



Symposium heralds closer links with China

AFTER TWO DECADES of reform culminating in China's entry into the World Trade Organisation, the world's most populous country is paying increasing attention to human resource management and development. And, while it is eager to learn from the experience of other countries, it is well aware of the need not to replicate others' mistakes.

Addressing a unique international HR symposium in Beijing last November, China National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (CNCPEEC) Vice President Yang Peiqing said that recent business scandals in the United States of America and Europe were helpful for China in that they highlighted the need for social responsibility and professional ethics, for morality as well as law; and they demonstrated that profits before all were damaging to society.

A former Chinese Ministry of Personnel Planning Bureau Chief, Madam Yang said that the deficiencies of more 'advanced' countries provided important lessons, as both State-owned enterprises and private companies in China were looking to establish strong corporate governance.

Joint initiative

The symposium, entitled 'Global prospect – challenges and strategy for HR after WTO entry', was a joint initiative of the HRD sub-committee of CNCPEEC and the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations, with help and participation from the Hong Kong Institute of HRM.

Despite coinciding with the National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, it was attended by 120 delegates, mostly HR professionals from China's private sector, plus representatives from Government Departments, NGOs and research institutes. Five members of the current WFPMA Board, including President Carlos Aldao Zapiola and Past President Eddie Ng, as well as the Asia Pacific Federation's Secretary General P. O. Mak, addressed the symposium.

Describing the structure and recent work of the WFPMA, Carlos Aldao explained how

the kind of international exchange made possible by the Federation contributed to the development of professional HR practice around the world.

Hans Bohm, Secretary General of the German Association for Personnel Management (DGFP), who is also Vice President of the European Association (EAPM) and a member of the WFPMA Board, described the methodology and background to his own association's model of HR competency. Tailored to take account of German customs and practice and drawing on the recent international HR competency work commissioned by the WFPMA, this had led to a new professional education programme for Germany; the first courses are due to begin this March.

Dong Keyong, Dean of the School of Public Administration in Renmin University, HR research director there and a member of the CNCPEEC HRD sub-committee, explained that as recently as 10 years ago HRM had not been regarded as a specialism in China and even now there was no Masters Degree in the subject – people studied it as part of public administration, psychology or education.

Companies were starting to hire consultants to design HR systems, but there was no real theoretical underpinning of HR knowledge; they tended to adopt new concepts and trends without thinking through issues of implementation, to regard technology and software as solutions in their own right and to treat case studies as



▲ Symposium line up (l to r): Geoff Armstrong, WFPMA Secretary General, Yang Peiqing, Executive Vice Chairman, CNCPEEC, Carlos Aldao, President, WFPMA, Yang Chengxu, CNCPEEC Chairman, and Eddie Ng, Past President, WFPMA

'gospel' without taking account of local company culture and circumstances.

Priorities, said Professor Dong, were to make HRM in China a more integral part of company strategy, to encourage closer working with line managers – not least in recruitment, to relate compensation much more closely to market factors and to make training more systematic and needs-related.

WFPMA Secretary General Geoff Armstrong said that China would very soon be a first world economy but for that to happen the country would need the right managerial and leadership cadres, processes and systems. It did not need to go through the same cycles of thinking and practice that other countries had experienced, with all the mistakes that that implied; China could very quickly pick up on the learning of others and compete on an equal footing.

The same issues of globalisation, consumer power and technological advances affected all countries equally, he said, and HR professionals had the knowledge, understanding and commitment to help management and political leaders meet those challenges.

He hoped the symposium marked the start of the international integration of Chinese people management and development and that the WFPMA could look forward to welcoming a new professional body into the APFHRM and thus into full membership of the World Federation.



CNCPEEC's Yang Peiqing shows WFPMA President Carlos Aldao a more professional way with chopsticks

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Next issue

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Brazil's new

As the largest and most populous country in Latin America, what happens in Brazil has an impact. In the recent election of a new left wing government, ABRH President Cássio Mattos tells WorldLink

Last October former steelworker and union leader Luis Inácio da Silva (popularly known as Lula) of the left wing Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) was overwhelmingly elected President of Brazil. Notwithstanding predecessor Fernando Henrique Cardoso's preoccupation with fostering macroeconomic stability and fiscal adjustment, Lula comes to office at a time of serious debt, stagnant growth, high crime rates, falling wages and unemployment near 10 per cent.

His victory, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit, reflects a desire for change after eight years of government by a centrist coalition, and the Brazilian electorate's demand for greater government attention to social concerns such as income distribution, employment creation and poverty alleviation. Lula, it is said, took advantage of the change in the public mood, moved to the centre and assumed a more statesmanlike image and moderate rhetoric.

This helped to widen his appeal among middle class voters, who had previously rejected him and the PT partly out of fear and conservatism.

Although Lula and the PT are now riding high, the circumstances under which they took office could hardly be more taxing. The financial markets doubt Lula's ability to manage the economy prudently, despite his endorsement of Brazil's IMF programme and his newfound commitment to market-based policies. In particular, they are afraid of a default on Brazil's onerous public debt and will be watching for any slips, particularly in the early stages of his presidency.

Lula faces other daunting challenges. He will need to hold together the disparate elements of his party (unions, public sector workers and the middle classes), the more radical members of which will be well represented in the incoming legislatures: together with many other PT supporters they

So, how do HR professionals view the prospects under the new government? Cássio Cury Mattos, National President of the Brazilian Association of Human Resources (ABRH), comments:

There are two contrasting words that summarise reactions to the election of Luis Inácio da Silva - fear and hope. However, we prefer to take an optimistic perspective. First, we hope the country will start growing again, with the regeneration of jobs and income. Secondly, in terms of dialogue, the government has committed itself to turning its back on its more dogmatic faction, and repeated its willingness to embrace pluralism; and to this degree Lula is the living metaphor that Brazil has changed and changed for the better. This administration is proposing participation rather than the elitism which led to the unilateral decisions of its predecessors. And thirdly, it is high time to promote a frontal attack against the serious social inequalities that devastate the country.

The question that remains unanswered is how the government can meet society's great expectations for more social fairness. It won't be an easy task. That is why it is so important to be open to dialogue.

Lula declared during his campaign that the characteristic of his administration would be the attempt to establish a major political alliance, almost a coalition, to facilitate a dialogue. To this end, he is already holding meetings with businessmen, bankers, union leaders and non-governmental organisations to define the model of social partnership to be adopted and implemented by the Council of Economic and Social Development. At these meetings discussion centres around themes of public interest such as income distribution, poverty, environment and jobs. Transparency, democratic dialogue and negotiations with the Congress do already seem to be characterising the new presidential style.

In an interview, the new president wisely said, "Winning was easy, but the problems start now." This sentence carries a glimpse of the lucidity of the man who will head the country for the next few years and, at the same time, the scope of the conflict to be overcome to allow us to enter a new cycle of growth, a new phase of economic expansion. The only certainty here is the magnitude of the challenge. Therefore, society as a whole is invited to take part.

As a national association with 20 subsidiaries, 19 regional branches and 15,000 members ABRH

broom

... pact throughout that continent, and even in the USA. In the light of the way how things look from the perspective of the Brazilian HR professional

... will be expecting policies to create jobs and stimulate growth that will be incompatible initially with the demands of fiscal solvency and macroeconomic stability. The PT, which has a reasonable record in running states and large municipalities, will also have to make the step up to governing a vast and complex nation.

Finally, although the PT will be the largest party in the lower house, it will still be a minority and a working majority will be elusive without the support of one of the large centrist parties.

Negotiation and participation

Whatever the eventual balance of forces, comments the Economist Intelligence Unit, the process of lawmaking is likely to require painstaking negotiation and consensus-building.

... has let it be known that we wish to contribute as thoroughly as possible. We have reminded the new government that human resources professionals understand corporate reality in depth, and have been playing a significant role in the process of change. We have said that we are willing to collaborate in the dialogue between corporations and public power, as specialists in negotiation, particularly in relation to strategic and complex themes around jobs, income, work and labour law. HR will have an active voice in the discussion with a view to broadening social awareness – a merger of human and social capital.

We expect the best from our new president. If we were to pick out one of many qualities in him that we most admire, it would be his ability to overcome conflict and make understanding prevail. In other words, substituting confrontation for convergence. This was the practical attitude that during the election campaign drove out the fear of his party's radicalism. In addition, Lula knows industry and commerce, he knows workers and he understands politics. He is not a recent entrant to any of these areas.

According to his economic adviser Guido Mantega, "Lula is going to build a government based on alliances, a government in which businessmen, bankers, trade unions – the whole of society – will participate. The trademark of Lula's government will be participation."

However, he has also said that the government will be more active in intervening in the economy than those in the past, which had "allowed the market to organise the economy."

And, not least Lula's election could have an impact on US-Brazil relations, since he has criticised a proposed hemisphere-wide free trade zone, backed by President Bush. And he is friendly with both Cuban President Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, neither of who are top of Washington's hit parade.

In essence, both in Brazil and in other democratic countries, the modern approach suggests evolution rather than revolution. And evolution is necessary because in the globalised world the hegemony of capital over work, or of work over capital, is no longer acceptable. We rather seek an understanding that actually builds something.

ABRH's wish is that the new government may transform the challenge of building of a new social pact and pluralist dialogue into the objective of raising the degree of happiness of the Brazilian people. ○



Lula da Silva

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ In recognition of 2003 as the European Year of Disabled People, a special Realising Ability Award will be presented to the organisation demonstrating best practice and innovation in addressing disability as a corporate social responsibility priority.

Part of the UK's Business in the Community Awards for Excellence, the award will profile innovative work on disability by UK businesses, thus encouraging and challenging European businesses to increase their commitment to disabled employees and customers.

It will focus on initiatives around the employment, retention, empowerment and mentoring of disabled employees.

■ A recent OECD study of parents' participation in the labour market in Australia, Denmark and the Netherlands shows how family-friendly measures such as childcare, leave and tax/benefit policies can help create a better balance between work and family life.

While practices in Nordic countries reflect long experience of collective childcare, enabling most Danish women with children to work full time, and Australia offers less generous but more flexible childcare support, the workplace culture in all three countries still places a penalty on fathers using family-friendly benefits. Hence the greatest use of leave arrangements, part-time work and flexible hours is made by mothers, and this in turn can damage their career prospects.

More effort is needed, says the OECD, to change attitudes towards men who take advantage of such arrangements.

'Babies and bosses: reconciling work and family life', OECD, Paris 2002.

■ Harassment in the workplace will continue to cost employers time, money and serious disruption unless and until they are prepared to learn from their own and others' mistakes, according to a report which finds that organisations are more concerned about avoiding negative publicity than taking remedial action.

'*Picking up the pieces: how organisations manage the aftermath of harassment complaints*' is based on the experiences of 41 UK employers in both public and private sectors, who had been involved in sexual or racial harassment cases.

It makes wide-ranging recommendations, including acknowledging mistakes, even if only in private; debriefing sessions to discuss implications and help avoid gossip and rumour; support to managers; and specific strategies to rebuild relationships, such as counselling and training.

Available from www.wainwrighttrust.org.uk

Regional reports

Regularly updated reports from the five member regions of the WFPMA are now accessible on the website. They cover economic and HR trends, as well as activities and developments in each region's professional association and the member country associations. See www.wfpma.com

Executive remuneration and t

Despite the growing convergence in world-wide reward practices, differing cultural, historical, political, productivity, cost-of-living and tax factors make for significant variations between countries when it comes to pay. Commenting on recent trends, Charles Cotton focuses in particular on how HR professionals' own remuneration compares across the globe

Ten years ago, irrespective of the country they worked in, the largest element of most executives' and top managers' remuneration package would have been basic salary. Such staff would have received generous benefits and perks and a bonus that was linked to individual performance, but base pay would have been the most significant part of the package.

However, since then, the US practice of making variable, contingent or incentive rewards a major factor in remuneration has spread (subject to corporate governance issues) across the globe. And not only are more employers around the world adopting this approach, they are also increasing the proportion of the package made up of these variable elements of pay.

Chief executives (CEOs) saw that element of total remuneration linked to contingent or incentive rewards increase as a proportion of annual basic pay from 28.5% to 72.5% between 1996/97 and 2001/02, according to a survey by consultancy firm Towers Perrin. And, over the same period, HR directors saw the contingent element in their own pay rise from 16.5% to 43%.

Part of this growth is down to employers awarding executives higher bonuses linked to individual performance, the assumption being that the more successful a firm is the more those managers responsible for the success should be personally rewarded. Between 1996/97 and 2001/02, bonus pay as a proportion of annual basic pay rose from 24% to 32.5% for CEOs, and from 15.5% to 20% for HR directors.

However, the main reason for the decline in the relative importance of the basic wage for top managers has been the rise in the prevalence of share options and other long-term incentive plans (LTIPs). As recently as five years ago, LTIPs were typically on offer to executive staff in just a handful of countries, such as Canada, the US and UK. Now, the practice is

almost universal. Part of this growth has been due to the support of various governments which encourage such practices; for instance the prevalence of offering stock options jumped in Germany after the introduction of legislation.

Another driver behind the rise in variable pay is the desire by many employers to manage their fixed pay costs more effectively – by trying to shift some of the cost burden to their employees. This strategy is being aided by the current levels of low inflation being experienced around the world, which are having a moderating effect on pay increases and salary growth. As a consequence, in order to recognise the performance of key personnel, employers are offering more variable pay, which in theory is a less risky strategy in that such staff should only get such rewards if they perform effectively.

One would expect that staff lower down the jobs hierarchy would also begin to see

Total gross remuneration in \$US per annum

	HR Directors	CEOs
US	449,135	1,932,580
Argentina	335,564	879,068
UK	311,452	668,526
Venezuela	307,480	635,045
Belgium	301,138	696,697
Mexico	296,224	866,831
Italy	259,814	600,319
Hong Kong	254,002	736,599
Brazil	248,532	530,220
Germany	226,462	454,974
Singapore	224,865	645,740
Spain	215,736	429,725
France	214,208	519,060
Japan	214,185	508,106
Netherlands	210,231	604,854
Australia	196,611	546,914
Switzerland	194,440	404,580
Canada	180,362	787,060
South Africa	169,545	394,672
Sweden	155,690	413,860
Taiwan	114,889	229,212
South Korea	110,069	214,836
Malaysia	109,974	300,414
New Zealand	95,168	287,345
Thailand	85,046	137,581
China (Shanghai)	61,995	89,498

Source: Towers Perrin

The lot of the HR professional

growth in the pay element of their total remuneration linked to their performance. However, despite the hype, this is not happening on a wide scale. Even white-collar staff still see most of their pay coming from basic pay, and manual employees receive most of their earnings from base salary topped up by overtime and productivity-linked payments.

Some commentators argue that the advent of the internet, e-commerce and a rationalisation among the world's currencies is leading to greater transparency, not only when it comes to prices and costs, but also with regard to reward practices. While the time may be some time off when employers will no longer have to adopt different reward practices to reflect cost-of-living variations, within Europe the euro is having an impact on those countries using it, as prices converge. This is because many employers are using the advent of the new currency to rethink their whole approach to reward.

However, while companies are using similar philosophies to reward executives, their pay levels are not converging. A comparison of executive remuneration now and five years ago would reveal little difference in where various countries are positioned. Factors militating against convergence include history, cultural values, attitudes and beliefs of the company and the country in which it operates.

US pays best

So, how does the remuneration of HR professionals compare around the world? An examination of the table (left) reveals that such individuals can earn as much as \$449,135 gross in a year if they work in the US. Other high paying countries include Argentina (\$335,564), the UK (\$311,452), Venezuela (\$307,480) and Belgium (\$301,138). HR professionals in Asia-Pacific countries fare less well: in Shanghai, China, they earn \$61,995 a year, in Thailand (\$85,046), New Zealand (\$95,168), Malaysia (\$109,974) and South Korea (\$110,069).

However, while the total remuneration on offer to HR directors in China is the lowest in the survey, the disparity in

earnings between what an HR director can expect compared with what their chief executive colleague can command (see Table) is, at 31%, also the lowest recorded by the survey. In the UK, the reward gap between personnel directors and CEOs is 53%. And the remuneration disparity is even wider in such places as France (59%), Australia (64%) and both US and Canada (77%).

Yet before HR executives answer the lure of higher pay by booking flights abroad, they should bear in mind the tax, legal and accounting practices that exist in their intended country. For instance, in the US in addition to the federal rate of income tax there are also state taxes: the top federal marginal tax rate is 39.6%, while in New York the maximum marginal local tax rate is pitched at 10.63%, giving a combined maximum marginal tax rate of 50.23% for earnings over \$288,350. The lowest maximum tax rate recorded by the survey is enjoyed by those working in Hong Kong (15%), while the highest is in Brussels (59.95%). In London, the maximum marginal rate of income tax is 40%.

In addition to tax, our HR director is also faced by social security and other compulsory contributions. For instance, while a director could have to pay up to 11% in the UK, they would have to contribute 12.8% in Germany, 20% in Singapore and 29.4% in the Netherlands. By contrast, they would pay just 8.65% in Belgium, 6.2% in the US, 4.3% in Canada and a mere 1% in Taiwan.

HR professionals also need to bear in mind the impact of sector, location and job on total remuneration. Different sectors of the economy tend to be less generous than others. For instance, Mercer's 2002 HRM compensation survey finds that employers in the government, not-for-profit and education sectors typically are at the lower end of the HR pay scale, while sectors at the top end of the spectrum include energy and mining, as well as banking and financial services. These findings are mirrored by research by Reward. Its 2001/02 survey of personnel rewards finds variations between the sectors with health, local government and education employers being less generous

compared to employers within mining, new media and communications.

The Mercer survey also finds a regional disparity between the packages of US HR professionals, with the highest pay found on the West Coast and in the North East. For example, an HR information specialist receives median total cash compensation of \$61,800 on the West Coast, but only \$50,700 in North Central USA and just \$46,900 in South Central USA. In the UK, research by Reward shows that HR professionals receive the highest wages working in London (18.1% above the UK norm) and the South East of England (5.5%), while those employed in Northern Ireland and the West Midlands receive 17.9% and 12.2% less respectively.

International rewards

Pay can also vary quite significantly by functional area. Among senior HR executives in the US, international and labour/industrial relations responsibilities command the highest pay (median total cash compensation of \$167,200 and \$164,000 respectively), according to Mercer, as compared with employee relations (\$140,500), training (\$140,000), compensation (\$140,000) and benefits (\$130,400). Yet, lower down the executive tree, pay for executive compensation managers, at \$125,000, far outpaces that for other specialisms.

Similarly, the Reward survey draws comparisons between different disciplines in the HR function by examining the total pay for a range of jobs at middle manager level in the UK: compensation and benefit specialists come top with £40,862, followed by industrial relations specialists at £37,950 and recruitment managers (£37,800); the worst paid occupations are health and safety (£34,000) and training managers (£34,076).

Finally, though, there is more to a rewarding job than pay. Factors such as job content, company environment, the employer's values and the level of its success in the marketplace can be more important considerations. ○

Survey details: 2002 Mercer HRM Compensation Survey: imercer.com; Personnel rewards 2001/2002, Reward Group, www.reward-group.co.uk; Worldwide total remuneration 2001/2002, Towers Perrin, www.towersperrin.com

Charles Cotton is Adviser, Reward and Conditions of Employment, for the UK Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Canada launches national

In March this year Canada will have its own national professional HR standards. CCHRA President Anne Charette reports

Canada's Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation was established in the early 1990s. Providing a framework for professional development, it established a set of ethical standards and communicated the professional status of human resources to the business community. Originally established in the province of Ontario in 1990, the CHRP designation was adopted by the rest of the provinces by 1994.

The following year the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA), an umbrella body of the HR associations from each province, plus several specialist associations, embarked on a project to define the body of work for human resources, to raise the expectations of HR practitioners, establish credibility and increase the market value of the designation, and to establish a common standard assessment for CHRP candidates throughout Canada.

In partnership with the Canadian Federal Government (Human Resources Development

Canada) the Council commissioned a National Capabilities Committee (NCC) composed of experienced HR practitioners to oversee the development of a profile of required HR capabilities, standards for assessment of those capabilities and a model for the measurement of candidates.

In Phase One of the project (1997-98), the NCC created an outline for capabilities: a study of what capabilities HR professionals needed in order to meet the requirements of Canadian clients and employers. Through a series of focus group sessions with CEOs, senior executives, HR practitioners and representatives of the educational community across Canada, the NCC edited and validated the list of capabilities. Two years of work by almost 200 participants resulted in the publication of the Canadian Human Resources Capabilities Profile.

In addition to the data gathered from the focus groups and national surveys and questionnaires, an in-depth review of the UK model was undertaken, and

certification/assessment approaches in Canada and the United States were examined – both for human resources and for other professions, including management consultants, accountants and engineers.

Assessment standards were based on required professional capabilities (RPCs) and were defined as follows:

- client/practitioner determined and validated;
- independent contributor level of application within established parameters of conduct;
- beyond knowledge and skill, a demonstrated ability to perform.

In Phase Two of the project (1998-99), teams of subject-matter experts developed assessment standards for the HR Capabilities Profile. These outlined the evidence required in order to judge that a person possesses each capability.

In Phase Three (1999-2000), a pilot assessment centre was developed in cooperation with the HR Association of Nova Scotia. Based in Halifax, this tested the use of

the assessment standards in relation to professional accreditation programmes.

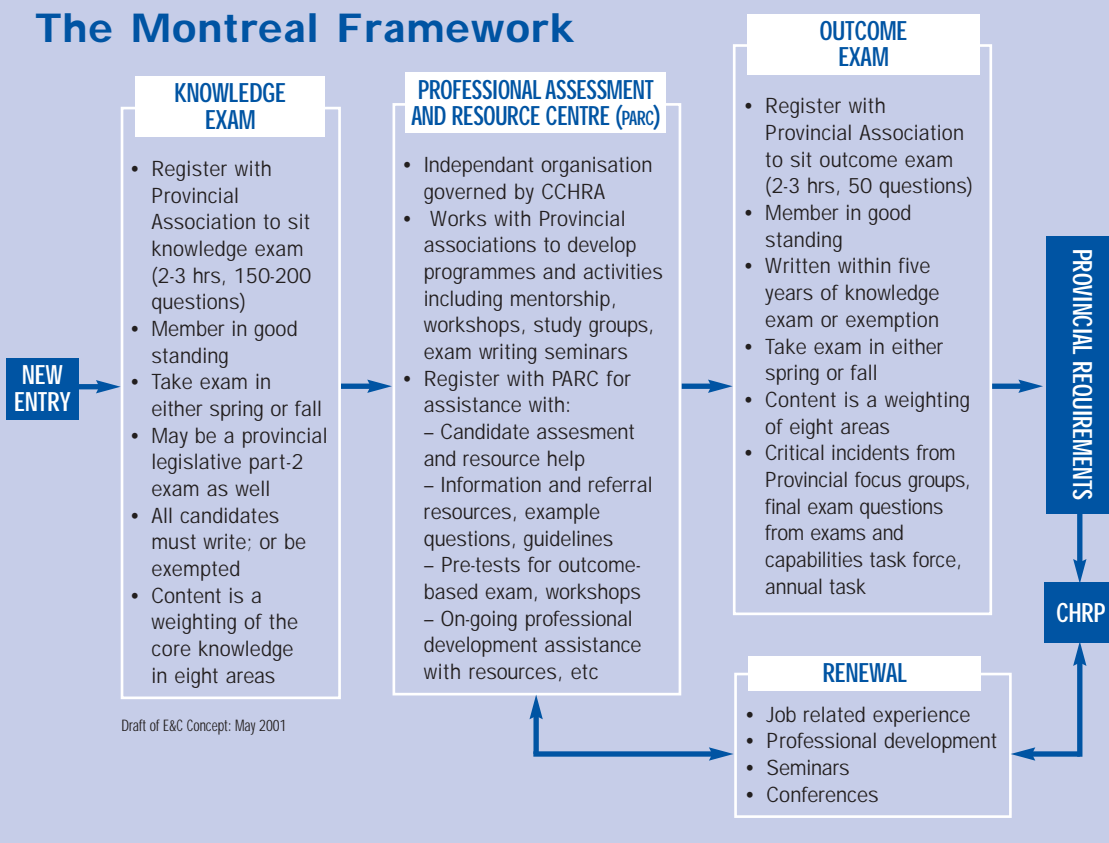
Following the pilot it was decided to establish four task forces to re-work some of the data and facilitate implementation. The task forces were responsible for

- exams and capabilities
- business model planning
- communications
- implementation;

also a consortium consisting of a project lead and the four task force leaders was established to manage the volunteer effort.

As a result of the work conducted by the Exams and Capabilities Task Force, under the direction of Dr Victor Catano of St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the RPCs were re-defined and validated into professional practice plus seven functional HR areas: staffing; total compensation, organisational learning, training and development, employee and labour relations, workplace health

The Montreal Framework



professional standards

and safety and HR information management.

The final Phase – Implementation, (2000–03) completes the developmental work to establish the national assessment processes and create the support structures for CHRP candidates across Canada. This phase will result in the establishment of the Professional Standards Organisation, the permanent body responsible for managing and supporting the national process in Canada.

In June 2001, national accord was reached in Montreal, Quebec, with unanimous approval by all CHRP-granting associations for what has become commonly known as the Montreal Framework. Thereafter, revised objectives/budgets were created, a business model for organisation, governance and financing of the Professional Standards Organisation was approved and a national launch date of March 2003 established.

Finally, the framework for a three-year re-certification was established for all CHRP holders with emphasis on continual professional development.

Other features of the national CHRP will include the creation of a CHRP Candidate status for those who have successfully completed the knowledge exam and are preparing to write the outcomes assessment, a national directory listing all CHRPs and Candidates, and a national Code of Ethics and National Reciprocity and Portability.

Thus, a major undertaking was completed, but there are still many transitional issues to

deal with – some national and many specific to the different provincial associations.

It is an exciting time for human resources in Canada and the next 10 years promise even more change. CCHRA is developing a unique, made-in-Canada approach to certification. No other national benchmark professional association certifies competency. Beyond HR, the national designation is good for Canadian business. By creating a designation with national standards and processes we believe we are contributing to the success of organisations and ultimately the Canadian economy. ○



Anne Charette is President of the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA) and past President of the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario (HRPAO). She is also President and founder of the Burke Group, an HR consultancy located in St. Catharines, Ontario, and has over 20 years experience in the human resources field.

Expats labour market tightens

BUSINESSES finding it difficult to recruit international assignees should use their former expatriates as ambassadors for the role, according to a recent report from PricewaterhouseCoopers.*

The recommendation is one outcome of research among six major Danish organisations, employing 80,000 people, and carried out by the Danish division of PwC in association with the Copenhagen Business School.

Businesses expect a growth in expatriate assignments. But, with fewer young people coming into the labour market and more dual career families, more companies experience resistance from managers to being posted abroad, according to Carsten Skovbro, senior manager at PwC Consulting in Denmark.

Despite this, Skovbro told a recent CIPD International Forum Network meeting in London, 98 per cent of those who have returned or are still in post as

expatriates say they would recommend the experience to others, 93 per cent would like to be assigned internationally again and 88 per cent said their assignment lived up to their expectations.

While 65 per cent of expatriates said they had initiated the assignment, HR managers reported differently, saying they had had to do a lot of persuasion, especially when it came to specific jobs and locations.

The report also found that most expatriates accept international assignments for professional challenge rather than because they are part of an agreed career plan or for development purposes.

Family issues for expatriates, including assignees missing family and friends in the home country, continue to be the most problematic for HR departments to manage, the report suggests.

One of the main areas of dissatisfaction expressed was in relation to contact in

connection with future work tasks and assignments, a shortcoming to which PwC attribute the subsequent quick loss of many employees returning from abroad.

The highest proportion of participant companies reported an increase in short-term assignments over the last two years and an anticipated increase in them over the next two. 'Commuter' assignments were also expected to increase significantly.

Short-term assignments, according to the latest ORC Worldwide Survey of International Assignment Practices and Policies,* remain on the increase because they offer the chance to control expenses and still meet corporate objectives without upsetting the employee's home life to the degree caused by full-term relocation. However, while firms in most countries prefer assignments that last no more than three years, Japanese-based companies report the

highest percentage (29 per cent) opting for longer stints.

Out-and-back assignments, with planned repatriation for the employee, still represent the most common types of international transfers, according to ORC.

The most popular destination for expatriates originating in the United States is Western Europe, followed by the Asia-Pacific region. Western European expatriates reciprocate with transfers to the US, followed by moves within Western Europe. Asia-Pacific expatriates transfer most often within their own region, with the US and the Middle East as the next most common destinations. The majority of Japanese expatriates split their moves between the US and Asia Pacific, with Western Europe and China ranking third and fourth.

* For more information about the PwC survey, contact Carsten Skovbro; tel: +45 3945 3360; email csv@pwc.dk. For more on the ORC survey: www.orcinc.com

THE WORLDLINK HR CALENDAR

February 12-14, 2003

Toronto, Canada

HRPAO Annual Conference and Exposition

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March 27-29, 2003

Córdoba, Spain

AEDIPE 38th Annual Conference

Tel: +34 91 420 0612
Fax: +34 91 420 0894
Email: aedipe@aedipe.es

March 31 - April 2, 2003

Los Angeles, USA

SHRM International Conference and Exposition

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Fax: +1 703 535 6497
Email: forum@shrm.org

April 8-10, 2003

London, England

CIPD Human Resource Development Conference and Exhibition

Tel: +44 20 8263 3434
Fax: +44 20 8263 3223
Email: training.hotline@cipd.co.uk

May 13, 2003

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

WFPMA Board Meeting

May 14-17, 2003

18th Interamerican (FIDAP) Conference on HRM

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Tel: +613 9685 1200
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Email: jo.mithen@ahri.com.au

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DGFP 11th National Conference

Contact: Ute Graf
Tel: +49 211 5978 150
Fax: +49 211 5978 179
Email: graf@dgfp.de

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Killarney, Co Kerry, Ireland

CIPD Ireland National Conference

Tel: +353-1-676-6655
Fax: +353-1-676-7229
Email: info@cipd.ie

May 27-30, 2003

Lisbon, Portugal

IFTDO 32nd World Conference and Exhibition

Contact: Luis Bento
Tel: +351 21 352 2717
Fax: +351 21 352 2713
Email: apgtrh@mail.telepac.pt

June 10-12, 2003

Balatonszéplak, Hungary

OHE National Conference

Contact: Hungarian Association for HRM
Tel: +36 1 361 4655
Fax: +36 1 361 4656
Email: humanpol@mail.matav.hu

May 4-6, 2004

Singapore

WFPMA 10th World Congress on Human Resource Management

Contact: David Ang
Tel: +65 438 0012
Fax: +65 438 0029
Email: information@hr2004.org or enquiries@shri.org.sg
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