

## ACF EUROPE ANNUAL CONFERENCE PARIS 15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> MAY 2014

Members gathered in Paris at dinner to mark the start of the 2014 conference in Paris. There were representatives from 10 companies and 6 countries attending and the enthusiasm in building new connections and re-igniting old friendships was palpable.

Friday morning saw the conference kick off at the offices of Syntec who are the French chapter and were warm hosts. The first workshop was led by Colin Minto who is global head of resourcing and HR systems for global giant G4S. Colin engaged the members in debate and idea building on the topic of new trends in job search techniques. Colin shared his extensive knowledge of the world of jobs and associated technology so that we sensed we were only scratching the surface of his total expertise in this area and we all came away a lot wiser and with ideas to incorporate in our own businesses.



The second topic of the day was a take-up of outplacement services. debated and worked on by None-the-less there was a very conference attendees we walked an old one reworked which would with our services than previously



workshop on tips for increasing the This is a thorny subject much organisations across the industry. productive debate and again as away with at least one new idea or enable us to reach more clients experienced.



After an enjoyable lunch and with time to network with fellow members we were back in to the third topic of the day, the future of career development. We were privileged to welcome Jan Brecke from GE who is head of learning and development. Jan held a captive audience as he shared the world of career development GE style and his own extensive expertise in this area. There was a large amount of audience participation, a key sign that the session is landing well. Jan generously shared copies of his slides with the attendees.

The final session of the day was a discussion on the future development of the ACF and ideas were well received by the board and will be discussed at our next meeting when we will start to plan next year's conference.

Thank you to all who attended this year and we are very much looking forward to meeting all our members at our conference next year.

In the meantime enjoy this month's newsletter and please do send us your articles for inclusion in future newsletters.

Bev White  
President ACF Europe



# AGE IS BUT A NUMBER... ...IT IS TODAY!

In the UK during April Manchester United football club sacked its new manager after only ten months. Nothing particularly sensational about that other than it started a very interesting debate about whether young aspiring managers would be given time to succeed in role and by conclusion it was likely that no manager would ever stay in post for 5 years let alone the 25 years that the previous incumbent stayed in post. The feeling that the world had changed forever mirrors what we have been seeing emerge over the last few years in the broader employment market. To complete the picture and set the point the candidates lined up to replace the departing manager were all mid 50's and above, all to be bought in for a short period.

This approach to tactical and specific recruitment has become a real opportunity for the more experienced sector of the labour market. The over 50's today are seeing a resurgence in career opportunities which are emerging due to the combined need for immediate results combined with a tactical need that suggests the need is both short term and without onward progression. Age bias has always been seen as a problem in the labour market initially in the 1980's with the over 40's feeling marginalised and then the over 50's and latterly the over 55's. But today there is little evidence that this is the case. Recently one of our clients was approached by a recruiter to consider a post as Superintendent for the Metropolitan Police, the frontline services notorious for restrictive age guidelines. The client is 54 and this would be a first role of its type, the rationale is that the Police service are themselves looking to introduce such tactical short term recruitment, The major surprise in this case is that the training period is 18 months.

The growth in reduced hours contracts also offers the older employee more options than ever before as does the growth in portfolio working, all of which underpin the flexibility that is today demanded within the current economy.

But ageism in the workplace has not disappeared altogether. The elongation of retirement ages and the reduction in occupational pensions has created a supply in the new generation Z which was unexpected only a few years ago and many organisations have been slow to change recruitment practices to harness this new and emerging talent pool, indeed the growth of the talent director role is to focus on a gene pool that still today is likely to focus on those at the early stages of their careers.

There are challenges for today's generation Z, both in practical terms and also in approach. Practically technology in the workplace is moving at a rate faster than ever before and the generation that was not schooled in technology but that has been adapting to stay ahead of these advancements now needs to embrace technological advances rather than cope. The qualification trail is also an interesting conundrum as we have an ever qualified younger employment gene pool setting the educational framework for many job descriptions as the more mature employees seek to balance a wealth of experience with an often underpowered academic track record. Interestingly today the CPD of many senior employees looks remarkably thin over the last five years creating a lack of confidence as applications are prepared.

There is no doubt that the next ten years presents an unparalleled opportunity for those who are working between the ages of 50 and 70. In the UK there has been speculation regarding the offer of new vocational apprenticeships to the over 50's as skill gaps emerge and existing strong skill sets can be retrained to meet ever changing needs. There are challenges. Employers will need to embrace fully this sector and amend reward packages to reflect the differing needs of a group who are now working for more tactical financial reasons. Recruitment processes need to support the balance of qualification and experience which is where the competency based interview framework sets a great benchmark. Induction and on-boarding processes together with onward appraisal needs to ensure that the initial tactical reasons for engagement are reflected in the onward treatment and measurement of performance of such appointments.

So in many ways the recent economic downturn of the five or so years has had an unexpected and perhaps initially hidden benefit in that not only has the boundaries for the older workforce moved but a very clear and compelling place in the employment market has emerged. Come on Football keep up with the trends!!!!

**Steve Thompson-Martyn**  
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**Steve  
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**Author:  
'AGE IS BUT A NUMBER.....  
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The June ACF Europe Newsletter will feature an article by Herbert Mühlenhoff (Managing Partner at Mühlenhoff + Partner in Germany and Board Member of ACF Europe)

