

## EMBEDDING A CAREER CULTURE

I have just returned from a whistle stop trip to New York where I supported a client in a talent review exercise for their most senior hires. An excellent, open session with tremendous focus and commitment. My only reservation was that we had done exactly the same thing 15 months earlier, almost identically and nothing had changed or carried on within the business in the year that had passed.

Since my return I have contacted a number of clients for whom we have carried out similar programmes to check in on real and developing progress and it has led me to pose myself a fundamental question. Why, despite all of the energy, enthusiasm and goodwill is it so difficult to embed a career centric culture that develops beyond a one year programme to a true organisational way of life.

There is no doubt from the reviews that I carried out that for HR this is a really important area for them as they seek to provide context for talent throughout the business and also create an exciting employer brand for new hires. So where does the blockage lie?

Senior line managers, particularly at Exco or Board level seem the most reluctant to commit to establishing ongoing open career discussions. From the discussions I have had it seems that their take on Career management programmes is that it is an event rather than a healthy ongoing process which keeps the talent pool fresh but also provides much needed context to those driving their careers in often flat and complex business models.

As professionals within the career space we will have many positive stories of where Career Management has been established as a positive part of the calendar but I suspect for all of us we have really only scratched the surface. To really engage and derive sustainable traction we need to find a way to change the focus and drivers of the functional senior leaders both directly and in support of our HR colleagues.

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The December ACF Europe Newsletter will  
feature an article by  
Marc Saunder  
(CEO at Nexmove, France)



# THE THREE ACF EUROPE WORKING GROUPS

During our last annual conference in May we discussed the benefits and obligations a membership of ACF Europe entails. Three working groups were set up to focus on:

- A. Public and Political Relations**    **B. Industry Development**    **C. Quality Assurance**

The groups had various meetings since. Their progress reports so far:

## A. PUBLIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONS

So far, this group focused on clarifying the ACF Value Add. The final Value Add document will be presented to the ACF Europe Board early 2016.

This group is also promoting the use of Twitter among ACF Europe members and raise the ACF profile through this route.

## B. INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

The Industry Development Group is recommending:

1. Market research via country chapters, direct research and studies
2. Market analysis and observing trends in cooperation with universities and political institutions
3. Helping emerging markets through chapter building and by providing a networking platform enable outplacement providers to cooperate on an international basis while they are not a member of a strategic alliance (or find entries to a strategic alliance), mentoring through an established member
4. The annual conference as well as the webinars should be designed as events of relevance and address long-term issues, strategic issues, creative issues; speakers should represent a wide range of expertise and come from, for example, customers, politicians, universities
5. Maintaining contact with other relevant associations (e.g. coaching associations, , association of temporary employment companies, ACP International (The Association of Career Professionals International)).

## C. QUALITY ASSURANCE

This group discussed our main characteristic: the quality of our service. In accordance with the ACF criteria the key components of quality are:

1. Dedicated structure to deliver the services promised to clients; a company organized as a corporation or a division of corporation with their own structures and offices.
2. Qualified consultants: coaches with relevant academic certification and business experience and with understanding experience of organizational dynamics.
3. 30-90 days structured consultant training for new consultants: the purpose of the program is to work in assistance with senior coach to learn the outplacement's process, the method and the instruments to become a consultant who guarantee a good quality service.
4. Agreed process of application: establish methods and procedures
5. Structured programs with a handbook
6. Service development process based on client feed-back; gather client feed-back and use it to revise/improve the product/service
7. Annual questionnaire on such matters as organization client services, general method of operation and standards of professional practice
8. Check the difference between the outplacement service's level and the customer satisfaction

The group is currently comparing quality definitions of other Associations to identify additional criteria that could be incorporated in ACF Europe.

