

## ICCI Global Council May 2017 – Report from China by Dr Brian Schwartz

### 1. What is happening in your country in the economy, politically and labour market

China is once again in the throes of a generally vibrant economic growth period with GDP expected to be at least 6.5. With the faltering and chaotic USA government basically serving the interests of the billionaire class and working to deregulate corporations, China has come to the fore as the greatest agent for environmental protection and has taken the leadership in that arena. In addition, its creation of an Asian development bank is challenging the USA in that arena as well. There are over 100 cities with a minimal population of 1 million and vast resources are being committed to the urbanization of the country which is seeking 70% by 2020 with hundreds of millions being brought in from the countryside to cities old and new. Guizhou, the poorest province in China in its Southwest, has been chosen as the center of the new Chinese big data industry and Guiyang, its capital has been selected as the new site of a massive new hitech district to rival my city's (Suzhou) Suzhou Industrial Park and Suzhou New Science District, the current models for the new urban design and planning effort of the last 25 years. Politically, President Xi continues to solidify his position as the most powerful leader since Mao. His anti-corruption campaign has made a huge but negative impact on the luxury goods industry as there is much less gift giving and bribing and several very high level officials have been arrested and tried. While human rights have suffered serious setbacks with the arrests of human rights activists and their lawyers, there is still a sense that personal freedom is generally unfettered as long as one does not agitate against the government. The security budget exceeds the military budget so control and censorship are still major features of political life. Nevertheless, there are tens of thousands of demonstrations against corrupt officials, environmental hazards, land theft by developers and their allies in government. Pressure continues on young people to marry with the middle class ante being an apartment and a car, often out of the reach of hundreds of millions of young men. There is generally equality of opportunity between men and women and far less of the kind of sexual harassment found in the USA. Violence is relatively rare and women can be out late and alone at night without fear of attack. Jobs mismatch is a wide problem and the employee engagement score of 6% engaged employment is a sad commentary that goes along with China's position of #79 in the World Happiness Index.

### 2. What is happening in the profession of career coaching?

I work here to differentiate between career and life design counseling and career coaching. Both professions continue to be nascent with the training programs drawing interest but thus far failing to meet the increasing need for a deeper and broader approach to our profession coupled with a deeper approach to talent development and management in organizations which is generally lacking in most Chinese companies but increasingly alive and well in multinationals. Beisen, the largest career assessment company, dropped the NCDA GCDF training program after failing to gain sufficient traction with that American-based program. They have retained a Taiwanese firm but their results to date are unknown. Two competitors, Xiangyang and New Elite have also experienced similar dissatisfaction with the depth of their training programs which do not prepare professionals for independent practice or entrepreneurship coaching or talent development consulting within organizations. Both Suzhou marketing organizations for the latter two programs have decided to cut ties and are now working with our Accredited Career and Talent Development Professionals programs and preparing to launch in Shanghai with a program initially for bilingual Chinese as delivery

will be in English in late July.

3. What is going on in professional career coaching organizations?

The Chinese Career Development Associate is moribund. I hope to revive it at the APCDA conference later this month.

4. What strategies are career coaches using to compete in today's market place

Most strategies used are conventional and focus on the traditional resume and use of social media. The more innovative strategies first widely introduced by the recently deceased Richard Bolles in 1972 are still rarely used and with few trained Chinese proponents. The field is in its infancy here with no coherent professional organization.

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