

## ICCI Global Ambassadors Teleconference Minutes

Wednesday, November 9, 2011

ICCI Global Ambassador Task Force: Kathy Blanton, CMF, US; John Fitzgerald, CMF, Ireland; Jutta König, CMF, The Netherlands

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In Attendance: Kathy Blanton (US), Jutta König (Netherlands), John Fitzgerald (Ireland), Hans Fiedler (Austria), Maribeth Renne (US), Ed Witherell (US), Spencer Liles (US), Jean Walker (US), Ismael Ajzenszlos (Argentina), John Taylor (Mexico)

**Mission:** To bring together leaders in the career management services field, business, government, academia, associations and related professions to share insights and discuss marketplace issues in their respective areas of the world.

**Purpose:** To enhance global recognition of the value of professional certification by providers of career management services, to ensure their expertise and experience meet appropriate standards as evaluated and verified by recognized leaders of the profession.

Kathy Blanton welcomed the ambassadors. ICC International Chair Ed Witherell addressed the group and thanked Jean Walker for her past and ongoing leadership in ICCI and Global Ambassadors. He congratulated and thanked the Ambassadors for being a huge resource to the ICC International Board.

John Fitzgerald commented on how delighted he was to be named to the ICCI Global Ambassador Task Force and congratulated ICCI for stressing a global perspective. Jutta Koenig agreed and said she was looking forward to working with the Ambassadors to expand ICC International.

Kathy Blanton urged everyone to visit [www.careercertification.org](http://www.careercertification.org), the newly revised ICC International website. She also stressed that the over-arching purpose of our calls is to gather information and data from around the world for the Career Management profession.

The full discussion then began with the following underlined topics:

**Global Ambassadors reported on the current economic landscape in each ambassador's country/region, the current unemployment rate and how the unemployment rate has it changed in the past 6 months:**

Kathy in the Southeast US – Unemployment rate in Tennessee is around 10% and has not changed much in the last 6 months. In some pockets, companies are beginning to hire and

some HR professionals are seeing an extreme uptick in posted jobs. This has led to a hopeful feeling in this part of the country. She remarked that Youngstown University did a study in the US and reported the percentage of unemployment at 30% nationwide. Kathy wondered if this is ringing true for others in the US.

Maribeth in the Northeast and Spencer Liles in the Midwest US – Both reported seeing some improvement with 9-10% unemployment rate. In addition, they commented that holiday hiring had begun with employers saying many of those temporary jobs may turn into permanent jobs. Both found that employers have extremely high expectations when making new hires and are saying that they cannot find well-qualified people.

Jean in the Northwest US – Jean is seeing a surge in hiring with lots of interviews and multiple offers happening for those in job search. She sees a definite change in the marketplace. People are anticipating working into their 60's and 70's, companies are adverse to risk and applicants are using their age to their advantage, positioning that the risk isn't there for the older applicant. They are a proven commodity.

Ishmael in Argentina – updated the group by delivering a paper. Economic and Government Landscape

Hans in Austria – Historically, the numbers are good now and businesses are doing very well. 55-64 are still working. Retirement age is 57 for women and 58 for men. Pensions are an issue.

John Taylor in Mexico – Unemployment is not recorded. Antidotal information is relied upon and the assumption is that there are major tourism issues due to a growing international reputation.

Jutta in The Netherlands – Jutta sees 4.5 and 5 percent unemployment. Industry is now doing well. 600,000 people are working as entrepreneurs and many are not registered officially. She sees lots of worrying about the Euro economical situation and concern about how pensions will be paid if money is loaned to Greece. The official pension age is 65 but the government is considering pulling it up to 67.

John Fitzgerald in Ireland – Pension age is moving up to 68 in the next couple of years. He urged that we can use our career management effectively to make sure our clients are in work they enjoy. The Irish are saving up to 80% of their salaries; this figure is up from a previous 3% due to the fear factor of losing jobs. This is impacting the retail sector. The saving grace has been that exports are growing. Social media businesses are now centered in Ireland. Unemployed is now 14.4%, a 10% jump from previous numbers.

### **Industry Sectors Growing Country By Country:**

- Netherlands - Agricultural industry, auto, aviation sub-suppliers, sustainable and water management.
- Mexico – The traditional industry, tourism, has taken a hit; exports have suffered somewhat. Communication and building is being encouraged and is growing. Infrastructure is growing.
- Austria – Agriculture, scientific and technical services and other types of services. Energy efficiency is fueling this growth.

- US – NY is a tough market for financial services, especially in the over 50's group. High end retail is doing well, some manufacturing - especially technical manufacturing - and business to business services.
- Midwest US – Health care, auto, high tech
- Northwest US – Major growth is high tech and cloud computing. Large equipment hauling is also growing.
- Ireland – Gaming companies, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, and alternative farming.

### **Government /other initiatives to get people back to work and the biggest challenge for the unemployed.**

- Ireland - Government pays interns so people can gain experience. The biggest challenge is the social welfare system offering support and people getting lost in the system without getting new skills.
- Mexico – Government grants for retraining. Many younger people however are not studying and are not employed and are recruited into organized crime. The biggest challenge for the unemployed is finding out about opportunities.
- US – Northeast -The number of recent grads are being frozen out of the job market. Many are accepting internships where they work for free so that they can gain experience. Even though unemployment is 9%, this only reflects the number of people who are still actively looking. If you add in the people who have given up the job search, the number goes up quite a bit. Those who have access to outplacement have used up professional help before they are able to find jobs.
- US – Northwest - Long searches and long interview processes. The government is not doing anything to particularly help. Government sponsored unemployment services are far behind and are giving inaccurate advice.
- We are in an election year and this is impacting the job market. The US President has introduced a program and the Occupy movement is impacting citizens. The challenge is that there continues to be a lack of trust in organizations and everyone is looking to move. There is a lot of confusion. Boomers are not retiring as they have planned but are being laid off and are not prepared for retirement.
- US Midwest – employers are being very selective.
- Argentina –
- Austria – Government provides short-term work before companies take over. Companies are very choosy and very picky oftentimes with up to eight interviews before an applicant is selected.
- Netherlands – reduce taxes when people buy houses, providing a stimulus for the building sector. Reduced taxes on energy reducing cars. Government going through transformative process from bureaucratic to more production-oriented landscape.

### **Suggestions for us as career professionals as we look to stay ahead of the curve and prepare for the future:**

Stay abreast of what the government is doing. Help people to do long term career planning in this new environment. We need to be much more prepared to help the emotional toll this is taking on people.

Coaching and training to bring people up to higher levels within organizations.

Encourage people to explore courses and schooling to stay up to par with how things are changing. It is becoming increasingly more complicated to plan a career. Instead people are rising to occasions as opportunities arise.

Without adequate training and experience, people are hanging out their own shingles and claiming to be career management professionals. There is a huge exodus of people from HR setting up their own shops and claiming to be Career Management Professionals. This is a huge risk for our reputations and our industry.

Companies are not interested in taking any risks and everyone is incredibly over worked. Stress on working people has increased incredibly.

Stay ahead of the curve.

Panic and fear of people who are in career transition and panic and fear within organizations. Sheep walking- heads down, working hard, not paying attention to managing their careers.

**NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2012 AT 10:00 EST**

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*Additional in-depth reports submitted by Ambassadors:*

### **John Fitzgerald – Ireland**

***What is the current economic landscape in your country/region? What is the current unemployment rate and how has it changed in the past 6 months?***

Our domestic economy especially retail has taken a huge hit in this recession with people increasing their personal savings from monthly pay checks from 3% in the boom to 18% savings now. This has led to many of the stores associated with the building boom now closing or in many cases reducing to 3 days per week working.

Exports has held up and grown steadily and this is the saving grace for Ireland right now. American multinationals continue to show faith in Ireland. Twitter have now arrived and Google announced a data centre for Ireland along with Face book, Amazon and many gaming companies this is a huge growth area and there is actually a shortage of IT skills, language skills and experienced people in bio pharmacy.

We have close to 250,000 people unemployed almost 14.4% which has remained pretty constant in the past 6 months of the working population but up from 4.3% in the boom times.

Nearly half of multinationals based in Ireland expect to grow employment numbers in the next 12 months, with 13pc expecting to cut their workforces, according to a survey out today.

The *Irish Management Institute/National Irish Bank Survey of Multinational Corporations in Ireland 2011* shows a major improvement on last year's survey, when around half of those questioned planned to cut jobs.

The survey highlights that 61pc of the firms had won new mandates within their global parent company over the past 12 months, and that six out of every 10 companies surveyed predicted their turnover would increase in 2012.

"This growth is feeding strongly into Ireland's export-led economic recovery, with multinationals here now accounting for over three-quarters of exports," he said.

"It's also encouraging to note that the strategic importance of Irish operations to their parent companies is very high in 62pc of multinationals, which is contributing greater value to the Irish economy."

***What Government /other initiatives have been initiated to get people back to work? What initiatives are planned? What has worked in your region?***

JobBridge is a new National Internship Scheme that will provide work experience placements for interns for a 6 or 9 month period.

The aim of the National Internship Scheme is to assist in breaking the cycle where jobseekers are unable to get a job without experience, either as new entrants to the labour market after education or training or as unemployed workers wishing to learn new skills. The scheme will also give people a real opportunity to gain valuable experience to bridge the gap between study and the beginning of their working lives.

The scheme will provide for up to 5,000 work experience placements in the private, public and voluntary sectors. This will be a time-limited scheme. Interns will receive an allowance of €50 per week on top of their existing social welfare entitlement. This will be payable for the period of the internship

***What three industry sectors are growing in your region?***

*IT Services*

*Gaming*

*Medical Devices*

*Pharma*

*Alternative Farming*

***What is the biggest challenge for the unemployed in your region?***

*The social welfare system does not encourage people to find a job as they lost too many benefits coming off the live register. It may seem harsh but there needs to be a much tougher approach to those abusing*

*the system. Traditional jobs in manufacturing , banking and retail are all being downsized so many feel they need to up skill but public sector career guidance is very poor.*

*The mismatch of the skills of those newly unemployed and the skills required in the future*

***How is the career management industry organized in your country; who are the stakeholders? How is professional excellence determined/registered?***

*Career Counsellors in Secondary schools use NFQ system from level 3-10*

*Global associations such ICF,AC, and EMMC most recognised as a symbol of best standards but no regulation*

***What two business opportunities can you see to grow the career management profession in your marketplace?***

*A huge amount of people who need our skills and experience so developing niche programmes for the public service who need to make a lot of people redundant*

*Marrying other skills like leadership, finance, and stress management to our service to offer a more holistic service*

***What are the “watch outs” for us as career professionals as we look to stay ahead of the curve and prepare for the future?***

*To become aligned to new industries like IT so that we stay current for the new generation and that we can blend technology with coaching for a generation that have a high boredom threshold, so designing low in time solutions but high in impact.*

***What topics would you like to discuss at our next meeting? How can your involvement in the Global Ambassadors Forum better support your objectives?***

*How can we publish our findings in a newsletter/paper and get everyone on the call to type their answers and put a document together that could prove a fascinating global perspective in the careers industry.*

**Our aim is to have a core number of questions on each call so that we compile your answers**

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## **Ismael Ajzenszlos - Argentina**

- 1. What is the current economic landscape in Argentina What is the current unemployment rate and last 6 months change**
  - It must be said that Argentina recently underwent election polls, on which the government received a 55% approval, thus emerging strongly reinforced, and decided to “deepen the model” which can be perceived on the following points.
  - Economy keeps growing slowly, mainly due to almost complete prohibition to import most of machinery, devices and consumer goods, which in turn began to be produced

locally, at substantially higher prices than those international.

- Severe government restrictions to change local money for foreign currencies. (AFIP, Argentine tax collecting institution investigates anyone who try to change local money
- No reliable statistics from the government intervened INDEC (National Statistics and Census Institute), private consultancy firms who produce trustable figures, are fined and sanctioned by the government. Official unemployment rate is 7,3 % and underemployment 5,8% (+ - about 13%)

**2. What government initiatives to get people back to work**

- No official plans. Instead government opted for subsidizing plans, like a classic unemployment subsidy, and several “Social plans”, like: “Home heads”, “Universal allocation by son” and others alike.

**3. Three industry sectors growing in Argentina**

- Farm products and foods in general, Also as mentioned in 1., former and no longer imported electronic devices as phones, TV’s, home computers, automotive and spare parts (some trouble with some countries due to imports severe restrictions)

**4. What is the biggest challenge for the unemployed in Argentina**

- To understand that these “social plans” mentioned in 2, may be an appetite calmative but is not, and will not be a solution on the middle and long term.

**5. How is the Career Mgmt. industry organized in Argentina, who are the stakeholders?**

- Three international companies local representatives: Right assoc., LHH, DBM
- Three local independent consultancy firms like ours.
- Two international accountant firms’ representatives, Price and Deloitte offer also some kind of limited Outplacement programs.
- Some six hiring consultancy firms offer also a kind of limited Outplacement.

**6. How is professional excellence determined/registered?**

- Unfortunately there are not official or widely accepted procedures. The most conscious companies adopted or their headquarters policies or – as in our case– the ethics codes and procedures of institutions to whom there are members. In our case ACPI and AC (Association for Coaching) UK

**7. What two business opportunities can I see to grow Career Mgmt. profession?**

- Besides a labor market shrinking possible in middle term, thus increasing the demand for Outplacement and other Career Mgmt. services, I can’t see further opportunities

**8. What are the “watch outs” for us career professionals, as we look to stay ahead of the curve and prepare for future?**

- To be connected with local and global circumstances which may affect the economy and activities of her/his own country
- To keep an eye on new psychological and/or behavioral advances. which may in turn help to optimize our Career Mgmt. services

**9. What topic would I like to discuss at next meeting?**

- I have not special topics to suggest

**10. How can my involvement in The Global Amabass. Forum better support my objectives?**

- As in these Global Ambass. Teleconferences, it gives us a valuable opportunity to share experiences and widen our reach, thus optimizing our understanding on issues and necessities usually beyond our scope.