

Last week I took a walk down memory lane and decided to revisit some of the letters from five years ago. I thought it would be interesting to remind myself of the things that were important then, the promises I made and the initiatives that were important at that time. Would the things said five years ago still have relevance? Were the initiatives discussed then still a part of the association today? Did we deliver where we hoped to? Several talked about the association's commitment to support and implement best practice sharing, collaboration and networking for our members. (and they each continue to be important aspects of the association's value. Interestingly enough, 18 months later we built a value proposition for the association that highlights 5 member benefits important to our success and basically our brand. Ironically Best Practice Sharing and Networking are stated as 2 of the 5 and Collaboration plays an important element throughout. The next thing that caught my attention was the launch of our Thought Leadership Councils, or TLC's as we refer to them. Basically these are learning sessions, and have grown from the initial standard webinar to include multiple different delivery formats for learning, best practice sharing and collaboration. As well they provide the members/speakers who deliver them an opportunity to be recognized as thought leaders in our industry. Thought Leadership. That was a phrase that came up often in 2014 and is still widely referenced today.

What does thought leadership mean to YOU? Well in terms of our association, Thought leaders are the informed opinion leaders and the go-to people in their field of expertise. They are trusted sources who move and inspire people with innovative ideas; turn ideas into reality, and know and show how to replicate their success. We set out 5 years ago to identify industry experts and thought leaders, in some cases helping to develop them to better serve our membership and advance the profession of HR, Talent Acquisition and Services and Technology. Today I am pleased to say that we certainly have a great group of thought leaders and innovators involved in our association, as demonstrated by the outstanding group of thought leaders, industry experts and best-selling authors who speak at our Thought Leadership Councils (TLCs), as well as the people who attend them.

Setting industry standards, published research opportunities as well as new upcoming endeavors like, certification for the HR outsourcing industry (provider and practitioner) professionals were also "upcoming" initiatives that members should watch for. Again, I was pleased to note that there was a linkage and continued development of those initiatives we were talking about in 2014. We do work to discuss, set and publish industry standards and practices, through our Standards and Practices Committee. A Provider Certification Program was officially launched this year, after much work and research to create the vision that Elliot Clark, CEO SharedXpertise shared with us years prior. We continually work to enhance things like our website and member experience, improve communication, and review processes to ensure they are effective and efficient. These things along with all that we do together as a team, (practitioners, providers and the HRO Today team) are done to enhance the experience each and every member has and hopefully tells others about.

While noteworthy in their own right, these were just some of the things we've accomplished together over the last five years. We also expanded and enhanced the Board of Advisor role to better serve the members, through in person meetings and the formation of committee groups where the details of the

work could get done (see the new and improved committee structure and plan for 2020, featured in this month's newsletter). We finally partnered with our Research Team at HRO Today and have proudly brought association sponsored research reports and most recently, a quarterly Research Roundup to keep members apprised of the great research we provide our customer, magazine readers, event delegates and now our association members.

So what I came to realize is this. By engaging in our association, you become part of the conversation – not just for today, but in helping to successfully prepare us for the future. You allow other members the opportunity to get to know you and share your stories. Leaders are everywhere. Expose your thought leaders, and you begin the process of becoming a social business -- real people with real faces talking to real industry experts, customers and buyers. Our members are always looking for new ideas and solutions to solve problems. Are you willing to give it to them? And tell me, what do you think? What does thought leadership mean to you?

Well for me, thought leadership mean many things although I'll pick just one for this letter. Change. Having a mindset of thought leadership and keeping it a focus throughout the last 5 years, has prompted a lot of change, as you read in this letter. Changes in how we think, act and deliver member resources and benefits, have helped solidify our credibility, build our business and has help others along the way. As we wind down 2019, I've one last change to make you aware of (and its another good one)! Please join me in congratulating Renee Preston our new **Sr VP of Membership**. Renee has been a friend to me over the last 15 years and luckily I was able to recruit her to the HRO Today family a few years ago. In that time she has learned from us and taught us several things that became part of that change we see in how we work better. Her positive and friendly attitude and genuinely caring for members make this change, as easy one. For me, that means change as well. You'll no longer see me involved in the day to day work and activities, and Renee and her team will become your main point of contact for all things membership (HRO Today Association, C-TEN and TALENT groups). But of course, with almost 20 years invested working in some capacity with and for this company and the association, I simply can't leave it entirely. I plan to work with Renee and team, to ensure a smooth transition and transfer of knowledge, as well as work on and support the new projects, committee groups and of course thought leadership engagement. Renee – Congratulations on this next chapter in your career, I hope you will look back on your story one day with the same satisfaction, happiness and pride that I have.

Have a very safe and happy Holiday season!

Zachary Misko

President, Membership Services and Executive Director, HRO Today Association

AND

Renee Preston, Senior VP of Membership Services