



● IN THE 21ST CENTURY

A Vision For The Future

"CIPS seeks to establish and create recognition for the IT profession in Canada, and supports all those in the field who are committed to acting professionally".

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Process

CIPS has been in transition towards a “professional” society for a number of years, but the rate of change has been slow and the direction somewhat vague. In May of 2002, the Board of Directors approved the creation of an executive committee portfolio and committee on *Societal Transition*. The role of the Committee on Societal Transition has been to paint a clearer vision of the target environment and put in place plans to accomplish the strategic changes that need to occur to get us there.

The Committee approved an overall approach for the strategic planning project that has three major steps:

1. definition of the target environment, which involved documenting a vision for the organization;
2. conducting a gap analysis between the current environment and the target environment; and
3. drafting an implementation plan that includes the strategic changes required to transform the organization.

This report, CIPS in the 21st Century, represents the completion of the first step in the execution of the Strategic Plan that will allow CIPS to fully realize its mandate as “The professional association providing leadership in information systems and technologies”. This vision was arrived at through extensive stakeholder consultation that has occurred both within and outside of CIPS. This vision has been shaped by the input received from the membership in regional and national planning sessions and in countless teleconference and list server discussions.

Adoption of the new vision will begin with the National Board setting this clear target for the organization. To be successful, the Sections, provincial societies and National councils will need to adopt the vision in spirit if not in formal motion. Implementation of the vision will require the participation and agreement of all parts of the organization. I.S.P. related changes have to be approved by the Provincial Association bodies responsible for the I.S.P. in registered provinces. Moreover, implementation will only be successful if our Sections are fully behind the new vision.

This document describes what we would like to be. It does not answer all the questions as to how we get there. These questions will be answered in subsequent steps after we have agreed on the vision. The Societal Transition Committee will continue on their three phase plan and perform a gap analysis between the current and target environment and make recommendations for, and present a high level plan to implement, the target environment. Some work on the gap analysis and identification of strategic changes has already been done as the vision has emerged. Specific recommendations for some key projects will be presented before completion of the full gap analysis.

The definition of the vision/target environment involved exploring three key issues: a) the definition of the market for CIPS; b) the value equation for the I.S.P.; and c) identifying future activities for the organization. Other issues relating to the target environment, such as defining the new governance model, will be addressed in the gap analysis as we answer the question how we achieve the vision.

The Tested I.S.P. Value Equation

As a professional organization, CIPS awards and administers a professional designation that distinguishes those I.T. practitioners who have demonstrated their competence and have made a commitment to ethical behaviour. Introduced in 1989, the I.S.P. has not been well adopted in the marketplace. Although the measure of a designation’s success is not measured in adoption rates alone, the I.S.P. does not have the level of market adoption to make it a meaningful and viable designation.

The committee examined what changes could be made to add value to the I.S.P. so that the market will respond to adopt it. After some tentative conclusions were developed, a market survey was conducted to test the market appeal of various professional “value elements”. The survey indicated a very strong market support for a non-vendor specific designation and the committee reached the following major conclusions:

- The I.S.P. designation should be awarded based on: commitment to ethical behavior; demonstrated mastery of a body of knowledge; demonstrated mastery of standards of practice; demonstrated ability to apply the body of knowledge in a professional working environment; and committed to ongoing professional self-development which is reviewed by professional peers.
- The Body of Knowledge, which forms the basis for the I.S.P. award criteria should reflect the diversity of knowledge bases that make up the I.T. Profession and provides multiple paths to certification through graduating from accredited programs, direct BOK examination, PLAR and other designation MRA.
- In addition to the formal certification model centered on a revamped I.S.P., CIPS should foster professionalism within the industry by educating all practitioners on professionalism and by requiring all members to conform to a rigorous professional code of ethics and standards of conduct. This approach is designed to draw practitioners with an interest in professionalism into the organization and then provide opportunities for them to learn about formal models and possibly to pursue certification.
- Develop a senior designation for practitioners who have been recognized by their peers as having made a significant contribution to the profession.

The Market

The market size for CIPS membership is estimated at approximately 500,000 IT practitioners of which, according to the Software Human Resource Council (SHRC), over half are at the “professional level”. The envisioned target market for CIPS has been defined in the following table:

A Vision of CIPS Market

Primary target

	Organizational Leaders	Coaches & Idea Leaders	Independent Contributor	Apprentices
IT Professionals / IT Educators (19 OSPM Job Streams)	Senior I.S.P./ I.S.P.	Senior I.S.P./ I.S.P./ Candidate I.S.P.	I.S.P./ Candidate I.S.P.	Member
Senior Managers	Senior I.S.P./ I.S.P.	Senior I.S.P./ I.S.P.	X	X
Paraprofessionals (5 OSPM job Streams)	I.S.P./ Member	I.S.P./ Member	Member	Member
Students	X	X	X	Student Member
IT Marketing	Member	Member	Member	Member
IT HR/Recruiting	Member	Member	Member	Member

No job streams are excluded from the target market, however, the primary target is the IT Professionals in the first row (application developers, computer programmers, IS/Business Analysts and Consultants, and Software Engineers), which make up the core of the IT practitioner marketplace. Certified membership, through the I.S.P. or the new "senior" I.S.P. is the primary product for this targeted group.

This inclusive model accomplishes a number of objectives; it provides for keeping more of our existing members while we continue to evolve to a professional society; it provides for more flexibility at the local or grassroots level of the organization to adjust the focus to meet or match the local mix of IT practitioners; It fulfills the professional responsibility of encouraging ethical behaviour from all practitioners and it highlights the primary focus areas for our products and services.

The compelling value proposition for membership is what membership says about the individual. Membership in CIPS is a clear statement that the practitioner has committed to acting professionally, and will be held accountable by CIPS. For certified members membership additionally offers a reasonable "proof" that certified members are qualified to undertake certain kinds of professional tasks.

Membership would be broadly based and would include I.T. professionals, educators, senior managers, paraprofessionals, students, IT marketing and IT human resource personnel. **Certified Membership** would include I.T. professionals and educators, senior managers and those professionals who are considered organizational leaders.

With an enhanced I.S.P. and good marketing campaign, a modest growth rate of 1% per month would result in membership doubling in 10 years and exceeding 15,000 members¹. A more aggressive growth rate of 2% per month would allow CIPS to double membership in three years and exceed 60,000 members in 10 years. Based on the number of IT workers in Canada, the perceived market need for a professional certification product and a revised I.S.P., such an aggressive growth rate is not entirely unrealistic. This would make us a much stronger and more influential organization; one capable of truly leading the profession.

The Vision for CIPS

The work on the three key vision issues has culminated in a proposed renewed vision for a CIPS that is an organization that is committed to **professionalism**.

In the many meetings and in the many individual conversations, the following themes for change consistently emerged:

- CIPS needs to remain an open society to anyone willing to commit to ethical practice as defined in the CIPS Code of Ethics.
- Professionalism was clearly identified as the *raison d'être* for the organization. CIPS members and non members surveyed believe in a Canadian I.T. profession that is based on integrity and competence and see themselves as being part of it. CIPS will perform other activities, notably in the areas of Advocacy and Networking but these are not as fundamental to our purpose as that of professionalism. "We are a professional society that offers networking opportunities to our members. We are not an organization that exists for the purpose of providing networking opportunities for our members."
- The current I.S.P. needs to change if it is to remain the cornerstone of our professional certification. The I.S.P. needs to be broadened and become more inclusive and this must be

¹ In comparison, the British Computer Society (BCS) has approximately 35,000 members. The population in the U.K. is about twice that of Canada. Thus, as a very crude relative measure, the BCS, which is very well established and recognized organization, has about two and half times the membership of CIPS. Achieving an annual 1% increase in growth, therefore, would be most realistic for CIPS to predict.

done by maintaining or raising the standard. Key to achieving this will be the establishment of a Canadian Body of Knowledge. In addition to providing a sound basis for the profession, the CBOK will enable the development of alternative paths to certification, such as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) and Internal Society Examination.

- The Code of Ethics needs to be strengthened and more actively enforced. That strengthening process would involve: a) maintenance and evolution of the Code of Ethics; b) pro-active enforcement of the Code by investigating potential violations of the Code and taking disciplinary action if warranted; and c) educating members and the public on ethics issues.
- Development of Standards of Practice² for IT that together with the code of ethics will set standard of professional conduct against which substandard performance can be identified and in the case of CIPS members, disciplined.

The long-term aim of the Society should be to **establish and create recognition for the I.T. profession in Canada**. This aim would establish CIPS as providing a true leadership role in the I.T. community. A second aim of the society should be to **support all those in the field who are committed to acting professionally**.

To achieve these aims, CIPS should seek to become ...

- Canada's leader in the development and implementation of IT professional standards, demanding high standards and ethical behaviour from all practitioners.
- Canada's trusted society for everyone connected with the IT field by providing innovative and valued products and services to people working in the sector.
- Canada's advocate for the IT profession - enhancing the image and well being of our members, identifying and sharing best practices, and working with all interested parties to advance the profession.

The **core purposes** of the Society should be to:

- To create and administer the infrastructure of a professional society³ for Information Technology practitioners in Canada.
- To encourage professional behavior of all IT practitioners in Canada by teaching the values of professionalism and encouraging the pursuit of certification.
- To protect the public interest by enforcing adherence to professional standards for certified practitioners and conformance to the code of ethics and standards of conduct for all members.
- To advocate on behalf of CIPS members and other IT practitioners by identifying issues of importance to our members, developing positions on these issues that are in the interest of our

² The purpose of a Standards of Practice is to establish and define a set of standards of practice which will guide and direct all members of CIPS as they pursue their profession. It is incumbent upon all members to provide their services in a manner which instills a strong sense of trust and confidence between themselves and their employers, clients, peers and all members of the general public. Professional competence, character, integrity, fairness, commitment, and trustfulness provide the foundation for the establishing and maintaining of all professional relationships. Therefore all members should dedicate themselves to a course of conduct which manifests respects, confidence and trust on the part of the general public.

³ The infrastructure of a professional society includes the following elements: management of a certification process, development and maintenance of a CBOK and Standards of Practice, development, maintenance and enforcement of a Code of Ethics, accreditation of programs, and a professional development requirement.

members and by raising these issues to government and other bodies so as to elicit outcomes favourable to our members and the Canadian IT profession.

- To lead the development and implementation of I.T. professional standards and to stimulate high standards and ethical behaviour in the practice of I.T in Canada.
- To provide innovative and valued products and services for our members.
- To represent the Canadian IT profession internationally.

Achieving the Vision

As mentioned previously, subsequent phases in this strategic planning process will identify the specific steps that need to be taken to achieve the vision. At this point a number of critical success factors are evident and should be acknowledged:

The strategic change process must continue and every effort should be made to move this forward as quickly as possible. The primary constraints on the rate of progress will be lack of funding and volunteer time. The risk in not moving forward quickly is that we will run out of time.

CIPS must acquire funding for the proposed strategic initiatives such as the Canadian Body of Knowledge and Standards of Practice. These projects are not insignificant in terms of scope and cost. We will need to partially fund these projects from new sources external to the organization. CIPS must concentrate on a relatively few coordinated priorities so that neither its energy will be dissipated nor the sense of momentum lost.

We must constantly remember that our members are the key stakeholders and that other stakeholder groups including government, educators, business and the general public are also important. In all that we do, we must deliver a compelling value to our members and to the other stakeholders. And we must communicate to our members that we are delivering this value.

Lastly, we must recognize that we will not be successful without the support of our membership for the vision. CIPS is a heterogeneous organization with many different parts (Sections, Provincial Bodies, National Board, Office and Councils) and the support of our members is required at all levels of the organization. It is incumbent on CIPS' leaders to communicate the merits of the vision and to participate and support its implementation, once it has been adopted as our goal.