

Interview with...**Fiorella Callocchia, CHRP**

Chapter President, Human Resources Professionals Association of Halton



Fiorella Callocchia, CHRP, is President of HR Impact, an HR consulting firm specializing in helping companies leverage the people side of their business. A well-known conference and keynote speaker, her approaches and techniques have been featured on TV as well as in various business and HR publications. Callocchia is author of Canada's first HR audit tool and an Editor for Carswell's "HR Best Practices Series."

Why did you choose HR as a career?

Since my teens, I have always been fascinated by human behaviour and what makes us tick. While in university I researched various professions in business and HR, or personnel as it used to be called, spoke to me. It involved people from all over the organization so I could learn more about the business and working in HR gave me an opportunity to solve complex people problems which I find fun and challenging.

What does your typical day consist of?

I have been in the HR field for 25 years and what still amazes me is the fact that every day is different, interesting and exciting. The types of issues I consult on are so varied from recruitment to performance issues to terminations and community-related projects. Being an HR consultant specializing in training, my days are usually spent delivering keynotes, workshops or coaching individuals to strengthen their skills and enhance their careers. Some days are filled with back-to-back meetings and conference calls, and some evenings, as Chapter President for Halton, I am involved in making presentations at academic institutions. Then some days are totally free so off to the spa I go to recharge and relax.

What do you see as HR's greatest challenge in the next decade?

Overcoming our historical and dominant image of being reactive transactors who are policy crazy....I am proud of the profession and what I do. However, often when I first meet someone and tell them what I do for a living, it is always surprising how little they know about the field. It's

time to sit down and do a serious review of what exactly HR is doing in an organization and whether it is focused on what our customers really need. We need an "image makeover" or overhaul.

What is the most important quality in an HR professional?

There are lots of articles written on this so I will deviate from the norm of technical competencies and say that I think it is important to have the ability to empathize and instill trust. We have been given a coveted position of trust and deal with all kinds of sensitive information and data. Keeping people's confidence is crucial. Relationships lie at the heart of any organization and we need to be role models in that regard.

What advice would you give to an HR student entering the workforce?

I would advise them to do research on the organization and their manager before accepting the job. Ensure the HR professional they work for is someone who is willing to teach them the "right" way and has a good reputation in the field. I would also encourage them to examine their true motivators for wanting to further a career in HR. Are they doing it for the "right" reasons? I would suggest they learn stress management strategies and, specifically, ensure their sense of humour is well developed. There will be many days where a laugh or smile will save the day.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Still working as President of HR Impact, as I have for the past 15 years or teaching HR at a local academic institution. □