

## RETAIL: A FUTURE FOR OUTPLACEMENT?

In a fair amount of European countries, outplacement is only accessible to employees sponsored and financed by corporate companies as a part of their severance package. And a large majority of the unemployed have little or no assistance during their (often long) job search.

In the same time, the awareness of the benefits of outplacement among the unemployed has never been stronger. Everywhere in the world, outplacement firms get more and more incoming calls from employees made redundant looking for self-financed outplacement programs.

In countries such as France outplacement firms simply turn down these individual requests, referring to the charter of Syntec, the professional association of Outplacement firms setting the frame of outplacement programs exclusively between outplacement firms and corporate companies.

But the trend is there. Less than 3% of the 300.000 unemployed executives benefit from an individual outplacement program in France and the public service has no sufficient resources to offer a satisfactory alternative.

In UK, US and Germany to name the most significant markets, outplacement firms have started long ago to address specific programs to self-financed individuals. In most cases, budgets are significantly lower and therefore the program content is much lighter.

This lighter version of outplacement focuses on online services rather than on face-to-face meetings and there is obviously less customization. Still, some of the major players of this industry have decided to bring a very professional response to this ineluctable evolution in the market with the highest quality standards.

A way not to let a certain type of free-lancers and self-proclaimed coaches improvise unprofessional programs to assist the unemployed, even with the best of intentions. But, particularly in the US, there are specific retail outplacement firms servicing only individuals.

These firms are under a considerable financial pressure to deliver an equivalent service, because margins are lower, cost of acquiring a new client is higher and they often have to compromise on quality or promises.

The major players, in each local chapter or within organizations such as ACF must anticipate this inevitable evolution and come up with a solution that will keep the standards of the profession as high as possible.

E-learning, MOOCs, online paying databases, Skype meetings could be a suitable response for most candidates. Obviously, when it comes to more radical change needs, nothing will replace a customized program with one-to-one meetings, but it will always be better to have access to an assistance program than to organize a job search of your own.

Still, the role of outplacement firms worldwide is to convince more and more corporate firms to include outplacement programs in their severance packages, not only as their social responsibility, but as their contribution to generate a better circulation in job changes.

If employees are aware and conscious that their job search will take significantly less time (from 4 to 5 months less, i.e 9-10 months instead of 14 months in France) when they benefit from an outplacement program, they will be less reluctant to make a move.

The future of outplacement is not necessarily retail, but ignoring this growing need and demand would be suicidal.

Professionals should get together and organize a response that could take into consideration all the aspects, on legal and tax basis, on content, on potential state subventions...

It could very well be one of the social responsibilities of outplacement firms to give access to job search programs to more and more unemployed and imagine formats economically viable.

Quite a challenge, don't you think?

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'RETAIL: A FUTURE  
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The April ACF Europe Newsletter will feature an article by Herbert Mühlenhoff (CEO at Mühlenhoff + Partner, and Board Member of ACF Europe)

## Confirmed keynote speakers at ACF Europe Annual Conference Amsterdam 21 and 22 May 2015

The ACF Europe Conference in Amsterdam features the following exciting keynote speakers:

### BOBBY MUNSTER

Relationship Manager  
LinkedIn - Talent Solutions

### PAUL HUISKENS

HR Director O&P and R&D  
LyondellBasell Industries

### CLEMENS VAN SLINGERLAND

HR Director  
Hunter Douglas Europe

Please note:

**Hotel accommodation (21 May)  
at the Double Tree by Hilton Amsterdam  
can only be guaranteed if you register at  
[acf europe@gmail.com](mailto:acf europe@gmail.com)  
before March 20**

