



## CHRISTINE RICHARD, GPC.D

Director, Governance & Risk  
GFD of Canada

### *Fun fact:*

*I began my professional career as a licensed funeral director in the bereavement profession.*

*My current employer, GFD of Canada, also serves the bereavement profession, and I feel I'm better able to serve my organization thanks to my firsthand experience as a funeral director.*

### **Why have you joined GPC?**

I joined GPC when my responsibilities transitioned to corporate governance of my organization. I didn't have a background in governance and I knew I needed further education to strengthen my skills, so I enrolled in the GPC.D program.

### **Why do you think GPC is an important organization for any governance professional to belong to in Canada?**

GPC is the leading organization for all things governance across Canada. GPC's resources and education are applicable, and can provide value, to anyone involved in governance matters regardless of job position or industry.

When I joined GPC, I assumed I would earn my designation and maintain my membership to stay in tune with the profession, but being a part of GPC is so much more than that. Being a member has afforded me access to industry-leading education and ongoing professional development. I have been able to build networks through exclusive events and have access to the latest resources pertaining to governance. Every interaction with GPC, whether it be a webinar, networking event, or accessing the online assistance forums, allows me to bring practical solutions to my senior leadership team and the board of directors.

### **How did you get into governance and your current role?**

Like many in the profession, I fell into the role out of necessity. Our organization has grown immensely over the last few years and with growth and sophistication comes a greater need to ensure a sound governance framework is in place. My role was created to manage and coordinate all aspects of the Board's operations including strategy, risk, policies and procedures and ensuring compliance within the regulatory framework of my organization and its subsidiaries.

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### What does governance mean to you?

Governance means ensuring that the appropriate decision-making processes and controls are in place so that the interests of all stakeholders (Members, Shareholders, Employees, Regulatory Authorities, etc.) are satisfied. Good governance provides the infrastructure to facilitate equality decision-making to create long-term value for organizations.

### What do you believe is a key topic right now in the governance industry?

Board and Executive level diversity have been under increasing scrutiny as being crucial in creating a sustainable and successful company. Gender balance in the boardroom has been discussed, and for some, implemented. Stakeholders are now looking to other types of representation including ethnic diversity, age, members of visible minorities, socio-economic background, and LGBTQIA+. Professionals are starting to explore what really makes a board diverse, and will soon realize the importance of incorporating diversity into their organization.

### Where do you see, or would like to see the role of governance in the next few years?

The role of the governance professional is critical to any organization, and yet it tends to fall as a secondary responsibility to those already dedicated to another part of the business. Governance is complex and not something that comes as firsthand knowledge to many, so I hope to see this role more formalized in organizations. It's also rare to find someone who had career aspirations to be a governance professional as the role is not widely known. Further education and continued networking across governance associations will help to formalize this career path and better prepare employees and employers for governance oversight.

### What is the most fulfilling part about your role in governance? What do you love most about your job?

I love being an integral part of the senior leadership team and to support the board of directors in their oversight responsibilities. The success of the organization begins with the board of directors and its an incredible feeling to be able to have an influence on that.

### What is the best career advice you can provide?

A wise mentor once told me "don't take yourself too seriously". There is a time and place for business, but no one on their death bed ever wished they had worked more. Having boundaries and a good work-life balance will get you further in life personally and professionally.