

CPRS Strategic Plan 2005-2008

MESSAGE FROM ROBYN QUINN, APR CPRS PRESIDENT 2004-2005

During this past year, the National Board of Directors has prepared a new strategic planning process to enable future boards to identify long-term initiatives and allocate appropriate resources to make CPRS a dynamic organization. As CPRS implements a new governance structure in June 2005, this strategic plan will act as the framework for the incoming board to begin its term of office.

As transparency and accountability are paramount in any profession, it is our intention that the outcomes from this strategic plan be reported to the membership at all opportunities.

As National Board members, we recognize that we are accountable for ensuring CPRS achieves its specific objectives as well as for measuring and reporting actual performance. We are proud of our recent successes in these areas.

The Strategic Planning process is not a new endeavour. A previous three-year plan was offered in 2000 with many successful implementations. This year, we began the process by reviewing past accomplishments, successes and challenges. The goals that follow reflect what we have heard from you through our research this past year. Each goal relates to the mission and vision. Some of the tactics are already underway, and others are part of our continuing commitment to our members. Other tactics will be implemented through new Task Forces and Committees to be established in the coming year.

The Strategic Plan 2005/07 will guide our National Society's priorities for the next three years. As this Plan is a living document, its vitality comes from our members. We encourage you to become involved as a committee or task force volunteer, either locally or nationally. We welcome your suggestions as we continue to offer a professional association today, and for the future.

Robin Quinn, APR, president
And the 2004/05 CPRS Board of Directors
April 2005

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The history of our society began during the mid-1940s, when a group of Montreal public relations practitioners explored the need for a greater exchange of knowledge. The Canadian Public Relations Society was established in 1948 with membership limited to practitioners working in corporations. Later that year, a group of public relations practitioners in Toronto formed the Public Relations Association of Ontario, which was open to government employees and consultants as well as corporate practitioners. In 1953 the two organizations amalgamated to form the Canadian Public Relations Society, Inc. (CPRS). Today, the National Society continues as a federation of Member Societies, governed by a Board of Directors. CPRS is a non-for-profit organization whose members are engaged in the practice, management or teaching of public relations.

The scope of CPRS in 2004/05 is as follows:

- 16 member societies
- 1635 national members
- 493 accredited members
- 27 Fellows, 15 Honourary Fellows
- \$470,000 annual operating budget

As a volunteer based professional society, the national society benefits from a strong commitment by public relations practitioners who sit on CPRS boards, committees and various task forces.

In August 2002, the National Society contracted out the management services to Philip Boyd & Associates. The management services include: financial and accounting management, administration for the society, volunteer management; fundraising and partnership programs; communications with members and liaison with local Member Societies.

The National Society receives funding primarily from its members through annual dues, accreditation and award fees and conference registration. A second level of funding is sought from sponsorships, both in-kind and cash. The Society is now in its second of a three-year plan to achieve financial stability.

Governance structure:

In 2002, a task force was formed to review and recommend a governance model to provide better continuity on the national board level as well as reduce expenses. The recommendations were approved at the 2004 Annual General Meeting with implementation slated for 2005. It is recognized that there will be a transition of the new structure during year one of this plan.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Vision

In a survey conducted in 2004, respondents were asked to articulate their vision for CPRS. The most common theme for a vision was:

“To be the society of choice for Canadian Public Relations and communications professionals – one that champions best practices, promotes understanding of the value of effective communication, provides value to its members and is dedicated to their development.”

Mission

CPRS’s mission statement integrates the Society’s purpose and client base:

“The Canadian Public Relations Society, as a distinct Canadian association, seeks to:
Canadian Public Relations Society, Inc.

- Group all public relations practitioners in Canada and to foster their professional interests;
- Advance the professional stature of public relations, in cooperation with its regional Member Societies and with like-minded organizations in other countries; and
- Regulate its practice for the benefits and protection of the public interest.”

Values

Core values have not been identified at this date. Future Boards may wish to consider recognizing the society’s core values to acknowledge similar values with partner organizations and sponsors.

OPPORTUNITIES & RISKS

Market Strengths

The market for public relations professionals continues to grow as demonstrated through the increase of post-secondary diplomas and degrees in communication and public relations. Through the formation of Global Alliance we see that this trend is mirrored throughout the world.

As the need to communicate grows and job force participation rises, the public relations profession will be called upon to play an ever-increasing role. Other broader societal factors are also adding to the demands on the profession in many areas. For example, the convergence of the media relies more and more on communicators to provide information to journalists.

Within Canada, the top three strengths of CPRS as identified by its members are the accreditation program, networking opportunities and the national organization itself. These building blocks are currently in place and the strategic plan will continue to build on these strengths.

Opportunities

With the momentum of public relations awareness increasing, CPRS national and the local societies are able to further build awareness of the profession. The national CPRS society will continue to promote the professional and ethical standards, identify national issues and seek out opportunities for visibility for the profession and its members. The term "Public Relations" in itself is often referred to with a negative connotation. The Society will position itself as an advocate of high professional standards while recognizing that, like other professions, there are unethical practices that have to be addressed through improved education and awareness of good practice.

Local societies also have a role to play in the visibility of the profession and its members. In building a national strategic plan, local societies will be able to utilize the tactics identified to bring local awareness to their community through recognition of local members and activities.

With the new governance structure, the Presidential Council will be able to better share local activities and when necessary, take issues forward to the National Board. While the two-way communication process will be different with the new structure, members can address issues in a clearer approach. As well with the National board members not part of the local society boards, it is expected that the volunteer hours can be put towards projects to build national’s credibility.

Risks

The adoption of the new governance model was achieved through a majority of the voting members at the 2004 Annual General Meeting. As with any change in organizational structure, there is

uncertainty on how this change will affect individual members and local societies over time. Without ongoing communication to ensure members understand the governance process, there is an increased risk of perceived loss of value and voice at the National table.

Perception by its members is one of the greatest risks to the national association. When asked the three biggest threats facing CPRS in a recent survey, members responded with the loss of members, lack of membership value and financial instability. Local societies are the best recruiters but the National society has to play an active role in retaining members by providing visible value for membership. Membership numbers have remained static over the past several years as the same number of new members replace exiting members

Its members see the Society's past experience of deficit budgets as a threat for the national association. The Board has implemented a new financial structure and budgeting process and it is expected that the financial risk is now minimized.

With a society that is mainly operated through volunteers, one of the largest risks that CPRS faces is that of volunteer burnout, both nationally and locally. There is also a perception that there is a loss of members to other professional associations. While the lack of succession planning was identified as a threat in a recent survey, it was not clear if that was local or national in nature.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES

The 2005-2008 Strategic Plan is built upon three principle goals: growth, visibility and organization operations.

CPRS's goals, objectives, strategies and tactics for the next three years are described in the following pages. Collectively, this plan ensures the transparency of the National Society and provides value added benefits to the local societies through high-level strategy and tactics. The task forces and committees will develop more detail through their action plans and timelines.

GOAL 1 Maximize the Effectiveness of the Society

Maximize the efficient use of resources to support the growth and vitality of CPRS to meet present and evolving demands.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Optimize growth and retention of national members.

Strategy A: Increase national membership.

Tactics:

- Secure Membership Task Force to develop strategy, objectives and metrics for growth / retention
- Conduct research of potential public relations professionals in Canada, growth markets and retention issues
- Identify key motivators for staying/becoming members and for local-society participation including regional champions

OBJECTIVE TWO: Be the leader in Life-Long Learning

Strategy A: Build programs for key career stages of members: new professionals, mid career and senior professionals.

Tactics:

- Work with Global Alliance and recognition of APR designation worldwide
- Encourage participation in Accreditation programs
- Encourage participation in certificate and graduate certificate programs, diploma and advanced university degrees
- Identify key motivators for APR applicants
- Identify key motivators for participation in the Maintenance Program

Strategy B: Expand professional development offerings to build knowledge and skills

Tactics:

- Secure PD committee, create terms of reference
- Establish goals and satisfaction benchmarks
- Review professional development at regional level and at national conference
- Conduct survey to identify levels of satisfaction and PD interest
- Identify best practices at the society level, support expansion and cooperation among societies
- Endorse PD sessions through third parties with CPRS members as the trainers
- Launch Tisdall Lecture as a National CPRS initiative
- Identify cross promotion and revenue sharing opportunities
- Work with Global Alliance to study and recommend core elements of public relations education
- Seek and promote PD sessions offered (eg PRSA tele-seminar, web seminars, Tisdall Lectures)
- Research fee-based certification for instructors and courses in year two
- Create a PD email alert to promote society events across the country

Strategy C: Provide Leadership in Educational Development

Tactics:

- Assess and evaluate the state of public relations education in Canada
- Present recommendations to CPRS National Board on issues such as program certification, educational outcomes and standards, industry-academy partnerships and continuing education opportunities for public relations practitioners
- Conduct a review on what has been done to support PR education in Canada
- Identify and explore model options for CPRS's involvement and leadership role for PR education in Canada

GOAL 2 Increase Visibility in the Business Community

Maximize the awareness of CPRS.

OBJECTIVE: Raise awareness of the profession.

Strategy A: Define and Expand awareness of the profession's knowledge, skills and attributes

Tactics:

- Conduct research including current job descriptions, salary ranges (*eg State of employment in Canada*)
- Develop strategy and tactics for promoting the profession to government employers and human resource professionals
- Based on research, develop and promote to employers CPRS recommendations for job descriptions, expected education levels, salary ranges (throughout regions)
- Lobby federal government to work with National office to promote recognition of CPRS membership and the APR designation as preferred criteria for public relations hiring and contracting practices

Strategy B: Strengthen CPRS's profile

Tactics:

- Establish a Public Affairs or Government Relations Committee/Task Force
- Develop and implement an overall marketing plan for the Society by building on past successes
- Introduce media relations briefing for incoming Executive Committee
- Leverage 2005 Conference for branding and announcements, awards winners, significant professional development, milestones and APRs
- Generate editorial content and articles for trade magazines and appropriate business reports such as PR Week, PR Tactics and Strategist.
- Create media list and target areas, eg HR professionals and executive clients
- Develop case study compilation on website
- Develop a national CPRS speakers bureau (promote to conferences, local member societies and event planners) in year two
- Review sponsorship advertising opportunities for economies of scale and leveraging in year two
- Increase overall sponsorship revenue through the identification of opportunities for existing programs, national conferences and services.

GOAL 3 Improve Organization Operation and Effectiveness

Build a viable financial and organizational structure.

OBJECTIVE: Strengthen the value of CPRS National Office and Board.

Strategy A: Strengthen national/local society relationship

Tactics:

- Work with local member societies to build a greater understanding of activities, roles and responsibilities between National Office, National Board and Local Societies.
- Create an organization chart to reflect responsibilities of national office, board members and societies
- Foster two-way dialogue between National and local societies through Presidents Council
- Distribute information such as a series of newsletter articles and Presidential Communiqués
- Increase orientation for incoming local society officers to identify who is accountable to publish information at local level
- Identify National information/special project liaison from each local society
- Increase awareness and discussion of ethical practices to local member societies through the work of the Judicial and Ethics Committee and Ethics Network.

Strategy B: Create National standards including defining roles and responsibilities for national and local societies.

Tactics:

- Establish financial/budget allocations for National Society including committees and planning
- Standardize tools and resources (articles, presentations, ads, memberships)
- Communicate governance structure throughout year 1 and beyond
- Revise National Conference Manual
- Revise the Directors' Orientation Manual to reflect new governance structure
- Establish Presidents Council and develop orientation for incoming Presidents
- Build an understanding of obligations and policies between National and Local Societies
- Establish local society criteria in year 2 (financial accountability, consistency in membership categories, best practices)

Strategy C: Identify research topics and implement process for delivery.

Tactics:

- National Board of Director member portfolio; seek committee members
- Identify research already in existence at National and local levels
- Identify topics of future research
- Seek opportunities to partner in research development and findings

APPENDIX A: CPRS Strategic Plan Responsibility & Timeline at a Glance

	Objective	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
Goal 1. Maximize the Society				
1.	Optimize growth and retention of national members	a. Increase national membership	Rick Mauro, champion National Office	Year 1
2.	Be the leader in Life-Long Learning	a. Encourage participation in Accreditation, Maintenance and Fellow programs	Accreditation Council, BOD	ongoing
		b. Expand professional development offerings to build knowledge and skills	Call for Chair, Committee tbc	Year 1
		c. Provide Leadership in Education	Task Force, Dr. Terence Flynn Chair	Year 1, 2
Goal 2. Increase Visibility				
1.	Raise awareness of the profession	a. Define and Expand awareness of the profession's skills, knowledge and attributes	Kevin Boothroyd champion, Appoint Task Force	Tear 1, 2
		b. Strengthen CPRS's profile	Mark Lavigne - media Luc Beauregard Gov't Relations	Year 1
Goal 3. Strengthen the Society's Value				
1.	Strengthen the value of CPRS National Office and Board	a. Strengthen national/local society relationship	Presidents' Council	Year 1
		b. Create National standards including defining roles and responsibilities for national and local societies	EC cttee	Year 1
		c. Identify research topics and implement process for delivery	BOD portfolio	Year 1
Current Initiatives:				
	Initiative	Responsibility		Timeline
	Member Societies: renewal, website	National Office		ongoing
	Accreditation	Council, National Office		ongoing
	College of Fellows	National Office, Fellows Committee		ongoing
	Presidents' Council	President, National Office		ongoing
	Sponsorship	National Office, Finance Committee		ongoing
	Governance Implementation	Task Force		Year 1
	Leadership in Educational Development	Task Force		Year 1, 2
	Annual Conference	Local & National Office		ongoing
	Awards	Committee		ongoing
	Ethics	Committee		ongoing
	Global Alliance	Portfolio		ongoing
	Research on Digital management package	National Office		Year 1
	Insurance research (for members)	National Office		Year 1

**APPENDIX B: SAMPLE of Reporting Out
Performance Measures of Success Summary
Reporting for Year Ending 2005/06**

	Objective	Strategy	Measures of Success
Goal 1. Maximize the Society			
1.	Optimize growth and retention of national members	a. Increase national membership	1. Increased membership by 10% in Year 3 2. Retention rate of 95% in Year 1. 3. National office monitors societies – provides tangible support for member retention
2.	Be the leader in Life-Long Learning	a. Encourage participation in Accreditation, Maintenance and Fellow programs	1. Increase APRs applications by ___% by year 3. 2. Increase participation in Maintenance Program by ___% by year 3.
		b. Expand professional development offerings to build knowledge and skills	1. Launch one National ProD event in year 1
		c. Provide Leadership in Education	
Goal 2. Increase Visibility			
1.	Raise awareness of the profession	a. Define and Expand awareness of the profession's skills, knowledge and attributes	1. Formal guidelines adopted by Federal Government to recommend hiring and contracts criteria be amended to include CPRS membership and accreditation
		b. Strengthen CPRS's profile	1. Implement five activities or communications each year
		c. Extend CPRS's revenue streams	1. Sponsorship to underwrite ___% of national budget in year 1
Goal 3. Strengthen the Society's Value			
1.	Strengthen the value of CPRS National Administration and Board	a. Strengthen national/local society relationship	1. National liaison 100% participation by local societies in each year 2. Produce four newsletter articles for local society use each year 3. Distribute four presidential communiqués each year
		b. Create National standards including defining roles and responsibilities for national and local societies	1. Receipt of nominations to National Board from 75% of the local societies 2. Elimination of National financial deficit by year 2006 3. Operating contingency surplus of \$120,000
		c. Identify research topics and implement process for delivery	1. Identify and make accessible existing research in year 1 2. secure government agency to fund research on the profession