of Items Perceived as Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Useful But not Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Not Necessary |
| Leadership qualities | 78 | 4.0897 | 0.94231 | 60 | 13 | 5 |
| Confidence | 77 | 4.0909 | 0.98918 | 56 | 16 | 5 |
| Credibility | 78 | 4.641 | 0.83704 | 72 | 3 | 3 |
| Good judgement | 79 | 4.5063 | 0.8301 | 69 | 8 | 2 |
| Independent functioning | 76 | 4.1974 | 0.92405 | 61 | 11 | 4 |
| Discretion | 77 | 4.4545 | 0.75298 | 69 | 6 | 2 |
| Accountability | 78 | 4.6026 | 0.69019 | 71 | 6 | 1 |
| Understanding of obligations | 76 | 4.0789 | 0.8758 | 58 | 14 | 4 |
| Intellectual honesty | 76 | 4.5263 | 0.72062 | 68 | 7 | 1 |

Table 6.12 *Content Validity Ratio (Lawshe) of Desirable Professional Qualities*

| Identifying Elements | Ne | N | CVR |
|------------------------------|----|----|--------|
| Leadership qualities | 60 | 78 | 0.5385 |
| Confidence | 56 | 77 | 0.4545 |
| Credibility | 72 | 78 | 0.8462 |
| Good judgement | 69 | 79 | 0.7468 |
| Independent functioning | 61 | 76 | 0.6053 |
| Discretion | 69 | 77 | 0.7922 |
| Accountability | 71 | 78 | 0.8205 |
| Understanding of obligations | 58 | 76 | 0.5263 |
| Intellectual honesty | 68 | 76 | 0.7895 |

CVR values > 0,20 are significant on p0,05

While all the qualities are rated highly, it is interesting to note that in this climate with its heightened awareness of the erosion of moral values, the qualities most valued are “credibility” and “accountability”. This coincides with an earlier conclusion made in 6.3.1, where one of the results of the qualitative analysis of the four major professions was that *a commitment to integrity and morality through a Code of Conduct* (p4 above), was a foundational principle (second Pillar) of professionalism.

“Discretion”, “Intellectual honesty” and “good judgment” are also very highly valued as qualities a professional should have. This can be related to the principle of *autonomy of practice and the privilege of self-regulation* (third Pillar). If a professional works within an environment of self-regulation, public trust will usually be bestowed if the qualities of discretion, intellectual honesty and good judgment are displayed.

In a professional environment “independent functioning” is an indispensable quality and ties again directly to the third Pillar mentioned above. As established in the qualitative analysis, professionals have to be able to make independent judgments and stand their ground under sometimes very difficult circumstances in the work environment where the qualities discussed under this table all come into play. Or as articulated under Concerns listed on page 64 “Professions are often called upon to defend their professional judgment and their position of independence in the face of corporate greed”.

Even the qualities that received the lowest rating are still regarded as significant by the HR community. “Leadership qualities”, “understanding of obligations” and “confidence” complete the picture painted in this unit of a professional as seen through the eyes of the human resource community.

These last three qualities can be related once again to the foundational principles of *autonomy of practice and the privilege of self-regulation* (second Pillar), as well as an *acceptance of a duty to society as a whole* (fourth Pillar).

6.4.4 Responsibility towards the profession

Table 6.13 *Descriptive Statistics of Responsibility towards Profession*

| Identifying Elements | Descriptives | | | Lawshe Frequencies | | |
|--|--------------|--------|---------------|---|--|---|
| | N | Mean | Std Deviation | Frequency of Items Perceived as Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Useful But not Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Not Necessary |
| Maintaining good reputation and prestige of profession | 77 | 4.6494 | 0.68376 | 73 | 3 | 1 |
| Improving the profession | 78 | 4.141 | 0.93593 | 57 | 17 | 4 |
| Always maintaining highest personal standards | 78 | 4.7436 | 0.54501 | 76 | 1 | 1 |
| Exposing fraud and deception | 77 | 4.1429 | 1.04773 | 60 | 10 | 7 |
| Not permitting motives of profit | 77 | 4 | 1.1239 | 53 | 18 | 6 |
| Adhering to common code of values | 78 | 4.5513 | 0.63752 | 72 | 6 | 0 |
| Supporting individuals and system for quality entrants | 76 | 3.8947 | 0.94628 | 51 | 20 | 5 |

Table 6.14 *Content Validity Ratio (Lawshe) of Responsibility towards Profession*

| Identifying Elements | Ne | N | CVR |
|--|----|----|--------|
| Maintaining good reputation and prestige of profession | 73 | 77 | 0.8961 |
| Improving the profession | 57 | 78 | 0.4615 |
| Always maintaining highest personal standards | 76 | 78 | 0.9487 |
| Exposing fraud and deception | 60 | 77 | 0.5584 |
| Not permitting motives of profit | 53 | 77 | 0.3766 |
| Adhering to common code of values | 72 | 78 | 0.8462 |
| Supporting individuals and system for quality entrants | 51 | 76 | 0.3421 |

CVR values > 0,20 are significant on p0,05

It will be noted that “always maintaining the highest personal standards” enjoys the highest CVR value of all the above elements. The reason why this is perceived to be such an important element, is that this statement can be linked to all the foundational principles (or Pillars) of professionalism. In mastering the subject and practising with integrity, in self-regulating and in an acceptance of a duty to society, only the highest personal standards will gain the respect of the community and enhance the profile of the profession. This also speaks to the personal responsibility of maintaining currency of knowledge and skills, as the fast changing

environment demands continued professional development, which links to the first Pillar (p109), namely *a mastery of a complex body of knowledge*.

The second highest is “maintaining the good reputation and prestige of the profession”. The fact that HR is struggling to be recognised as a significant player in the economy makes this responsibility particularly important. The practice of moving unqualified or incompetent people into HR, as identified in the qualitative analysis, has badly damaged the reputation of human resource management.

The element with the next highest value is logically the expectation that the professional will be “adhering to a common code of values” (second Pillar), also identified in the qualitative analysis. It is also of importance that the Code of Conduct recognised by a profession should meet the highest aspirational demands and cover all important areas of practice.

The elements with lower values are nevertheless high in significance. Doing things like exposing fraud and deception, working to improve the profession, right motives and investing in new entrants, will significantly enrich the profession and lift the standard of HR in general.

These results are an indication that the HR community understands that building a credible profession requires that the individual practitioners set for themselves the highest possible standards.

The Engineering profession reaches this conclusion in the Fundamental Canons in the Code of Conduct of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) mentioned on page 95 of this study:

“Engineers shall act in such a manner as to uphold and enhance the honour, integrity, and dignity of the engineering profession and shall act with zero-tolerance for bribery, fraud, and corruption” (own emphasis).

The legal profession addresses this principle of upholding and protecting their profession in a resolution taken at a Conference of Chief Justices in 1996 of the American Bar Association which reads:

"There is the perception and frequently the reality that some members of the bar do not consistently adhere to principles of professionalism and thereby sometimes impede the effective administration of justice." (See p85).

The norms and discipline imposed by a profession on its members lends support to the general ethical practice within such a profession. As HR aspires towards being acknowledged at the same level as the major four professions, it is clear that it wants to position itself in the same way. Whether statutory or not, a profession remains responsible to set and maintain its own standards.

6.4.5 The responsibility towards the client or employer

Table 6.15 Descriptive Statistics of Responsibility towards Client/Employer

| Identifying Elements | Descriptives | | | Lawshe Frequencies | | |
|---|--------------|--------|---------------|---|--|---|
| | N | Mean | Std Deviation | Frequency of Items Perceived as Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Useful But not Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Not Necessary |
| Acting in client's interest | 77 | 4.2857 | 0.99812 | 66 | 6 | 5 |
| Certifying and authorizing | 74 | 3.9189 | 1.00351 | 52 | 16 | 6 |
| Maintaining and enhancing integrity | 75 | 3.88 | 1.02614 | 51 | 17 | 7 |
| Assume responsibility for impact of task | 75 | 3.9867 | 1.07167 | 52 | 16 | 7 |
| Not enticing clients away from colleagues | 74 | 3.9324 | 1.10207 | 50 | 17 | 7 |
| Acting as faithful agent | 75 | 4.28 | 0.89382 | 62 | 10 | 3 |
| Dedication to providing competent service | 76 | 4.5658 | 0.67991 | 73 | 25 | 3 |

Table 6.16 *Content Validity Ratio (Lawshe) of Responsibility towards Client/Employer*

| Identifying Elements | Ne | N | CVR |
|---|----|----|--------|
| Acting in client's interest | 66 | 77 | 0.7143 |
| Certifying and authorizing as personally verified | 52 | 74 | 0.4054 |
| Maintaining and enhancing integrity | 51 | 75 | 0.3600 |
| Assume responsibility for impact of task | 52 | 75 | 0.3867 |
| Not enticing clients away from colleagues | 50 | 74 | 0.3514 |
| Acting as faithful agent | 62 | 75 | 0.6533 |
| Dedication to providing competent service | 73 | 76 | 0.9211 |

CVR values > 0,20 are significant on p0,05

“A dedication to providing competent service” receives by far the highest CVR value and this does imply *a mastery of the complex body of knowledge and skills* (first Pillar). Competence is here seen as an integral part of being a professional.

Providing a competent service includes maintaining currency and growing in understanding of the complexities of the modern economy as the role of HR broadens and becomes more strategic.

This outcome indicates awareness among the human resource professionals that this is a serious responsibility. In Engineering, Williams (1997) referred to in on page 92, defines professionalism as the “*capacity to make competent and unbiased judgments consistently.*” In Accountancy the five fundamental principles of professional ethics include professional competence (page 106).

Both the second and third values namely “acting in the client’s interest” and “acting as a faithful agent” can be linked to the fourth Pillar of professionalism - *acceptance of a duty to society as a whole*. There is also a significant link to a commitment to integrity (second Pillar).

All the other elements, while much lower, are still regarded as important. It is interesting that “certifying and authorizing only what has been personally verified” is seen to be significant. This relates to a commitment to integrity and the second Pillar.

6.4.6 The responsibility towards the public and society

Table 6.17 *Descriptive Statistics of Responsibility towards the Public/Society*

| Identifying Elements | Descriptives | | | Lawshe Frequencies | | |
|---|--------------|--------|---------------|---|--|---|
| | N | Mean | Std Deviation | Frequency of Items Perceived as Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Useful But not Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Not Necessary |
| Dedication to service | 78 | 3.8462 | 1.06998 | 53 | 18 | 7 |
| Acceptance of duty | 77 | 3.3377 | 1.08349 | 35 | 24 | 18 |
| Holding paramount the safety, etc of public | 76 | 3.4605 | 1.22682 | 38 | 22 | 16 |
| Serving with fidelity | 77 | 3.8701 | 1.15109 | 52 | 14 | 11 |
| Promoting the public good | 76 | 3.4605 | 1.23764 | 44 | 14 | 18 |
| Willingness to subordinate narrow self-interest | 75 | 3.4667 | 1.2875 | 40 | 17 | 17 |

Table 6.18 *Content Validity Ratio (Lawshe) of Responsibility towards the Public/Society*

| Identifying Elements | Ne | N | CVR |
|---|----|----|---------|
| Dedication to service | 53 | 78 | 0.3590 |
| Acceptance of duty | 35 | 77 | -0.0909 |
| Holding paramount the safety, etc of public | 38 | 76 | 0.0000 |
| Serving with fidelity | 52 | 77 | 0.3506 |
| Promoting the public good | 44 | 76 | 0.1579 |
| Willingness to subordinate narrow self-interest | 40 | 75 | 0.0667 |

CVR values > 0,20 are significant on p0,05

This dimension has the lowest CVR values overall. This may indicate that the HR community regards this as an area for an internal locus of control and not an area to be necessarily regulated externally by the profession. This does not imply that responsibility to society is unimportant. On the contrary in the previous table a dedication to provide competent service to the client, who is often also part of the public / society, has the highest value. Some contamination may have occurred here, between responsibility to public and society and responsibility to client and employer, which may have influenced this rating.

As with the other professions, however, the HR practitioner acknowledges a responsibility towards the public and society, firstly through a “dedication to service” and secondly by “serving with fidelity the public, employees and clients”. Being a professional in this sense is synonymous with an attitude of service. Lewis (2001:5) puts it quite succinctly: “*Professions, then, are occupations whose members receive their licenses in return for their pledge, their **profession** to put the interests of the served society above their own self interest while acting in the licensed role.*” (own emphasis).

Acceptance of a duty to society is one of the main Pillars of professionalism and includes respecting human rights and dignity which was rated highly in table 6.10 above. According to the Oxford Dictionary (1989:949) the definition of “profession” includes a social contract between a profession and society.

6.4.7 The responsibility for a personal work ethic:

Table 6.19 Descriptive Statistics of Responsibility for Personal Work Ethic

| Identifying Elements | Descriptives | | | Lawshe Frequencies | | |
|--|--------------|--------|---------------|---|--|---|
| | N | Mean | Std Deviation | Frequency of Items Perceived as Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Useful But not Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Not Necessary |
| Promoting justice and fairness | 77 | 4.3506 | 0.94265 | 66 | 7 | 4 |
| Avoiding conflict of interest | 74 | 4.0135 | 0.95793 | 52 | 18 | 4 |
| Adopting responsible behaviour | 76 | 4.4211 | 0.75301 | 69 | 6 | 1 |
| Respecting rights of others | 76 | 4.3684 | 0.877 | 65 | 8 | 3 |
| Maintaining objective outlook | 75 | 4.28 | 0.84725 | 63 | 10 | 2 |
| Rendering service in accordance with standards | 77 | 4.4805 | 0.77137 | 69 | 7 | 1 |
| Building professional reputation | 76 | 4.1711 | 1.08797 | 60 | 9 | 7 |
| Issuing public statements objectively and truthful | 75 | 4.12 | 0.97204 | 60 | 10 | 5 |
| Playing a positive and constructive role | 74 | 4.0541 | 0.8897 | 58 | 12 | 4 |

Table 6.20 Content Validity Ratio (Lawshe) of Responsibility for Personal Work Ethic

| Identifying Elements | Ne | N | CVR |
|--|----|----|--------|
| Promoting justice and fairness | 66 | 77 | 0.7143 |
| Avoiding conflict of interest | 52 | 74 | 0.4054 |
| Adopting responsible behaviour | 69 | 76 | 0.8158 |
| Respecting rights of others | 65 | 76 | 0.7105 |
| Maintaining objective outlook | 63 | 75 | 0.6800 |
| Rendering service in accordance with standards | 69 | 77 | 0.7922 |
| Building professional reputation | 60 | 76 | 0.5789 |
| Issuing public statements objectively and truthful | 60 | 75 | 0.6000 |
| Playing a positive and constructive role | 58 | 74 | 0.5676 |

CVR values > 0,20 are significant on p0,05

As elsewhere the CVR values are very high. Again this is an indication that this area is regarded as very significant in the professional arena to uphold the profession. According to the respondents to our questionnaire “adopting responsible behaviour” tops the agenda and ties in with the fourth Pillar which is an *acceptance of a duty to society as a whole*. This enforces the fact that the HR community understands the importance of serving the public and society with maturity and sound judgment.

Next comes “rendering service in accordance with standards”. This is significant, as this implies that there are set and recognised standards accepted by the HR community. This in turn correlates with the first Pillar - *a mastery of a complex body of knowledge and skills*, where the knowledge and skills are defined by a regulating body. The second Pillar (*integrity*) and the third Pillar (*self-regulation*) and the fourth Pillar (*duty to society*) are all validated by this response.

In the light of the above choices, it is logical to conclude that unless a profession organizes and structures itself and makes decisions on the relevant technical and professional criteria, how will those that turn away from professional governance, even know whether they are meeting the standards? To meet a standard you must surely know the standard.

From the medical world, Robert (2004:1) is of the opinion that the core of professionalism constitutes

"... those attitudes and behaviours that serve to maintain patient interest above physician self-interest. Accordingly, professionalism ... aspires to altruism, accountability, excellence, duty, service, honour, integrity, and respect for others."
Much the same values are espoused by the HR fraternity as indicated above.

6.4.8 The responsibility for knowledge and skills

Table 6.21 Descriptive Statistics of Responsibility for Knowledge and Skills

| Identifying Elements | Descriptives | | | Lawshe Frequencies | | |
|---|--------------|--------|---------------|---|--|---|
| | N | Mean | Std Deviation | Frequency of Items Perceived as Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Useful But not Essential | Frequency of Items Perceived as Not Necessary |
| Mastering intellectual skills of profession | 76 | 4.4342 | 0.75429 | 66 | 9 | 1 |
| Continued concern for professional competence | 76 | 4.3816 | 0.7297 | 69 | 5 | 2 |
| Recognizing personal limitations | 77 | 4.1688 | 0.97876 | 60 | 13 | 4 |
| Keeping up to date | 77 | 4.3896 | 0.89083 | 65 | 9 | 3 |
| Continuing to develop knowledge | 78 | 4.3718 | 0.77475 | 68 | 8 | 2 |

Table 6.22 Content Validity Ratio (Lawshe) of Responsibility for Knowledge and Skills

| Identifying Elements | Ne | N | CVR |
|---|----|----|--------|
| Mastering intellectual skills of profession | 66 | 76 | 0.7368 |
| Continued concern for professional competence | 69 | 76 | 0.8158 |
| Recognizing personal limitations | 60 | 77 | 0.5584 |
| Keeping up to date | 65 | 77 | 0.6883 |
| Continuing to develop knowledge | 68 | 78 | 0.7436 |

CVR values > 0,20 are significant on p0,05

This whole dimension corresponds with the first Pillar identified in the qualitative analysis: *a mastery of a complex body of knowledge and skills*. The fact that the

CVR values are so high, confirms that this pillar on which all professions are built, has been correctly identified as pivotal. The first identified pillar also carries the implication that this body of knowledge should be recognised and subscribed to by the professionals as well as by the profession.

One can add that it is also vitally important for the health of a profession that industry and government also recognises the standards and accreditations of the governing body. With Chartered Accountants, universal acceptance of the standard set by the governing body means that appointments of CAs centre not on their qualifications and experience, but on their registration with the governing body. Much of the woes of the HR reputation can be traced back to a lack of universally accepted standards of qualification, experience and peer recognition of standing through professional registration.

Not only is the body of knowledge to be mastered, but the highest CVR value is given to a “continued concern for professional competence”. HR practitioners are, in this dimension, not only concerned with their own currency, but this value indicates a general concern for the competence of practise within the profession. This supports the third Pillar - *autonomy in practice and the privilege of self-regulation*.

In the table above both “continuing to develop knowledge” and “keeping up to date” are given high values. Structured continued professional is thus a non-negotiable. This premise is universally accepted by professions. All professions are continually evolving and therefore have to renew. It is important that currency of knowledge in education, training and continued professional development as well as new solutions through research, receive constant and vigilant attention.

The South African Board for Personnel Practice Continued Professional Development (CPD) Policy describes CPD as “the systematic, ongoing structured process that human resource professionals undertake to maintain, develop and enhance skills, knowledge and competence both professionally and personally in order to improve performance at work, throughout their working life”.

6.5 Conclusions

Taking the qualitative as well as the quantitative analyses into account, the main conclusion reached in this study, is that Human Resource Management meets every one of the identified criteria and can in fact be seen as a bona-fide profession. The key contribution of this study is the identification of a number of aspects that determine professionalism, and the isolation of the most important elements to be considered in the regulation of the HR profession.

These conclusions are made against the backdrop of the values and functions of other major professions, as well as the values and functions of similar HR bodies in other countries. There are significant similarities that are found in all these professional bodies. The conclusions are also reached based on the participation and input by human resource practitioners in South Africa.

The four main pillars of professionalism remain the same for all professions:

- mastery of a particular intellectual skill, acquired by training and education;
- the adherence by members to a common code of values and conduct;
- a regulating or administering body and
- acceptance of a duty to serve society as a whole.

6.5.1 Professions in general

From the study of four major professions, it can be concluded that they have many conduct issues (including values and ethics) in common although each also have unique elements. It can also be seen that the times we live in has made it more difficult than ever to honour the professional commitment. There is, for instance, an interesting correlation in the sentiments expressed by the medical profession that social change has not been beneficial for the profession, and the indication by the legal profession that the influence exerted on them by big corporations has been detrimental in particular to the ethics of the profession. We are living in a fast

changing environment and the saying “adapt or die” is the motto of the day. Whether professions can maintain the moral fibre of the past, is an open question.

6.5.2 HR as a profession

The problem of whether human resources can be described as a profession has now been examined in the light of the structuring of other major professions. The literature study has taken cognisance of the views of eminent writers in this field who highlighted the evolving and increasingly important role of Human Capital management globally. The following conclusions seem justifiable.

- Human Resources is practiced worldwide and recognized as an integral part of the business environment.
- It has formalized its own structures to a greater and lesser degree in the various countries.
- It has identified its main elements of practice and a relevant knowledge domain.
- It has further defined the roles and functions of human resources and organized a method of recognition of competence which is layered from senior to lower levels.

6.5.3 Challenges in attaining recognition as a profession:

The following challenges were identified in HR attaining recognition as a profession:

- Society is largely uninformed on the nature of human resource practice;
- There is an unwillingness among practicing HR professionals to present themselves to be measured for professional registration. This is perhaps a fear of not making an acceptable level;
- While there is a body of knowledge, there is no uniformly or internationally recognized educational path for entry into the profession as with other professions;

- HR is populated by diversely educated professionals who mastered the body of knowledge of other related professions. This diversity causes identification with differently constituted professions, e.g. Industrial Psychology, Labour Law, Industrial Sociology etc.;
- There are multiple points of entry into the profession from other disciplines, with the borders seeming endlessly permeable;
- The human resource field has been known to be used to “dump” unsuccessful managers from other disciplines (Klimoski 2001), greatly to the detriment of the reputation of HR. With no entry barriers the quality of entrants cannot be screened;
- Organisations employing HR practitioners have differing criteria for appointment to HR and differing understanding of the role of HR;
- An obligation to society does not seem to be at the same aspirational level as was found in the four major international professions of law, medicine, engineering and accounting

6.5.4 Reasons why the time has come for HR to be professionalised:

Regulation of HR is necessary. While it remains the ideal to self-regulate and work with passionate and totally committed people only, in a big system this is rarely achievable. Regulatory minimum standards will have a profound impact on the quality of the profession. The professional body should concern itself with enhancing both the informal and the formal enforcing of minimum standards on a continual basis. The goal of obtaining an Act or a Charter for HR that is sanctioned nationally should continue to be pursued.

The reasons for professionalising include:

- **Ethics:** According to Ulrich and Smallwood (2007:194-196) HR leaders have moved to positions of influence and are *“very visible throughout most organisations because they directly and indirectly touch everyone in the company, set the standards and norms for behaviour within the company, and coach other leaders to demonstrate the leadership brand”*. The human resource practitioner shapes the HR policies that touch every employee from

entry to retirement and HR leaders are the architects, coaching and facilitating the process of establishing the company's leadership brand. Losey et al (2005:1) argues that "*if human resource managers do not accurately anticipate the future and do not plan appropriately*" they affect more than plans, machines, sales and numbers, "*they touch people's lives*". Mistakes can hardly ever be undone. To put the workforce into the hands of unqualified people is a recipe for disaster.

- **The impact of Human Capital on the bottom line.** Boudreau and Ramstad (2007:5,17) point out that "*researchers from disciplines as diverse as accounting, consumer research, finance, political science, and operations management compete to define the latest metrics for human capital within the organisations. Academics and consulting firms provide a barrage of evidence that HR practices correlate with financial performance*". They further conclude that organisations will increasingly compete by making effective decisions aligned with professional practices in the talent market;
- **The global village.** In the "Future of HRM" Losey et al (2005:409,412) agree that the world is changing in ways that put HR in the spotlight through the changing composition of the workforce, rapidly developing technology, increasing globalisation and increased competitiveness..

In "HR Competencies" Ulrich et al (2008:37) have another list of emerging roles of HR:

- Talent manager / Organisation designer
- Culture and change steward
- Strategy architect
- Operational executor
- Business ally
- Credible activist

Despite the confirmation of eminent writers in the HR field that HR is a profession of increasing importance (Kearns, Ulrich, Losey, Meisinger, Boudreau etc), HR in

the USA and in Europe have not taken the final and logical step to fully fledged professionalism, whereas the UK has lent Royal Charter status to the profession.

HR functions as both a profession and a management science. Boudreau & Ramstad (2007:16) postulate that the decision sciences evolve from professional practice. They make a clear distinction between the professional practice (accounting) and the decision science (finance) in for instance accounting field. They find that there is an equally clear distinction between the professional practice of sales and the decision science of marketing. Taking this interesting concept through to HR:

“The historical lessons from finance and marketing suggest that today’s HR challenges will not be addressed merely through incremental improvements in the professional practices of HR, as important as such practices will remain. Today’s HR functions typically create value by focusing on delivery of HR practices (staffing, development, compensation, labour relations, etc), based on professional and often well-researched principles. ... Finance and marketing provide reliable and profoundly logical frameworks that connect financial and customer capital to the organisation’s sustainable strategic success. Strategic decisions must go beyond generic best practices to create a unique and sustainable competitive position for the organisation.”
(2007:18)

In examining the HR profession internationally in Chapter 5 including the work of academics and practitioners on the body of knowledge, and the work of the South African Board of Personnel Practice in Chapter 3 in particular, it can be concluded that an extensive list of the necessary professional elements are already in place for HR to be recognised as a fully fledged profession. It is fair to say that the human resource function in South Africa has:

- international status and recognition;
- an established body of knowledge;
- a regulatory body with a track record of stability recognised under the SAQA Act;

- heraldic registration;
- formal registration processes in place;
- a career path that makes provision for entry at various levels;
- registration levels with detailed competency criteria;
- post nominal titles for registration levels;
- a modern and workable Code of Conduct;
- disciplinary policies and procedures for deregistration;
- a CPD process to keep professionals current;
- an accredited quality assurance process;
- the will to regulate itself.

6.6 Recommendations

6.6.1 National professionalization of HR through some form of regulation

If the increasing importance of the HR role in managing human capital and talent is accepted, together with the economic imperative for this function to be practiced effectively, it can be inferred that the time has come to formalise the professionalisation of HR. It is important to note that the SABPP is already listed under the SAQA Act and on the NLRD as the professional body and also under the SAQA Act the statutory quality and standards body for HR in South Africa.

Extensive consultations with HR practitioners have clearly indicated that there is an awareness and acceptance of the necessity to regulate. More than that, there is an urgency to attain this recognition as soon as possible. There is also a growing acceptance in business that professional registration is a benchmark of quality and it is becoming more common-place to find registration required when applying for an HR position.

Government endorsement of the process is required to make this a national reality. It is recommended that the SABPP forges ahead to obtain some form of regulation of HR in South Africa, if not in the form of an Act, then taking the same route as the

CIPD to formalise through a gazetted Chartered Council for Human Capital of South Africa.

It is also recommended that the Human Capital Managers find a place in the King Report currently being revised. It should be recommended that all listed companies appoint professionally registered HR practitioners in at least their top echelon of Human Capital management as a measure of best practice. It is believed that by setting a recognized and uniform standard of competence and professionalism, good governance will be enhanced.

It should further be proposed that these Practitioners be at least at Chartered HR Practitioner level or Master HR Practitioner level. As with other professions such as CAs, the practitioners registered at these levels would have prescribed qualifications, experience and recognition by their Professional Body, would be accountable according to a Code of Conduct and would be required to continue personal development and to report on such development on an annual basis

It is further recommended that the IPM and the SABPP together take this concept to the international stage and make an argument for rationalisation of standards. To quote from the report of the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations on HR Competencies and Professional Standards June 2000 (P2): *“As organisations become more global it can be argued that the need for standardisation within the HR profession is growing.”* June 2000 (P2).

6.6.2 Ethics

The Code of Conduct of the SABPP needs to work-shopped, guided through examples and case studies and internalised by the profession. Communication underlining the importance of being an example and practicing at the highest ethical level needs to constantly reinforce the concept. It is further recommended that tertiary institutions do far more training on ethics than is currently being done.

6.6.3 Revisiting the functions / specialisations of HR

In the constantly changing world, HR needs to continually revise and update not only content of curricula, but also whether the right specialist functions are still being acknowledged. As indicated above on p30, HR functions are constantly being adjusted to fit the environment. It is recommended that in the light of functions recognised by other countries (matrix on pages 18 and 19) and new developments within commerce and industry, that the specialist categories recognised by the SABPP should be reviewed.

6.6.4 Establishing the role of HR in the eyes of society

It is up to HR to clearly define its role and to help society understand exactly what HR does that benefits society as a whole. This would lead to recognition of the value of human resources and thus achieve the sanction of the broader society.

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ANNEXURE A

DETERMINING THE ETHICAL PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT ISSUES IN THE HR FIELD

The following elements were extracted from the codes of the international medical, legal, engineering and accounting bodies. We have a two-fold questionnaire. Firstly we request the identification of the elements in order of importance in the HR field. Secondly the identification of the qualities and values a professional in the HR field should adopt.. PLEASE FAX FORM TO 011 773-6224.

Please indicate importance on a scale of 1 – 5 which elements you feel are important professional conduct issues in regulating the field of HR, using the following criteria -

- 1: Not important
- 2: Useful
- 3: Important
- 4: Very important
- 5: Essential

| A ELEMENTS OF A CODE OF CONDUCT | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|
| A The issues pertaining to ethics emanate from the following fields. Please rate in order of importance: | | | | | | |
| 1. The profession | | | | | | |
| 2. The public / society | | | | | | |
| 3. The employer / client | | | | | | |
| 4. A personal work ethic | | | | | | |
| 5. Knowledge and skills | | | | | | |
| B An HR Practitioner should also ideally have: (Not necessary to rate) | | | | | | |
| 1 Desirable professional qualities (characteristics) | | | | | | |
| 2 Basic fundamental personal values | | | | | | |
| 1 The responsibility towards the profession entails | | | | | | |
| 1. Maintaining the good reputation and prestige of the profession (e.g. by refraining from any conduct which might bring discredit to the profession) | | | | | | |
| 2. Improving the profession (e.g. by advancing competence, knowledge, ideals and practice) | | | | | | |
| 3. Always maintaining the highest personal standards of professional conduct | | | | | | |
| 4. Exposing those in the profession who engage in fraud and deception | | | | | | |
| 5. Not permitting motives of profit to influence the free and independent exercise of professional judgment | | | | | | |
| 6. Adhering to the common code of values and conduct of the profession | | | | | | |
| 7. Supporting individuals and the system to allow for quality entrants into the profession | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 3 The responsibility towards the public/society entails | | | | | | | |
| 1. A dedication to service | | | | | | | |
| 2. Acceptance of duty to society as a whole | | | | | | | |
| 3. Holding paramount the safety, health and well-being of the public | | | | | | | |
| 4. Serving with fidelity (faithfully) the public, employees and clients | | | | | | | |
| 5. Promoting the public good | | | | | | | |
| 6. A willingness to subordinate narrow self-interest in pursuit of the more fundamental goal of public service | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 4 The responsibility towards the client/employer entails | | | | | | | |
| 1. Acting in the client's interest | | | | | | | |
| 2. Certifying and authorizing only what has personally been verified | | | | | | | |
| 3. Maintaining and enhancing the integrity of work systems (e.g. of Information or IT etc) | | | | | | | |
| 4. Being prepared to assume responsibility for the subsequent impact of a task | | | | | | | |
| 5. Not enticing clients away from colleagues or employees away from clients where a trust relationship/understanding prohibits this. | | | | | | | |
| 6. Acting as faithful agent or trustee in all circumstances | | | | | | | |
| 7. A dedication to providing competent service | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 5 The responsibility for a personal work ethic entails | | | | | | | |
| 1. Promoting justice and fairness | | | | | | | |
| 2. Avoiding conflict of interest | | | | | | | |
| 3. Adopting responsible behaviour | | | | | | | |
| 4. Respecting the rights of others | | | | | | | |
| 5. Maintaining an outlook which is essentially objective (e.g. impartial, unbiased, not allowing external influences to override objectivity) | | | | | | | |
| 6. Rendering service in accordance with the relevant technical and professional standards | | | | | | | |
| 7. Building professional reputation on the merit of services rendered | | | | | | | |
| 8. Issuing public statements only in an objective and truthful manner | | | | | | | |
| 9. Playing a positive and constructive role where deviation from reputable practices occur | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 6 The responsibility for knowledge and skills entails | | | | | | | |
| 1. Mastery of the particular intellectual skills of the profession acquired by training and education | | | | | | | |
| 2. Continued concern for professional competence | | | | | | | |
| 3. Recognizing personal limitations and consulting with other experts | | | | | | | |
| 4. Keeping up to date on developments in practice, legislation and techniques | | | | | | | |
| 5. Continuing to develop professional knowledge and skill throughout career | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| B QUALITIES AND VALUES | | | | | | | |
| 7 Desirable Professional qualities (characteristics) include | | | | | | | |
| 1. Leadership qualities | | | | | | | |
| 2. Confidence | | | | | | | |
| 3. Credibility | | | | | | | |
| 4. Good judgment | | | | | | | |
| 5. Independent functioning and thought | | | | | | | |
| 6. Discretion | | | | | | | |
| 7. Accountability | | | | | | | |
| 8. An understanding of obligations to society and other practitioners | | | | | | | |
| 9. Intellectual honesty | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 8 The basic fundamental personal values of a professional should include | | | | | | | |
| 1. Sound moral character (integrity / honour / honesty) | | | | | | | |
| 2. Respect for human dignity | | | | | | | |
| 3. Altruism (caring / compassion) | | | | | | | |
| 4. Loyalty | | | | | | | |
| 5. A concern for development and progress | | | | | | | |

Please list any other elements, qualities or values of which you consider of primary importance, not mentioned above. You are also invited to comment on the structure of the questionnaire:

Bio-Demographics of respondent

Please mark appropriate box with an X.

1 Gender: Female ☐ Male ☐ 2 Age: _____

3 Ethic Group: (e.g. Zulu) _____

4 Present Job Title: _____

5 Present equivalent level in organisation:

| | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Chief Executive | <input type="checkbox"/> | Director | <input type="checkbox"/> | General Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Head of function | <input type="checkbox"/> | Senior Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> | Middle Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Junior Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> | Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> | Assistant | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (specify): _____

6 Employment Sector (indicate only for present post)
(Either A, B C or D)

A Public Sector:

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Government | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local Government | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parastatal | <input type="checkbox"/> |

B Private Sector:

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Agricultural | <input type="checkbox"/> | Food and Bev | <input type="checkbox"/> | Building | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Banking | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chemical | <input type="checkbox"/> | Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> | Education | <input type="checkbox"/> | Financial | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forestry | <input type="checkbox"/> | Health | <input type="checkbox"/> | Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| IT | <input type="checkbox"/> | Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> | Media | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mining | <input type="checkbox"/> | Security | <input type="checkbox"/> | Services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Textiles | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> | Transport | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wholesale & Retail | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

C Consulting ☐

D Other (specify): _____

ANNEXURE B

A new Code of Conduct for the SABPP

This study on professionalism in Human Resources, was commenced with the knowledge that the SABPP needed to review the current Code of Conduct.

Concurrently, at this point, the SABPP had begun talking to stakeholders and setting up “Cross Roads” conferences across the country to discuss statutory recognition for the human resources profession in South Africa. In preparation for the possible adoption of such regulation, the CEO was consequently tasked with setting up an Ethics working committee to investigate the formulation of a new Code of Conduct.

At the fourteenth Board meeting of the 8th Board of the SABPP, held on 4 February 2005 the following decision was minuted:

“The Code of Conduct of the Board must be reviewed to ensure that we have a modern and workable Code ready for the new Bill.”

The questionnaire was emailed to the registered professionals of the SABPP in March 2005. With the results of the questionnaire available, the working committee met on the 7th February 2006 to decide how to proceed. The CEO explained the process of investigating major statutory professions to extract a core list of shared values and ethics which informed the compilation of the questionnaire. The leadership of this committee was handed over to Mr Shaun Schwanzer, the then President of HRCOSA. It was decided to invite Prof Leon van Vuuren, who is a leading expert in this field, to participate in the process. The working committee reconvened on the 15th March 2006, when Prof van Vuuren explained some of the basic premises underlying the development work being undertaken.

The committee came to the conclusion that there were distinct phases in the development of a new Code. First, a new Code had to be formulated giving minimum standards, preferably to be adopted as soon as possible. Then, the specialist HR professions (IR, ETD, OD) could be approached to interpret and create their own specialised Code. Lastly, the Committee made a recommendation to the Board that, in time, a detailed guide with examples of good and bad practices, should be compiled.

The CEO then invited Prof van Vuuren to address the SABPP Board at the Board meeting of the 5th May 2006. His presentation (Annexure D) gave the various options available to the Board in revising the Code. It was minuted that the Board agreed in principle that of the two options (rules-based and punitive or idealistic and aspirational), the Board preferred the simpler, ideal-based version, underpinned by a guide. The Ethics Committee of the Board was given a mandate to continue with the work of setting up a new Code of Conduct. Prof Freddie Crous took the committee through a process of Appreciative Inquiry, in order to help shape the thinking around ethical concepts.

With the research undertaken in this study forming the basis and with the help of the Ethics Committee of the Board and in particular, Prof Leon van Vuuren formulated the new Code of Conduct. While much of the new Code flows from the results of the questionnaire, Prof van Vuuren has enhanced the Code through his understanding of the subject and by adding his own expertise and judgement in the formulation process.

An interview was scheduled with Prof Leon van Vuuren in order to record his final comments given below:

“Having a code of ethics for the profession is but the first step towards being afforded a reputation of being an “ethical profession”. The new code is short, clear and provides the values upon which the profession could organise itself. Since this particular code of ethics is values-based (as opposed to being rules-based), the application thereof holds a number of particular challenges. The first is that it should be actively marketed to

members of the profession, as well as to those responsible for the education and training of HR practitioners. Secondly, the profession and its seasoned educators, mentors and practitioners in particular, need to continuously discuss the contents of the code, interpret their activities in terms of adherence to the code, and translate the values expressed in the code to aspiring practitioners and those that are “novice” practitioners. Thirdly, the code should be used to view ethics as an opportunity (“how will our stakeholders see us if we are ethical”?) – a positive approach therefore. This approach is preferred to one of ethics-is-a-problem-to-be-solved”. Lastly, the Board should endeavour to promote training on the spirit and meaning of the code to HR students and practitioners at all levels. Meeting these challenges could ensure that the code becomes a living document, rather than vague words on paper”.

The original Code of Conduct of the Board had remained the same since adoption, at the establishment of the Board. In 2004, the Board decided to review the Code comprehensively. Research was undertaken by the CEO of the Board, Huma van Rensburg, as described in Chapter 5 of this study. At a Board meeting held in August 2006, the Board approved in principle the new Code of Conduct that emerged from the research and the subsequent work of the Professional Practices Ethics Committee and some experts in the field, Prof Leon van Vuuren in particular. The Code will remain a work in progress and a future objective is to compile a detailed guide, richly illustrated with examples of ethical and/or unethical practices.

- Approved new Code of Conduct

Preamble

We value what we can offer as a profession and recognise the stewardship role of the profession and its members. This role is embodied in the norms and principles we stand for. The purpose of this code is to entrench the obligation we

have as professional HR practitioners to uphold the profession's norms and principles and to conduct our activities in a professional and ethical manner. To ensure the trust of all our stakeholders, we strive to build the reputation of the profession and its members through the values of responsibility, integrity, respect and competence.

Our ethical identity

As members of the profession of Human Resource Management in South Africa, we actively pursue the ideals of professionalism and are therefore ethically obliged to

- *Bring meaning and quality of worklife to the people we serve in our professional capacities*
- *Ensure the sustainability of the organisations that we serve*
- *Make a difference to the communities we touch.*

Our ethical values

Responsibility

Our first responsibility is to meaningfully transform the lives of those men and women that are employed by the organisations we serve. We have a further responsibility to contribute to the success and sustainability of the organisations that employ us or that we render a service to. It is our responsibility to comply with the expectations of our profession and fellow practitioners. We accept responsibility for the outcomes of our actions and interventions. In this we contribute to the greater goodness of society.

Integrity

As HR practitioners we are committed to exemplary ethical conduct that is characterised by honesty, objectivity, fairness of judgement, consistency of action and loyalty to our profession and the organisations and communities we

engage with. We aim to grow the profession in a controlled and responsible manner. In that we strive to attract to the profession members with sound moral character and integrity.

Respect

We are unwaveringly committed to tolerance, respect for human dignity and upholding the human rights as prescribed by the constitution of the country. We treat all our stakeholders with respect and protect them from harm. We stand in service of our profession and its membership, those organisations that remunerate us for our professional contributions, and the communities we affect. We have an obligation to prevent breaches of principles of respect and to assertively object to such violations when they occur. We respect the confidentiality of information that is entrusted to us.

Competence

Professional registration of HR practitioners is a privilege afforded to individuals that have met the criteria for registration. We are committed to ensure professional credibility by actively evaluating and protecting the quality of professional education and training of those aspiring to enter the profession. We aspire to uphold the highest standards of continued professional development and improvement of competence of members of the profession. We enact this aspiration through role modeling and mentorship. It is our professional duty to integrate and apply sound human resource management principles, policies and practices in all aspects of people management and to assess the value that we add. We strive to formulate generally accepted HR practices that adhere to criteria of scientific and feasibility proportions. It is our quest to build the field of human resource management by promoting and supporting rigorous research.

ANNEXURE C

THE CURRENT WORK AND POSITION OF THE SABPP

In the years following 1991, registration proceeded as the Board consolidated its gains and strengthened structures. The political changes in South Africa in the early nineties impacted on the human resource profession in a major way. The Board experienced a steady fall in membership as the “old guard” started being retrenched, emigrated or moved into other spheres of business. The Board, nevertheless, continued to function effectively and gradually rebuilt its base as the incoming young black human resource professionals embraced the concept of professional human resources. Board elections have been held every three years as per the Charter of the Board.

Body of knowledge

In the process of auditing and accrediting programmes in human resources, the SABPP remained informed of the content of relevant degrees at the various institutions. The 1981 accepted body of knowledge as referred to on page 100 of this chapter (replicated for ease of reference) contained:

- Industrial Psychology III
- Business Economics or Industrial Sociology II
- Labour Law I
- Statistics I
- Public Administration I
- Applied Anthropology I
- Economics I

Today the picture still looks familiar, although each institution may have a slightly different emphasis:

- Organisational Psychology
- HR Management / Project and Operations Management
- Labour relations
- Career Psychology
- Training and Development (or Organisational Learning)
- Research Methodology
- Business Economics / Mathematics I / Financial Accounting / Statistics
- Organisational Development / Organisational Change

The above subjects were drawn from two institutions with completely differing approaches. Despite these differences, with some institutions emphasizing the business side and others, the organisational behaviour side, there are thorough and scientifically-based programmes at all major tertiary institutions up to doctorate level, preparing people for a career in human resources. There is no doubt that human resources, broadening today into human capital management, has its own very unique subject matter.

Reviewing the reason for existence

A landmark meeting was held at the Airport in Johannesburg in 1996, to which the Council of the IPM was invited. The challenge by the IPM President of the time, Mpho Makwana that the SABPP should make way for a new dispensation, led, in the next few years, to serious introspection and evaluation of the role of the SABPP in South Africa. A new strategy linked to newly established National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was crafted.

Under the leadership of the then Chairman of the Board, Ivan Lätti, the possibility of participating in the NQF through the establishment of a Standards Generating Body (SGB) for Human Resources was investigated. On the advice of Dr Ray Eberlein, the Board decided to apply for quality assurance status.

Standards Generating Body for Human Resources Management and Practice (SGB for HRMP)

The Board initiated and funded the stakeholder meetings to establish an SGB for human resources, early in 1998. Out of these meetings, an Interim Steering Committee was formed. The first meeting took place on 12 August 1998 with Dr Andries Lategan as the Co-ordinator

The SGB commenced with its work in 2000 and started the process of developing unit standards and qualifications for the human resources field. Once the SGB was up and running, the next step taken by the Board was to apply for accreditation as the Education and Training Quality Assurance body (ETQA) for human resources.

With the help of Dr Ray Eberlein, the Board completed its motivation and application for ETQA status and officially handed in the first application for ETQA status to SAQA in 1998. Four years later, in November 2002, the Board's application was finally accepted and an HR ETQA was established with full accreditation and statutory status under the SAQA Act No 58 of 1995.

The SABPP ETQA is, today, functioning effectively and as reported in the 2007/2008 Annual Report, has registered 102 Assessors and 41 Moderators and accredited 22 HR Providers. A growth area is the quality assurance of HR Learnerships of which 15 are either already completed or in process, as per the Annual Report referred to above.

The Board examination which was introduced in 1989 as a route to professional registration, was terminated in 1999, as this activity would have jeopardised the chances of the Board being accredited for the quality assurance function under the SAQA Act. No body could be both player and referee in the new system.

Continued activities of the Board

The Board has, over the years, accredited the HR Departments of 32 tertiary institutions and, in the process, built solid relationships in the HR field with both academia and professionals in practice. As an effective custodian of standards, over 7000 HR professionals have been evaluated and registered and more than 900 candidates taken through a two-year candidateship under approved Mentors. Accredited institutions, as well as the registered practitioners, are invited to participate in the development work of the Board at committee level and currently six tertiary institutions sit on the Education Committee of the Board.

Where the intake of professionals registering with the Board used to be predominantly white, the vast majority of new registrations today are from the previously disadvantaged African, Coloured and Indian communities. A new bio-demographic survey would be of interest.

Research

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) was commissioned by the SABPP in 1995 to do research into the status of HR. The result was a discussion document "The Supply and Demand of Personnel Practitioners in South Africa". Some of the findings were:

- Personnel Practitioner : Labour Force ratios 1988-1991. 2-3 per 1000
- Estimated number of HR Practitioners in 1991: 33,756

Some conclusions:

- ***"On the demand side:***
 - *Only some 6,000 new employment opportunities will be created for HR practitioners by the turn of the century.*
 - *Increases in the demand for personnel practitioners are primarily expected to take place at the middle and upper levels of the profession.*

- **On the supply side:**

- *There is at present an oversupply of HR practitioners in South Africa.*
- *This oversupply cannot be attributed to an oversupply of graduates in the HR fields of study. It is rather the result of the large proportion of people with other qualifications, such as psychology, who are employed in HR positions.*
- *The absence of specific entry requirements and/or compulsory professional registration contributes towards the significant inflow of people with other qualifications into the personnel field.*
- *Unless student numbers are curbed by stricter entry requirements or by more demanding subject matter or selection procedures, the previous trends are expected to continue.*
- *Although the image of the profession has improved in recent years, personnel practice is not yet regarded as a profession, on par with other professions such as chartered accountants and the engineering professions. This is partly ascribed to the lack of strict entry requirements for the profession or for the field of study.*

- **Status of the profession:**

- *Despite the problems experienced with the status of the profession, a strong need for and movement in the direction of professionalisation of the field was discerned during the course of this investigation. The need for an enforceable code of ethics, for control over entry into the field and for stricter control over educational standards was repeatedly expressed by respondents.*

- **Educational requirements:**

- *The competencies that will be required from personnel practitioners in future will necessitate a high standard of education and relevant inputs from both the social and economic sciences. Close co-operation between educational institutions and employers is needed to ensure the relevance of course contents.”*

It is strongly recommended that this study “Supply and Demand of Personnel Practitioners” be updated by the SABPP to reflect the situation in South Africa today.

A Personnel Terminology

The SABPP published a “Bilingual Glossary of Personnel Terms” English-Afrikaans and Afrikaans-English in 1992. The then Registrar and current CEO, Huma van Rensburg, chaired the Editorial Committee, other members being Wilhelm Crous, Ivan Lätti, Prof HP Langenhoven and Prof AMG Schreuder. With English becoming the predominant business language, it would probably not be useful to update this Glossary. However, a South African Glossary offering human resources acronyms, abbreviations and terms and their definitions would be very useful.

Annual Reports

Since the first annual report was published for the fiscal year 1989, the Board has continued to publish an annual report each year, detailing not only the finances of the Board, but every aspect of the work of the SABPP. This practice is upheld in recognition of the importance of transparency and of reporting not only on finances, but also on human resources and work undertaken on behalf of the profession.

Professional registration levels reviewed

After extensive consultation, the Board launched a new framework for professional levels and categories of registration in 2002. This framework was aligned to the National Qualifications Framework and based on the work of the Standards Generating Body for HR Management and Practice, with a view to establishing a career path in HR.

With the required experience, the professional path may be entered at certificate level and can be followed through to doctorate level, with the SABPP continuing to challenge the profession to new heights in knowledge acquisition, bottom-line contribution, professional conduct and a responsible work ethic.

The following five professional levels and post-nominal titles are currently recognized:

- HR Technician (HRT)
120 credit (or one year) certificate plus a minimum of 1 year of HR related experience;
- HR Associate (HRA)
240 credit (or two year) diploma plus a minimum of 2 years of HR related experience;
- HR Practitioner (HRP)
360 credit (or three year) diploma or degree plus a minimum of 3 years of consistent HR experience at middle management level;
- Chartered HR Practitioner (CHRP)
post graduate qualification plus a minimum of 4 years practicing HR at senior level;
- Master HR Practitioner (MHRP)
Masters or Doctorate plus a minimum of six years experience, at the highest level.

The qualifications have to be appropriate and accredited and the experience relevant to the HR field. The experience component is regarded as of equal value to the qualification component and is weighed and evaluated carefully for each individual application. Specific competencies for each level are given by the Board.

Specialist Registration Categories

To cover the HR field of practice adequately, the Board registers in either the Generalist category or in one of the following Specialist categories:

- Compensation management;
- Education, Training and HR Development;
- Employee Safety, Health and Wellness;
- Employment Relations;
- HR IT and Administration;
- HR planning, recruitment and selection;
- Organisation Development;
- Psychologiae;
- Research;
- Skills Development Facilitation.

This is an evolutionary process, reflecting at any stage the economically important activity subdivisions within HR. It is also possible, with the work done in Chapter 3, to look at functional or specialist areas as recognised in the UK, USA, Canada and South Africa. During the course of investigating the understanding and positioning of human resources in other countries, it has become clear that there are similarities and differences to our point of view of what constitutes appropriate HR specialist areas.

The broad basic categories are acknowledged by all (selection, training, rewards and employee relations, health and safety). There are, however, some interesting differences. For example, the CIPD acknowledges the management of diversity, career management, performance management and management development as stand-alone functions, whereas the USA, Canada and South Africa do not. In a similar fashion, the USA acknowledges strategic management and risk management separately and the other HR bodies do not. South Africa has Organization Development as a separate category, the others do not. Training variously includes training and development, organizational learning, education, training and development and designing and delivering training.

The CIPD has the highest number of recognised specialist functions (11), South Africa follows with 10, whereas USA and Canada have seven each.

It can, perhaps be said that SA and UK are closer in their understanding of the field and USA and Canada seem to be more closely aligned in their understanding.

Table 4.1 Comparative matrix of HR functional / specialist areas

(Titles and emphases differ from country to country – the South African wording of each function is placed last)

| RECOGNISED FUNCTIONAL/SPECIALIST AREAS | CIPD UK | HRCI USA | CCHRA Canada | SABPP SA |
|--|------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Managing diversity and equal opportunities | √ | | | |
| Selection and assessment / Staffing / Workforce planning and employment / Planning, recruitment and selection | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Career management and development | √ | | | |
| Management development | √ | | | |
| Managing organization learning and knowledge / Skills development facilitation | √ | | | √ |
| Managing training and development / Organizational learning development and training / Education, Training, and HR development | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Designing and delivering training | √ | | | |
| Employee benefits and pensions / Total rewards / Total compensation / Compensation management | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Performance management | √ | | | |
| Employee relations and law / Employee and labour relations / Employment relations | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Health, safety and security / Health and safety / Workplace health and safety / Employee safety, health and wellness | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Strategic Management | | √ | | |
| Risk management | | √ | | |
| Organisation Development | | | | √ |
| Organizational effectiveness / Productivity | | | √ | √ |
| HR information management / HR IT and administration | | | √ | √ |
| Research | | | | √ |

Current SABPP reporting structure

The SABPP is divided into two Chambers, the Professional Chamber and the ETQA Chamber. The full Board of the SABPP oversees the work of both Chambers and Board meetings deliberate on the work done in both of these Chambers. The Executive Committee of the Board recommends the acceptance of the annual budget, is responsible for the finances of the Board and serves as the remuneration committee of the Board. The CEO functions in close collaboration with the different committees of the Board.

The Professional Chamber

The Professional Chamber takes responsibility for the professional registration of new applicants which includes the recognition of prior learning candidates. This Chamber is also responsible for reviewing the Charter, the role of the Mentor, Continued Professional Development (CPD) and the Code of Conduct..

- Charter in review

The Charter was amended in August 2002 to reflect the new status of the Board as an ETQA. The amendments had to conform with SAQA requirements and the title of the Registrar was changed to that of Chief Executive Officer. The Board's division into two chambers, the Professional Chamber (non-statutory) and the ETQA Chamber (statutory under the SAQA Act) had to be reflected in the Charter. Due to the fact that the Board envisages further structural changes should an Act be promulgated regulating the HR profession, the Charter remains open to review.

- Mentors – their role and function

The Board has some 140 Mentors situated in all provinces with some in the neighbouring countries as well. The approved Mentors of the Board are consulted on strategic developments initiated by the Board.

The Board has been contacted by and have addressed meetings of the Zimbabwe, Namibia, Zambia and Malawi HR groupings. There is every indication that they would be interested in setting up similar standards bodies to the SABPP. A regionally accepted HR standard becomes an ideal to be striven for in the future.

- **The Registration Committee**

The Registration Committee of the Board has been chaired by Dr Ray Eberlein since the inception of the Board. He chairs the monthly meetings which currently have some 12 Mentors attending the workshops in rotation. All applications for professional registration go through this Committee and all decisions are signed and dated by a senior member of the profession, sitting on this committee. Dr Eberlein also serves as ombudsman for the profession and all appeals are heard by him. These appeals would be received from people who were not happy with either the level or category granted by the Committee.

The process of application for registration starts with someone completing the official application form, attaching certified copies of all qualifications, attaching a comprehensive CV as well as the recommendations of two credible professionals and the registration fee. A file is opened and a staff member ensures that all the required documents have been submitted.

A recent development is the requirement that the applicant submit proof, issued by SAQA, of qualifications completed and listed on the National Learner Records Database. A member of the SABPP staff then makes a recommendation as to level and category. The file is perused by a member of the Registration Committee and a final decision is made and signed off. The applicant is notified of the outcome, a certificate issued and an entry to the official Register of the Board is made. The CEO may put in an appeal immediately, if she regards this as necessary.

It is also possible for a candidate without the appropriate qualifications but with significant experience, to go the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) route. This entails submitting a full portfolio of evidence according to Board guidelines, which is submitted to a registered Assessor of the Board for review and a recommendation. The recommendation serves before the Registration

Committee and a decision is recorded. Applicants for the level Chartered HR Practitioner and higher appear before a panel of Mentors for an interview.

The Board approved a new “Standard for Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures in July 2005.

- **Continued Professional Development (CPD) Committee**

After a visit to the USA and the UK human resource bodies by the Registrar of the Board, the SABPP became one of the first professional bodies in South Africa to institute a Continued Professional Development (CPD) programme in 1994. The SABPP concept of CPD not only focused on personal development, but on the duty of the professional to contribute towards and develop the profession.

At a Board meeting on 23 February 2007, a new CPD policy was adopted with the following opening statement:

“The Board encourages members to view CPD as a systematic, ongoing structured process of maintaining, developing and enhancing skills, knowledge and competence both professionally and personally in order to improve performance at work”.

The SABPP policy further stated:

“CPD has been validated by solid international research. The overall benefits are overwhelming, the professions are all involved in CPD, the standards have been benchmarked worldwide. The SABPP is looked upon as a professional body in line with other professions and therefore needs to implement a policy of CPD”.

The current CPD Committee is introducing the following changes into the SABPP’s CPD process:

- The introduction of a CPD Annual Plan for each practitioner
- The submission of an Annual CPD Assessment form

- The monitoring, tracking, reporting and auditing of the CPD submissions utilizing the technology provided
- The establishment of a CPD Practices Advisory committee

In the introduction to the Board's official CPD policy written by Moira Katz and adopted by the Board in November 2006, she wrote:

"Continuing professional development has become the term widely used for ongoing education and training for the profession. One of the hallmarks of being identified as a professional is to continue to learn throughout a career.

The days are long gone when initial qualifications and certification were seen as final preparation for a career. Today they are regarded as a platform on which further or continuing professional development must be built".

The board believes that through CPD, members will achieve higher professional standards. Continuing development of knowledge and skills must be maintained in order for members to remain employable, to raise the standard of competence of the workforce, and to improve the quality of the workforce and so impact positively on the bottom line of the organisation and the economy of South Africa.

- The Ethics Committee - Code of Conduct

The Ethics Committee, for many years under the leadership of Dr Willem de Villiers, re-evaluated the Code of Conduct in the early nineties and at that point recommended that the Code be retained as it stood. The original Code appears in Chapter 4, p.106

- The Disciplinary Committee

This Committee is chaired currently by Elizabeth Dhlamini-Kumalo. The Disciplinary Policy of the Board was reviewed under her leadership, in 2004.

Very few cases have been presented to the Board since the inception of the Board. Because registration is voluntary, it is mostly the practitioners who endorse professionalism and accountability and who have personal credibility, who register with the SABPP.

- **The Education Committee**

This Committee of the Board is responsible for the accreditation of tertiary programmes and institutions. Tertiary institutions apply to the Board for accreditation in order for students in the HR field to be able to register professionally with the SABPP. Accreditation is renewed three yearly, after a comprehensive self-evaluation being submitted to the Board after which a site visit is set up. The team normally consists of a senior academic on the Education Committee, accompanied by the CEO and at least two senior HR practitioners who are responsible for ensuring that the needs of industry is met by the curricula being accredited.

The profession has a responsibility to ensure that curricula are current and meeting the needs of industry. A relevant-subject Formula developed by the SABPP in 1990, defined a set of academic disciplines next to Industrial Psychology relevant to the output from the profession in its full complexity. Industrial Psychology may still remain as a dominant contributor, but the adjacent humanities, social sciences and economic subjects that impact on required knowledge in the HR domain, feature in many institutions. Clearly the weighting of these subjects require periodic review.

The committee has direct representation from all the local institutions accredited by the Board, such as University of Pretoria. UNISA, University of Johannesburg, University of the North West, Tshwane University of Technology, the Central University of Technology etc. A recent publication of this Committee is the 2007 Directory of Academic Staff Members of Higher Education Institutions of South

Africa, in which the HR academics are given the opportunity to list and the Directory is then distributed to all interested tertiary institutions.

The ETQA Chamber

Within the ETQA Chamber of the Board, the ETQA Committee makes recommendations to the Board on all ETQA matters and takes responsibility for the functioning of the ETQA. The work of the ETQA is handled administratively by the staff of the Board in collaboration with contractors who do the specialised work of moderation, accreditation of providers, learning programmes and learnerships as well as the registration of assessors and moderators. The Chairman's address in the 2007 Annual Report reads: *"As the report of the ETQA Team in this annual report indicates, the ETQA is growing strongly and has gained a reputation for delivery of the highest quality."*

- Statutory recognition

On 8 June 2000, a pivotal event took place. The Board invited some 20 key stakeholders from HR education, senior practitioners and from black empowerment groups to a dinner for exploratory discussions to look at statutory recognition again. The then Chairman of the SABPP, Ivan Lätti made the following representation:

The Road Ahead for HR Education in South Africa

- **The need-** strong HR in the future
HR training in South Africa should, if anything, get stronger and more focused to deliver labour productivity, competitiveness, wealth creation and better quality of life for our population etc.

- **New Risk** - HR does not feature in the master plan
The culmination of modern legislated structures create the risk of losing even the focus that exists by omitting HR from any taxonomy of learning relevant to the emerging framework.
- **The Opportunity** - an HR qualification to focus the profession
An opportunity for asserting the position and needs of HR Education is presenting itself through the possibility of establishing an HR professional qualification that stands separate from general higher education, psychological education for different need areas and other broadly related fields of learning.
- **Prerequisites** - guts, a nucleus and team work
 - Prerequisites for a professional qualification for HR;
 - The energy in the HR fraternity must be sufficient as critical mass to achieve survival of transmitting the profession's body of knowledge to future generations;
 - A body such as SABPP or some other, will have to form a nucleus for harnessing energy (striving for a vision of a profession, establishing an ETQA, contracting productive deals with other role players);
 - A broad base of participation providing both legitimate democracy and balanced expertise will have to be mustered to drive such a project.
- **SABPP Role** - the ETQA for the HR professional qualification
 - The SABPP perceives its standards-safeguarding role for HR as offering its services to coordinate the planning and decision making process in the short term;
 - As well as to perform an ETQA role for HR in administering the envisaged qualification on behalf of the profession.
- **The Stakeholders** - representivity for legitimacy

- Central and peripheral stakeholder roles are consistent with the SAQA approach;
 - Council for Higher Education;
 - Professional Board for Psychology;
 - HR Standards Generating Body (SGB);
 - Institute for People Management;
 - Training Providers;
 - Other alliance partners;
 - All SETAs;
 - Previously omitted stakeholders and players.
- **Possible main features of the qualification**
- Once established, this new professional HR qualification will be the only route towards registration as practitioner;
 - Academic programmes – are existing qualifications enough?;
 - Scope or domain (unit standards) for generalist (what about specialists?);
 - Learnership - outcomes based, duration, supervision, coverage/scope, participating organisations, evaluation;
 - Qualification - examination, activity/project reports, assessment of a work output portfolio, other creative solutions or combinations;
 - Career path focuses on the operational/proficient practitioner level, below which entry and intermediate levels are provided for and above which master/mentor level is foreseen;
 - Name for the qualification -
 - Personnel Practitioner;
 - People Practitioner;
 - HR Practitioner;
 - Is “Professional” necessary in the proposed title?;
 - Is “Practitioner” preferable to “Manager”?;

- Normal period for achieving the qualification.
- **Possible project steps**
 - Establishing a project team;
 - Exploring the main features;
 - Formulating a proposed HR qualification and its functioning;
 - Submission to and dialogue with all stakeholders;
 - Buy-in and registration on the NQF;
 - Managing the transition process;
 - Communication and implementation.
- **ETQA Functioning** - incorporated in standards safeguarding
 - A partnership with the CHE and the Professional Board for Psychology and others in evaluating academic inputs;
 - Partner employer organisations and mentors in overseeing learnerships;
 - Coordinate candidate evaluation by balanced and competent teams and confer qualification certificates;
 - Register students and practitioners;
 - Establish RPL procedures;
 - Establish an adequate CPD process and contract financing and outsourcing with SETAs;
 - Manage deviations from the Code of Conduct.
- **Time frame**

Ensure an early start due to time lost over the last few years. Avoid elaboration in establishing the main professional qualification first and creating sub- and super structures afterwards.
- **Funding**

A considerable part of the envisaged work can be done with low budget. Where substantial funds may be called for, SABPP will require partnership

with other main stakeholders in HR due to the depletion of its reserves during the establishment of the HR SGB.

There was some discussion on the night but a strong consensus was achieved that the SABPP should go ahead to try and obtain statutory recognition for the HR profession. A new professional HR qualification will be the only route towards registration as practitioner. The Board started consulting with stakeholders in the profession.

- **The establishment of the HR Council of South Africa (HRCOSA)**

In November of 2002, the informal alliance of HR organisations which was gathered by the SABPP in 1998, was formally constituted to form HRCOSA. The constituting meeting elected the first President, Mr Shaun Schwanzer due to the fact that he took a strong stance on the necessity of regulating the HR profession.

In his inaugural speech, Mr Schwanzer took up on behalf of HRCOSA, the matter of obtaining an Act for HR. At this point, although the SABPP would be the implementing body of such an Act, the work of lobbying for statutory recognition and drafting various drafts of an Act, would be driven by HRCOSA, with the support of all the member bodies.

During 2004 to 2006, HRCOSA organised a series of conferences across the country, called the "Cross Roads Conferences". At the first of these meetings, held at the Sandton Convention Centre, Ms Adrienne Bird of the Department of Labour addressed the delegates on the matter of the Act, giving support to the continuation of the process. Support was not unanimous, but the majority of the HR fraternity was in favour of regulation, and organised business supported this

idea. To date, the government has as yet not been convinced to take up the proposed draft Bill.

The death of Mr Shaun Schwanzer at the end of 2005 dealt a severe blow to the process of the regulation of human resources in South Africa. HRCOSA has since been dormant and the new President, Dr Pat Naves has indicated her intention to commence again with the work of the Council, which is, in essence, to serve the interests of the member organisations.

The HRCOSA Member list as in May 2005:

Table 4.3 HRCOSA member list

| Member | Org Abbv |
|---|-----------------|
| Association of Mine Human Resources Practitioners | AMHRP |
| Employee Assistance Professionals Association of SA | EAPA |
| Association of Personnel Services Organisations | APSO |
| American Society for Training and Development of SA | ASTD |
| Department of Public Service and Administration | DPSA |
| Institute for Organisation Development and Transformation | IODT |
| International Society for Performance Improvement SA Chapter | ISPI |
| Institute of Safety Management | IoSM |
| Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of SA | SIOPSA |
| South African Board for Personnel Practice | SABPP |
| South African Reward Association | SARA |
| Institute of Personnel Service Consultant | IPSC |
| The Institute of Municipal Personnel Practitioners of SA | IMPSA |
| SA Journal of HR Management | SAJHRM |
| Confederation of Associations in the Private Employment Sector | CAPES |
| Services Sector Education & Training Authority | Services SETA |
| Institute for International Research | IIR |
| Association of Private Providers of Education, Training & Development | APPETD |
| Industrial Relations Associations of South Africa | IRASA |
| Logical Options Group | LOG |
| Johannesburg Water | JHB Water |
| ASA Metals (Pty) Ltd | ASA Metals |
| Employee and Organisation Enhancement Services SA | ICAS |
| Indgro Holdings (Pty) Ltd | IH |
| Multichoice | MC |

| | |
|---|-------------|
| South African Airways | SAA |
| Medscheme | |
| Murray & Roberts Construction | M&R |
| BOSASA | BOSASA |
| The Federation of Unions of South Africa | FEDUSA |
| Department of Defence | DoD |
| Department of Labour | DoL |
| Gauteng Government HR Shared Services Centre | GSSC |
| Human Resource Strategy Consultants | HRSC |
| Institute for Human Resource Research | IHRR |
| Institute of Human Resource Management Practitioners, Ghana | IHRP(Ghana) |
| Osgard Media / HR Future® Magazine | HRF |
| South African Chamber of Business | SACOB |
| Wellness Council of South Africa | WELLCOSA |
| Workplace Performance Technologies | WPT |
| Writestuff Publishing | WSP |
| Federation of Associations of Governing Bodies of South African Schools | FEDSAS |

- **Benchmarking**

In an article in the Annual Report of 2004, the Board announced its decision to support and, if possible, implement benchmarking as follows:

“The S A Board for Personnel Practice concerns itself with standards and is therefore committed to promoting benchmarking for the national benefit. The overall objective of creating a Benchmarking Forum for Human Resources (BEFOHR) was to achieve the establishment of one universal database of best practice to which all would contribute and from which all could benefit. Other objectives were:

- *To promote the understanding and use of benchmarking as a tracking and continual improvement vehicle;*
- *To create better access to methodology, large samples and data bases for research and development;*
- *To provide a platform for benchmarking initiatives and enterprises to explore common interests, exchange information and form appropriate employers’ associations;*
- *To stimulate benchmarking participation for appropriate stratification;*

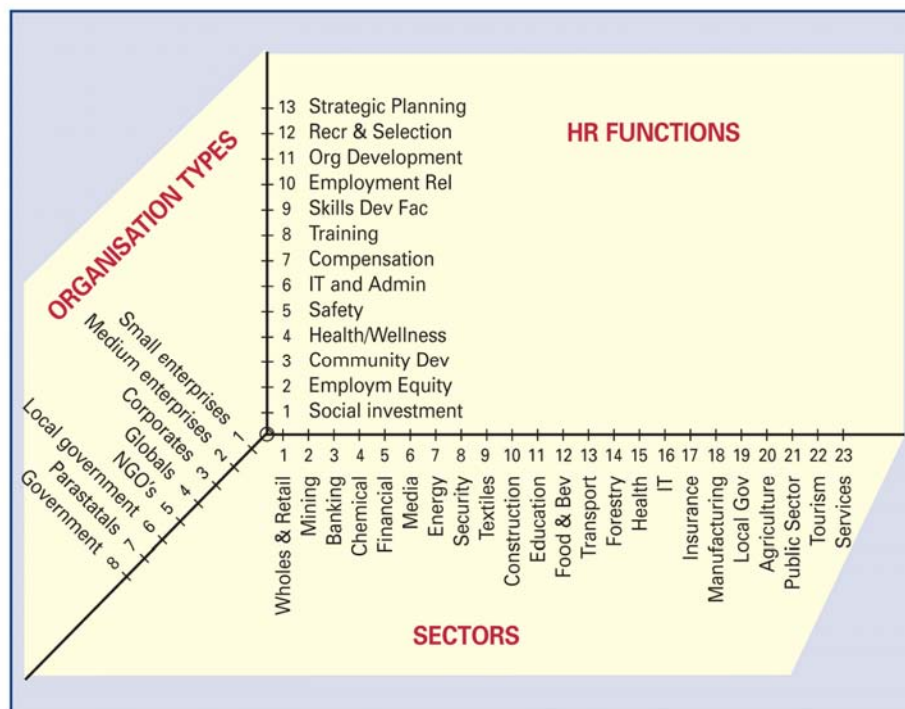
- To provide benchmarks of use to SME's to promote job creation;
- To promote ethical standards in benchmarking activities;
- To play an appropriate role in international liaison.

○ **Participation**

Several parties and functional divisions must be coordinated as depicted in this diagram.

Other players could become part of the benchmarking network.”

Figure 4.4 **Benchmarking matrix**



○ **The Concept**

There was some difficulty in coping with benchmarking in the different strata of HR and a 3D matrix was conceptualised to map HR functions in different sectors and organisation types. See diagram above.

Each HR function as it operates in a certain sector, within a specific kind of organisation can be benchmarked effectively by drilling down in the area of interest (e.g. organisation development in corporates in the chemical sector). Once a benchmark has been set, senior practitioners can be tasked to verify the benchmark to be placed on the national index, called the People Excellence Index of South Africa (PEISA) which will feature on the SABPP website. This mapping of the HR field will allow broad participation by existing research facilities, by industries and by different kinds of organisations and commercial interests. Universities could do the research for local industries, mines could for instance map HR in their own industry, SETAs could participate in own sectors etc. Wide buy-in would be ideal. Populating the matrix will be a task of continual creation of improved standards as practices change over time, by parties in the first diagram.

- **Output**

In every cell (eg recruitment and selection for mining corporates) a set of standards is to be created consisting of quantitative and qualitative material. This means there should be parameter values appropriate to that industry's functions as well as procedure indicators of best practices. An optimal model to marry research and development and commercial interests is required. A company will be able to track its performance against the benchmark made available to it in a scorecard fashion. This facility will allow for business and people strategies to be linked and achieve a better business partnership contribution for HR."

- **The establishment of a research initiative (HRRI)**

In 2007, the HR Research Initiative (HRRI) was launched with several of the big companies in South Africa buying-in to the concept. The inaugural meeting was held on 23 September 2007. The vision of the HRRI is to provide a common platform where all HR Partners and Associates can engage in collective dialogue

and discussions for the achievement of specific research objectives, for the broader HR community within Southern Africa and Africa as a whole, with special reference to:

- burning HR Issues
- knowledge sharing and networking between a variety of industry, business and academic role players
- the provision of pro-active advice to national authorities

The HRRI aligned itself to the following operational objectives:

- The facilitation of knowledge networks
- The creation of a knowledge distribution strategy (journals, websites etc)
- The alignment of HRRI research to matters of HR National policy
- The provision of a platform for interaction and facilitation
- The provision of enabling support, albeit in the form of access to financial resources or access to qualified resources or expertise to assist with research initiatives
- The fostering of a balanced research approach to all research initiatives within the following three categories:
 - Basic Research – 10-20%
 - Applied Research – 40%
 - Experimental Research – 40%
- The following outputs were envisaged:
 - The provision of results-driven research to resolve key HR challenges and issues in Africa
 - Advisory output to institutions and businesses on key HR issues facing the African continent
 - Standards and benchmarking for the HR Profession
 - HR Statistics

- The provision of a forum to assist HR Professionals to review areas of much needed HR Research
 - The dissemination and/or sharing of HR Research to the broader HR Community to ensure the continuous development of the HR Community (Recognition to be provided to involved HRRI Research participants).
- An HRRI Executive, which will report to the Board, was formed as follows:
- A minimum of 3 members from big business called HR Research Partners
 - 3 members from the Board (one being the Chair)
 - 3 acknowledged experts in HR research
 - The CEO of the Board, ex officio

All members of the HRRI Executive were allocated one vote per institution, with the Chair having a deciding vote.

- **Celebrating 25 years of existence**

In the 2007 Annual Report, the Chairman of the Board announced that the SABPP was celebrating its 25th Anniversary. There would be recognition of those companies who had made strides in professionalising their HR practitioners. Many successes were reported, such as the fact that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) candidates were successfully registering with the Board, learners were receiving Board certificates for their achievement of unit standard based Certificate and Diploma qualifications and many HR learnerships had been quality assured or were in progress. A memorandum of understanding was signed with the Association of Mining Industry HR Practitioners (AMIHRP) to collaborate on the professional registration of HR Practitioners in the mining environment.

ANNEXURE D

The HR Knowledge Domain as recognized by the international HR bodies

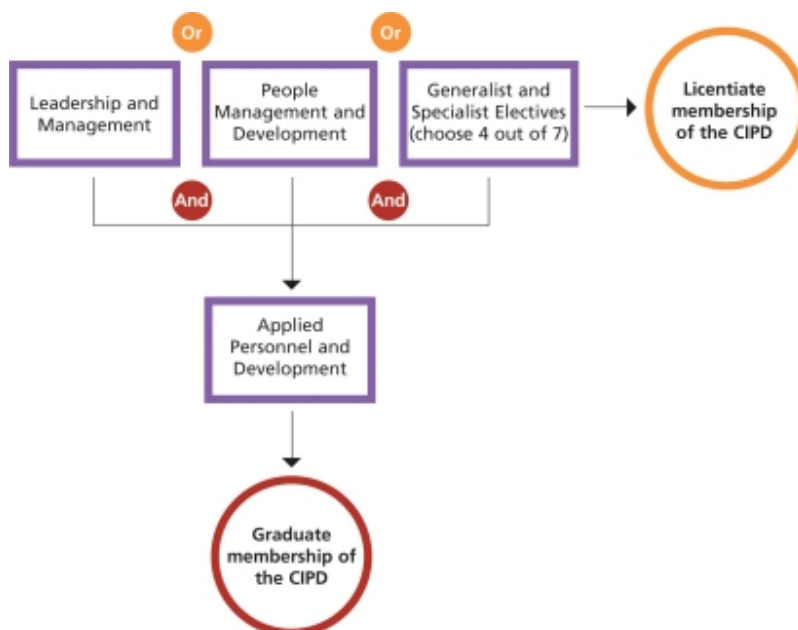
1 UK - The CIPD Fields of Study

(<http://www.cipd.co.uk/fl/studfl/qualification.htm>)

A short summary of the HR subjects for graduate level qualification as per their official information, is given below. The CIPD Professional Development Scheme is a postgraduate programme, however there are no formal entry requirements. There are four fields of study, each based on the CIPD's professional standards:

- [Leadership and Management](#)
- [People Management and Development](#)
- [Generalist and Specialist Electives](#)
- [Applied Personnel and Development Standards](#)

Successful completion of all four areas means you have completed the PDS qualification, giving you graduate membership of the CIPD.



Leadership and Management

This field is vital for anyone with a general management responsibility, and for those who need to understand their organisation in order to exercise influence.

The subjects cover:

- Managing for Results
- Managing in a Strategic Business Context
- Managing and Leading People
- Managing Information for Competitive Advantage.

People Management and Development

This field covers all the elements that make up personnel and development. It is designed to provide you with greater awareness of how personnel and development can contribute to organisational success. Underlying this subject is the need to gain support and commitment from other managers within the organisation.

The subjects covered are:

- Shaping the People Management and Development Agenda
- Contribution of People Management and Development Expertise
- People Management and Development in Practice
- Integrating the People Management and Development Contribution.

Generalist and Specialist Personnel and Development

To complete this field, you need to take four electives from the total of seven options below:

Generalist Electives

These are well suited to learners at an early stage in their career, as they provide the knowledge and skills required of personnel and development practitioners. They also form the basis for the specialist standards.

The four areas are:

- People Resourcing
- Learning and Development
- Employee Reward
- Employee Relations.

Specialist Electives

The Specialist electives are well suited if your job role is more involved with learning and development issues. You would normally meet the Generalist Elective in Learning and Development before embarking on any three of the following:

- Managing Organisational Learning and Knowledge
- Managing the Training and Development Function
- Management Development.

Applied Personnel and Development

To complete this field and achieve graduate membership of the CIPD you must undertake the following:

A Management Report

This is a 7000 word work based report on aspects of your studies. It assesses your ability to demonstrate professional competence within your role.

A Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Learning Log

You must provide evidence that you can manage your own continuing professional development. This will take the form of a record that demonstrates your ability to reflect on personal learning. This should show a focus on learning outcomes, benefits and applications, highlighting how learning is an integral part of your professional work activities.

2 USA - The HRCI body of knowledge

The subjects required for professional certification in the USA as found in the HRCI Certification Handbook of 2005 is given below in bullet form:

- Strategic Management;
- Workforce Planning and Employment;
- Human Resource Development;
- Compensation and Benefits;
- Employee and Labour Relations;
- Occupational Health, Safety and Security.

The following list is regarded as the core knowledge required by HR professionals:

- Needs assessment and analysis;
- Third-party contract management, including development of requests for proposals;
- Communication strategies;
- Documentation requirements;
- Adult learning processes;
- Motivation concepts and applications;
- Training methods;
- Leadership concepts and applications;
- Project management concepts and applications;
- Diversity concepts and applications;
- Human relations concepts and applications;
- HR ethics and professional standards;
- Technology and human resource information systems (HRIS) to support HR activities;
- Qualitative and quantitative methods and tools for analysis, interpretation and decision-making purposes;
- Change management;

- Liability and risk management;
- Job analysis and job description methods;
- Employee records management;

The interrelationships among HR activities and programmes across functional areas

The HR body of knowledge required for professional certification in the USA as found in the HRCI Certification Handbook of 2005 is given below.

Functional areas addressed in the professional HRCI examinations (The percentages that follow each functional area are for the levels Professional HR (PHR) and Senior Professional HR (SPHR) respectively):

2.1 Strategic Management (12%, 26%) – The processes and activities used to formulate HR objectives, practices and policies to meet the short- and long range organizational needs and opportunities, to guide and lead the change process and to evaluate HR;s contributions to organizational effectiveness. This requires knowledge of:

- Lawmaking and administrative regulatory processes;
- Internal and external environmental scanning techniques;
- Strategic planning process and implementation;
- Organizational social responsibility;
- Management functions, including planning, organizing, directing and controlling;
- Techniques to sustain creativity and innovation.

2.2 Workforce Planning and Employment (26%, 16%) – the processes of planning, developing, implementing, administering and performing ongoing

evaluation of recruiting, hiring, orientation and organizational exit, to ensure that the workforce will meet the organization's goals and objectives. This requires knowledge of:

- Federal/state/local employment-related laws and regulations;
- Immigration law;
- Quantitative analyses required to assess past and future staffing;
- Recruitment methods and sources;
- Staffing alternatives (telecommuting, outsourcing etc);
- Planning techniques (succession planning, forecasting etc);
- Reliability and validity of selection tests/tools/methods;
- Use and interpretation of selection tests;
- Interviewing techniques;
- Relocation practices;
- Impact of compensation and benefits plans on recruitment and retention;
- International HR and implications of international workforce for workforce planning and employment;
- Downsizing and outplacement;
- Internal workforce planning and employment policies, practices and procedures.

2.3 Human Resource Development (15%, 13%) – The processes of ensuring that the skills, knowledge, abilities and performance of the workforce meet current and future organizational and individual needs through developing, implementing and evaluating activities and programmes addressing employee training and development, change and performance management and the unique needs of particular employee groups. This requires knowledge of:

- Applicable international, federal, state and local laws and regulations regarding copyrights and patents;

- Human resource development theories and applications (including career development and leadership development);
- Organizational development theories and applications;
- Training methods, programmes, techniques (design, objectives, methods, etc);
- Employee involvement strategies;
- Task/process analysis;
- Performance appraisal and performance management methods;
- Applicable international issues (culture, societal norms etc);
- Instructional methods and programme delivery (content, building modules of programmes, selection of presentation. delivery mechanism);
- Techniques to assess HRD programme effectiveness.

2.4 Compensation and Benefits (20%, 16%) – The processes of analyzing, developing, implementing, administering and performing ongoing evaluation of a total compensation and benefits system for all employee groups consistent with human resource management goals. This requires knowledge of:

- Federal, state and local compensation and benefit laws;
- Accounting practices related to compensation and benefits;
- Job evaluation methods;
- Job pricing and pay structures;
- Incentive and variable pay methods;
- Executive compensation;
- Non-cash compensation methods;
- Benefit needs analysis;
- Benefit plans (health insurance, pension, education, health club etc);
- International compensation laws and practices.

2.5 Employee and Labour Relations (21%, 24%) – The processes of analyzing, developing, implementing, administering and performing ongoing evaluation of the workplace relationship between employer and employee (including the collective bargaining process and union relations), in order to maintain effective relationships and working conditions that balance the employer's needs with the employees' rights in support of the organization's strategic objectives. This requires knowledge of:

- Applicable federal, state and local laws affecting employment in union and non-union environments, such as anti-discrimination laws, sexual harassment, labour relations and privacy;
- Techniques for facilitating positive employee relations ;
- Employee involvement strategies;
- Individual employment rights issues and practices;
- Workplace behaviour issues/practices;
- Methods for assessment of employee attitudes, opinions and satisfaction;
- Unfair labour practices;
- The collective bargaining process, strategies and concepts;
- Public sector labour relations issues and practices;
- Expatriation and repatriation issues and practices;
- Employee and labour relations for local nationals.

2.6 Occupational Health, Safety and Security (6%, 5%) – The processes of analyzing, developing, implementing, administering and performing ongoing evaluation of programmes, practices and services to promote the physical and mental well-being of individuals in the workplace and to protect individuals and the workplace from unsafe acts, unsafe working conditions and violence. This requires knowledge of:

- Federal, state and local workplace health and safety laws and regulations;

- Workplace injury and occupational illness compensation laws and programmes;
- Investigation procedures of workplace safety, health and security enforcement agencies;
- Workplace safety risks;
- Workplace security risks (theft, corporate espionage etc);
- Potential violent behaviour and workplace violence conditions;
- General health and safety practices;
- Incident and emergency response plans;
- Internal investigation and surveillance techniques;
- Employee assistance programmes;
- Employee wellness programmes;

Issues related to chemical use and dependency.

3 Canada – The CCHRA Body of Knowledge

CCHRA body of knowledge

In Canada the basic required capabilities for professional HR can be summarized as:

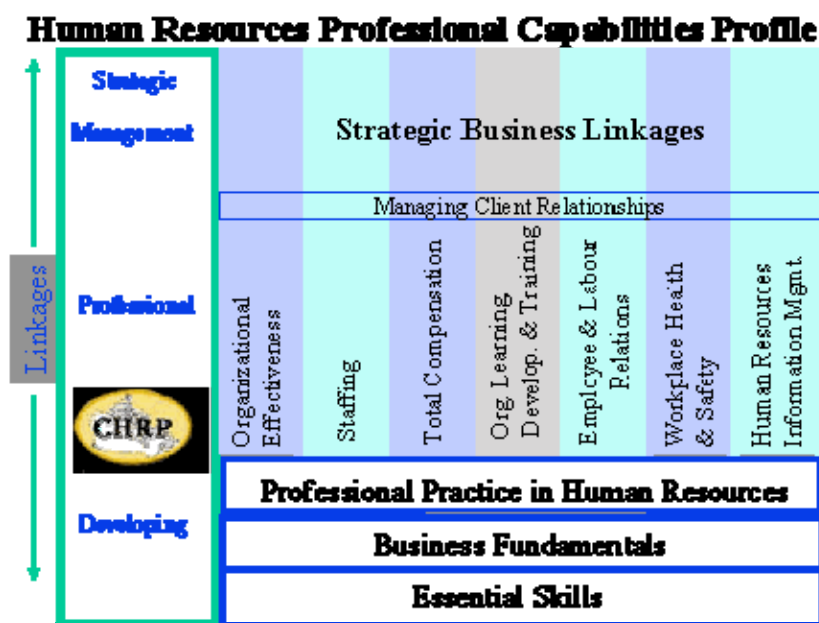
- Providing strategic and business linkages;
- Understanding business fundamentals;
- Managing client relationships.

The following Canadian Human Resources Professional Capabilities Profile has been sourced from the website of CCHRA :

The HR professional requires a broad range of capabilities, many of which are shared with or derived from other disciplines. The exact mix of capabilities that an HR professional must bring to a business problem is a function of the size and nature of the organization.

In developing this profile for the Canadian HR profession, required professional capabilities have been broken into seven functional areas of practice, and an additional cross-functional area referred to as Professional Practice in Human Resources.

Some of the capabilities are very specific to a functional area, while others are widely shared across several functional areas. Rather than restate these capabilities in each area where they are required, they are listed only once. The HR profession is characterized by the interweaving of these eight functional areas, and the crossover use of capabilities is itself a defining characteristic of HR practice.



(From the CCHRA website)

Description of the Profile:

The human resources professional capabilities profile consists of the following:

3.1 Functional Areas

The capabilities required of a HR professional are grouped in seven functional areas:

- Organizational effectiveness;
- Staffing;
- Total compensation;
- Organizational learning, development, and training;
- Employee and labour relations;
- Workplace health and safety; and
- HR information management.

These seven areas are bound together by an eighth functional area called Professional Practice in Human Resources.

3.2 Professional Practice in Human Resources

This functional area is represented in the Profile by three overarching requirements:

- That the HR professional provide strategic / business linkages;
- That the HR professional understands business fundamentals; and
- That the HR professional manages client relationships.

3.3 Essential skills

These are the personal skills required for any level of HR practice. The most important are oral and written communication, problem solving and continuous learning skills.

3.4 Levels of practice

The practice of HR has been defined as existing at four levels:

- Developing;
- Professional;
- Management;
- Strategic.

A more detailed description of aspects of the body of knowledge required follows below:

- **Part I: Professional Practice in Human Resources**

This area identifies the most important cross-discipline capabilities that link the practice of HR management with organizational success. Areas of important to the HR professional include:

Strategic contributions to organization success:

- Adding value to meet organizational needs:
 - Contributes to the development of the organisation's vision, goals, strategies with a focus on human capital;
 - Interprets and communicates business strategies and plans;
 - Guides and facilitates change in organizational culture and/or values consistent with business strategies;
 - Contributes to an environment that fosters effective working relationships;
 - Contributes to improvements in the organization's structures and work processes;
 - Directs the organization in ethical HR practices, and application of conflict of interest guidelines;

- Planning and implementing HR strategies;
 - Leads in the development of HR initiatives which support the organization's strategic directions;
 - Collects data, analyzes and reviews the organization's existing HR programs to ensure they are consistent with business activities;
- Measuring strategic organizational results:
- Monitors HR activities of the organization, identifies problem areas, initiates responses;
 - Evaluates the effectiveness of HR strategies using various measurement, assessment and accountability approaches.
- Business acumen:
- This section focuses on the general business capabilities that the human resources professional brings to the client/organization.
- Capabilities address the areas of business fundamentals, managing outside HR contractors and other specialists, project management, and complying with legal/legislative frameworks.
- Business fundamentals:
- Applies business fundamentals of production, operations management, finance, information technology, marketing, and strategic planning to people management issues.
 - Applies measurement, evaluation and assessment processes to business situations.
 - Gathers, analyzes, and reports relevant business and industry information including global trends.

- Develops business cases for HR activities, eg Return on Investment (ROI) evaluations, data collection and assessment.
 - Sets clear goals and objectives for the HR activities of the organization, maintaining evaluation measurements of all HR activities against goals and objectives of the organization.
 - Communicates information to serve current and future needs of the organization.
- Manages outside HR contractors and other specialists:
- Develops budgets, monitors expenditures, and evaluates activities of contractors.
 - Develops requests for proposal (RFP) and reviews submissions by third parties.
- Project management:
- Establishes goals, deliverables, timelines, and budgets;
 - Assembles and leads teams to achieve established goals;
 - Monitors expenditures and timelines;
 - Evaluates progress on deliverables.
- Legal / Legislative Framework:
- General Employment Relationship -
 - Identifies relevant legislative jurisdictions and legal jurisprudence associated with the organization's operations (includes global perspective).
 - Analyzes and provides advice on employment rights and responsibilities.

- Advises client on status of dependent and independent contractors, and elements of employee status.
- Human Rights
 - Provides advice on policy, monitors activities, and, if required, initiates corrective action related to the organization's practices.
 - Leads an appropriate organizational response to formal or informal complaints or appeals related to alleged human rights violations.

➤ Managing client relationships

The human resource professional interacts with other managers in addressing organizational needs. To be effective in this role requires an understanding of all management activities and the importance of these organizational relationships. In addition, the HR professional may be required to manage a unit or functional area within an HR or related field.

This section covers fundamental capabilities associated with managing a client's HR services and those addressing the needs of the HR professional as manager.

➤ Managing and shaping expectations:

- Manages the use of resources, assigns work, and gauges the effectiveness of teams, individuals in meeting specific goals;
- Provides performance feedback, coaching, and career development to teams and individuals to maximize their probability of success;
- Establishes and maintains the trust and support of one's manager and subordinates;
- Develops and administers a departmental or project budget;

- Operates within organizational guidelines for procurement of equipment and services.

➤ Manager as client:

- Builds constructive and supportive relationships;
- Effectively handles disagreements and conflicts;
- Provides support and expertise to managers and supervisors with respect to managing people.

➤ Employee as client :

- Provides services to enable employee success while maintaining the well-being of the organization.

➤ Professionalism:

The human resources professional is responsible for maintaining established standards in the area of personal conduct, professional development and advancement of the HR profession.

- Personal conduct:
 - Understands and adheres to the Canadian Council of Human Resources Association's code of ethics.
- Professional development:
 - Stays current in terms of professional development.
- Advancement of the Profession:
 - Contributes to and promotes the development of the profession through active participation in the HR community.

- **Part II: Organizational Effectiveness:**
 - Organizational design and development ;
 - Employee Involvement strategies;
 - Human resources planning.
- **Part III: Staffing:**
 - Recruitment and selection;
 - Deployment;
 - Terminating/outplacing staff.
- **Part IV: Employee & Labour Relations:**
 - Employee relations;
 - Labour relations.
- **Part V: Total Compensation:**
 - Total compensation strategy;
 - Compensation programs;
 - Benefits programs;
 - Pensions;
 - Payroll.
- **Part VI: Organizational Learning, Development and Training:**
 - Organizational performance;
 - Performance management;
 - Development programs;
 - Training.
- **Part VII: Workplace Health and Safety:**

- General;
 - Occupational health;
 - Safety;
 - Worker's compensation.
- **Part VIII: Human Resources Information Management :**
- Human resources information;
 - Information systems.

4 AUSTRALIA - Australian HR Institute (AHRI)

The human resource body of knowledge covered in three AHRI accredited qualifications gives an indication of how the HR profession is understood to function in Australia.

At foundation level the course Foundations of Human Resources provides introductory human resource skills and knowledge. The programme has been designed to meet the needs of people who have new responsibilities in the human resource area and those wishing to update their skills in human resources. There are no prerequisites for enrolment

Introduction to HR and HR Planning. This module looks at HR activities, occupational competencies, planning approaches and processes, and strategic HR planning.

Job Analysis and Job Design. This module looks at workforce design productivity and is examined through conducting job analyses and constructing job descriptions and job specifications.

Recruitment, Selection, Induction and Orientation. These modules look at the role of recruitment in determining staffing needs, HRM strategies, recruitment

policy and methods, and EEO requirements. The modules focus on policies and processes relating to interviews, selection, orientation and induction.

Human Resource Development. This module analyses the need for and implementation of training, both strategically and organizationally, in HR development.

Career Management and Planning. This module considers employer and employee responsibilities, planning and development, and career possibilities in HR.

Performance Management. These modules examine performance review and appraisal systems, discipline and grievance procedures, and employee motivation and goal setting.

HR and the law. This module provides an introductory examination of the sources of legal obligations, contracts, awards, agreements, and discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

Employment Relations. This module looks at the Workplace Relations Act in the context of the industrial relations system and workplace implications.

Occupational Health and Safety. This module explores legislation, duty of care, planning and implementing safety requirements, and the monitoring and adjusting of safety performance..

Termination, Redundancy, Separation and Change. This module considers aspect of employee termination including procedures, notice, unlawful termination, employee rights and separation through retrenchment or redundancy.

The next qualification is the accredited Graduate Diploma of Human Resources which seeks to further develop knowledge and understanding of the development of key human resource skills that are essential to the practice of people

management. Participants build on their work experience exploring the theoretical background that supports and substantiates the contribution of human resources to organizational effectiveness.

Organisational Behaviour. This unit focuses on the systematic study of the attitudes and behaviours of individuals and groups in organizational settings. Compulsory unit.

Employment Relations for Organisational Effectiveness. This unit presents an overview of employee relations in the Australian context. It focuses on the way employment relationships are managed within a framework of change. Compulsory unit.

Change management. This unit aims to deepen students' understanding of the change process through the practical application of various approaches to and techniques of change management Compulsory unit.

Financial Reporting and Analysis. This unit aims to develop the ability to read, understand and use corporate financial statements. Elective Unit.

Marketing management. This unit consists of twelve modules built around the integrative nature of the marketing process and its role in achieving corporate objectives. Elective Unit.

Strategic Management. This unit aims to develop the capacity to think strategically about the business direction of an organization. Elective Unit.

The next qualification on the AHRI website is the Professional Diploma of Human Resources. The programme is especially suited to line managers, HR professionals with at least two years experience or those who have completed the Foundations of Human Resources programme. The professional Diploma offers a formal progressive programme of study in leading edge human resource practice.

Improving Business Performance through Strategic HRM. This unit provides an introduction to the key concepts associated with strategic human resources management and examines the contribution of HR practices to organizational performance and competitive advantage.

Building Organisations through Human Resources Management. This unit investigates the nature and structure of organizations, and the operational role of HR in workforce planning, attraction strategies and industrial relations.

Strategies for Enhancing Human Performance. This unit provides a comprehensive examination and application of performance management, human resource development and succession planning to improve business outcomes.

Evaluating and Leveraging Human Resource Management. This unit examines the organizational expectations of the human resources function and the role and practice of evaluating and measuring the return on investment in people management strategies, to gain competitive advantage and achieve organizational goals.

These accredited qualifications were sourced from the website of the Australian Institute.

5 GERMANY - The German Personnel Association (DGFP)

The new professional HR standards of the German personnel association came into effect in May 2003. Conscious that other country associations do have clearly defined professional standards, the DGFP set up a working party to develop professional standards that would be acceptable throughout Germany. The group concluded that the HR manager of the future had to be able to fulfill different roles, such as:

- Mediator of ethics and values;
- Creator of added value;
- Manager of change;
- Designer of social partnerships within the organization;
- Conveyor of the entrepreneurial point of view to all employees.

A strong and influential HR leader at the top of the organization was regarded as a prerequisite. The group produced a set of standards with associated learning objectives for each of the following levels of HR professionals within an organization:

- The HR executive or manager on the board, whose competencies needed to embrace:
 - Micro/macro economics, national and global economics;
 - Entrepreneurial attitudes;
 - Organisational change and development;
 - Management of HR roles;
 - Strategy development and application;
 - Holistic thinking and management of complex networks;
 - Leadership.
- The HR middle manager/ future top manager/ department head / HR graduate, who would need competence in:
 - Micro/macro economics, national and global economics;
 - Entrepreneurial attitudes;
 - Organisational change and development;
 - Management of HR roles;
 - Strategy development and application;
 - Holistic thinking and management of complex networks;
 - Leadership;

- Company and HR objectives and strategies;
 - HR systems, especially selection and development;
 - Project management;
 - Psychology and sociology;
 - Labour legislation;
 - Social partnerships.
- Assistants, specialists and administrators, who would need competence in:
- Employee records and contracts;
 - Wages and salaries;
 - Flexible working time systems;
 - Social insurance/pensions;
 - Health insurance;
 - Organisational techniques and IT applications.

For each of the three levels, the group has devised learning objectives covering role awareness, self-knowledge and communication behaviour and, for the top two levels, self-assessment.

The curriculum for each of the three levels covers eight learning areas, for each of which there is one key learning objective and a number of subsidiary learning objectives.

The eight learning areas are:

- Culture development - understanding corporate culture in general and the candidate's own company culture in particular;
- Strategy - the role of people and HR management in company's development;
- Social partnership - labour law, social legislation;
- External relations - chambers of commerce, trade associations, trade unions and other stakeholders;

- Value creation - qualitative and quantitative methods and instruments for measuring and demonstrating contribution of HRM to company value;
- Competence management - assessing knowledge and organizing and supporting processes of learning and development within the organization;
- HR systems and tools - tailoring them to company circumstances and keeping up to date;
- Management of change - understanding factors and influences of change.

Annexure E

Unstructured Interviews and Discussions with some senior practitioners in the HR field

Various interviews and discussions were scheduled in order to test the understanding of senior practitioners and acknowledged experts in the HR field on the issues of professionalism and the standing of HR in South Africa.

The following insights were gained from a conversation with a past Chairman of the Board, Ivan Lätti at the end of 2007:

“If you study the nature of professions over time, this changes as needs and whims of society change. The more durable and defining components of professions may also have various diachronistic and synchronistic features. This may be the topic of an enquiry or hypothesis.

The professions did not grow in isolation, but parallel to the arts and crafts guilds. Arts not only have a body of knowledge, but competence. It is one thing to know what an artist must do, it is another to train the hand to do it.

One example in the arts is the rigorous requirements of the Meistersinger Guilds. Baking is a fairly sophisticated trade but there are no barriers of entry, no proof of competence is required, it is therefore not a profession when minimum standards are not in place. The body of knowledge is probably related to academic depth eg. food science, understanding biology and science by baking. A master baker is an artisan and has competence without necessarily the theoretical knowledge.

What we have learned out of this exploration is that the phenomenon of learning to master admission criteria and performance behaviour standards, are shared among professions, trades, arts forms and many divers human endeavours where conventions for the protection of the knowledge and competency base are contracted by members by agreement.

No matter how autonomous, liberated, self-regulating a profession becomes, it always lives by the sanction of the broader society that allows it free functioning as long as it does so at the accepted standards of society at large. The young

profession cannot confer the privileges of a Royal Charter, an act of Parliament or the tacit condonation of the general activities. Society confers this at some point or in stages. Independent functioning becomes a mark of the mature profession. The absence of outside intervention demonstrates the recognition of exemplary self-government as performed by the profession's leading echelons.

After our perusal of this study on professionalism of HR in South Africa, we conclude that HR may well be ready to be considered a profession, but alas the main signals of acceptance are still absent or partly absent.

A second reason why HR has yet to achieve the accepted professional status in society probably relates to the fact that its body of knowledge is to such a large extent shared by Industrial Psychologists who are in the throws of their own struggle for achieving and retaining even what they have already as far as professional status is concerned. This divides and weakens the effort especially since Industrial Psychology is so central to the intellectual and academic providing of proof of the body of knowledge that underpins the HR profession”

In a conversation with Alan Jonker one of the Master HR Practitioners of the Board, he agrees with Ivan Lätti that society in the final analysis confers professional status.

“It is my concern that HR will not achieve anything until people understand what HR is doing. There is a clear understanding of the function of an engineer, a doctor, a lawyer or an accountant. This is not the case in HR, where the concepts of performance management, change management, talent management, skills audits, organizational structuring, coaching, mentoring, employee wellness and employee relations are not understood to be part of HR or even understood at all. Defining the scope of HR and marketing this, would assist recognition of HR as a profession.

The profession of HR must now be regulated in some form or another to create an understanding of the HR function internally which will result in the acknowledgement of HR externally. The changing role of the HR professional and alignment with the strategic mission is no longer negotiable.

Alan continues:

“The HR field requires major research input. Research is the umbrella for creating social awareness of the role and functions of HR. Academia should be playing a much larger role in ensuring that HR becomes a real strategic partner in the boardroom. They should be offering a lot more depth in post graduate studies, fostering professionalism and ensuring that students know how to deal with problems, understand the HR value chain and how to restructure a company. Expertise in OD in particular should be supported with application research, case studies and practical assignments.

Some fifteen senior registered practitioners serving as Mentors of the SABPP, were approached in semi-structured interviews and they were asked questions regarding their views on human resources today:

Question 1: How important is competent and strategic HR in companies today?

| Respondent | View |
|-------------------|---|
| Crous | <i>More than ever . SA has a recurring skills crisis, if people and intellectual / knowledge property is the only competitive edge – then HR should become even more strategic in</i> |
| Dhlomo | <i>Government also needs competent and strategic HR to provide good services. The focus of the public sector in general, even though there are also differences, is on administration and resources.</i> |
| Beck | <i>More than ever important, but not yet valued as equal partners</i> |
| Hammond | <i>The requirement for international competitiveness, increased productivity, keeping up with constantly emerging technologies, retaining the new young generation - particularly high talent individuals, the importance of the people rather than the other factors of production makes it quite impossible to implement effectively without a strategic, forward thinking, internationally involved or aware HR constantly looking at people and their development</i> |
| Snelgar | <i>I believe that strategic HR is fundamentally important to the success of the company. However, I think that most companies simply pay lip-service to this, and do not support the function in this context, simply because of ignorance and lack of insight into just how it affects the bottom-line. I do not see that this is declining at all.</i> |
| Latti | <i>Independent functioning becomes a mark of the mature profession. The absence of outside intervention demonstrates the recognition of exemplary self-government as performed by the profession's leading echelons</i> |

Question 2: Have companies become aware of the importance of the professionalisation of HR?

| Respondent | View |
|------------|--|
| Crous | <i>Striving towards professionalisation is lead by the top HR Professional/Executive – I don't think it is pursued by their Boards. So if the top HR Executive is not truly professional don't expect the remainder of the company to follow</i> |
| Bruniquel | <i>With the emphasis on growth of small businesses for job creation, they need assistance in the HR area as this is the one area which can make a huge difference and which is most neglected</i> |
| Jonker | <i>It is my concern that HR will not achieve anything until people understand what HR is doing. There is a clear understanding of the function of an engineer, a doctor, a lawyer or an accountant. This is not the case in HR, where the concepts of performance management, change management, talent management, skills audits, organizational structuring, coaching, mentoring, employee wellness and employee relations are not understood to be part of HR or even understood at all. Defining the scope of HR and marketing this, would assist recognition of HR as a profession.</i> |

Question 3: What about accountability and ethical conduct?

| Respondent | View |
|------------|--|
| Latti | <i>Independent functioning becomes a mark of the mature profession. The absence of outside intervention demonstrates the recognition of exemplary self-government as performed by the profession's leading echelons</i> |
| Hill | <i>I am deeply concerned at the damage being done to the HR profession through</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>o dishonesty by leading players who have little or no understanding of their role;</i> <i>o Incompetence. Many so-called HR professionals really work at personnel officer level (at best) with no insight as to their strategic contribution to the achievement of business / organisational objectives.</i> <i>o Unwillingness. Performance Management implies establishing business processes and training people to attain business objectives productively and efficiently.</i> |
| Crous | <i>As far as accountability is concerned – it is a concept that hardly exists in South Africa. Accountability is part and parcel of the fabric of a professional. The Code of Conduct is critical. I don't think it is internalised.</i> |
| Dhlomo | <i>A lot of communication, training, and investment is required in this area. The corporate sector and training institutions must continually discuss this issue. Unfortunately some people treat their big private and public sector organisations like a 'family business'. Overall accountability and ethical conduct is expected from all employees and managers. Senior people in organisations must, however, walk the talk!</i> |

Question 4: Comments on a vision for HR in South Africa

| Respondent | View |
|------------|---|
| Crous | <i>I believe the HR professional should also be more of a conscience to the organisation. The professional should also be more proactive in areas such as climate change and sustainability, someone who takes real responsibility to position the organisation in this regard. Develop and install a long term planning culture (Eskom for example) Long term planning for skills. Develop a Metric / Measurement approach</i> |



| | |
|--------------|--|
| Jonker | <i>The profession of HR must now be regulated in some form or another to create an understanding of the HR function internally which will result in the acknowledgement of HR externally. The changing role of the HR professional and alignment with the strategic mission is no longer negotiable.</i> |
| Roodt | <i>I am becoming more and more concerned about HR's contribution to sound corporate governance. If HR cannot identify their HR risks and guide management in these respects they become merely collaborators in poor corporate governance. Professionalization (legalized) seems to be the only viable and responsible option!</i> |
| Woodborne | <i>I believe that HR has a role to play in making this country economically viable by ensuring the best for both business and the people who make them. There is an embarrassing amount of HR people who still don't have knowledge of the basics of our trade and make us look like a Mickey Mouse industry</i> |
| Richter | <i>My hopes would be that there are forums created across the nation for young practitioners to hook up with mentors. Why not partner with Universities and Technikons offering HR programmes and get them to buy into mentoring and registering. The spin off could be mentors that can provide in-service training in their organisations for the young practitioner</i> |
| Bruniquel | <i>In appointing people, the emphasis should be on recruiting and training entry level people and in ensuring proper talent management within businesses so that they are able to progress without hindrance</i> |
| Hardijzer | <i>Some HR professionals are forever attempting to justify their roles/existence When appointing into HR roles competency, track record and ability should be the ultimate determining factor</i> |
| Mulder | <i>It is a matter of urgency that compulsory registration for HR management staff be instituted</i> |
| Kemp | <i>My vision is a gradual and ever increasing commitment to professionalise HR in South Africa</i> |
| Goodwin | <i>My impression is that the "top achievers" tend to focus on the upliftment of the specialist areas in which they work, but not necessarily HR as a whole. The relationship between the profession and universities is also not strong enough</i> |
| Roodt | <i>I am becoming more and more concerned about HR's contribution to sound corporate governance. If HR cannot identify their HR risks and guide management in these respects they become merely collaborators in poor corporate governance. Professionalization (legalized) seems to be the only viable and responsible option!</i> |
| VdWesthuizen | <i>SABPP should start with the source of where our professionals came from. That is the Universities. Talks between Deans of Faculties will enable Mentors of SABBP to identify upcoming professionals in the industry and Mentor them as they leave university until they are settled in their new career</i> |
| Sacht | <i>The SABPP itself must bring 'pressure' to bear on the powers that be at Universities to get with the real picture of what goes into a modern and realistic HR syllabus that CEO's and CFO's can relate to</i> |
| Hammond | <i>I am afraid that too many HR people concentrate on the really soft or administrative stuff and avoid the strategic, the legal and the economic imperatives of company development. HR done well has the ability to initiate and follow through on initiatives which are to the benefit of the individual employee, the company, the community & the national economy but it takes hard work, long hours, dedication to the role & less of the concern with the BMW the car allowance and the opportunity for travel and voyager miles</i> |
| Jonker | <i>The profession of HR must now be regulated in some form or another to create an understanding of the HR function internally which will result in the acknowledgement of HR externally. The changing role of the HR professional and alignment with the strategic mission is no longer negotiable.</i> |