

Press release – January 2018

ACF statistics 2017 – ACF (Swiss Association of Personal & Organizational Change Firms), the industry association for outplacement services, has once again published its current statistics for 2017. Over the past year, job seekers under ACF's care found new employment after an average of just 8.1 months, with unemployed people aged over 50 finding jobs after nine months. Demand for outplacement programs is increasing, with reintegration programs evening out at an average duration of three to six months.

Industry association for outplacement services ACF has been collecting key reintegration data from the Swiss job seekers under its care since it was founded in 2003. The results for 2017 have proven positive and show that support is helpful when it comes to finding employment. Overall demand for individual coaching after loss of employment has increased in recent years. On average, job seekers complete outplacement programs lasting between three and six months. This is shorter than in previous years.

A new job after just 8.1 months – only fractionally longer for over 50s

Last year, job seekers were able to find new employment after around 8.1 months. The period of time before reintegration into work was slightly higher than the previous year. It also became clear that it only took job seekers aged over 50 less than a month longer to be reintegrated into the world of work, with the average period remaining at nine months.

Personal networking remains the most important success factor in job hunting

Networking is still the most important factor for reintegration into the world of work, increasing once again to over 46%, followed by advertisements and the internet as tools (29%). Social media channels such as LinkedIn and Xing (4%) and unsolicited applications (2%) were of negligible and reducing importance.

Higher education does not prevent unemployment

The percentage of job seekers with university or college degrees was as high as in previous years, at over 48%. Higher education does not seem to provide protection against losing your job.

Sector mix – trends are remaining stable

Around half of those seeking employment came from the industrial sector, followed by the services sector (42.58%). The number of administrative job seekers decreased. Just 38% of job seekers from the industrial sector were able to find employment in the same field, with the majority moving over to the service sector – a trend which has been continuing for several years. More than 9% of all job seekers took the plunge of becoming self-employed, a higher proportion than the previous year.

There was an observable general increase in the confidence shown in outplacement programs, despite increasing pressure on budgets. In this field, it is important that outplacement companies offer programs which are specifically targeted in terms of duration, orientation, and quality.

(Data from ACF Switzerland 2017 statistics)

See attached chart.

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ACF

Switzerland's Association of Personal & Organizational Change Firms (ACF) – founded in 2003 – brings together the country's leading career development and organizational change companies. The companies in this field offer the following services:

- Outplacement programs
- Career assessment and development
- HR consultancy and development

ACF Switzerland Statistics 2017

**Data collected through ACF Switzerland
&
Collated by Kellerhals Anwälte, Basel**

**Prepared by
Pascal-Laurent Favre
03 January 2018**

Introduction

The statistics below summarize the 2013 to 2017 data over 5 years.

As in previous years, the collated revenue data of ACF Members in Switzerland is difficult to interpret in a meaningful way for the following reason. Since one member has resigned in 2016 and therefore did not participate to this survey.

1. Number of candidates involved in an Outplacement Program

Number of Candidates involved in an Outplacement Program

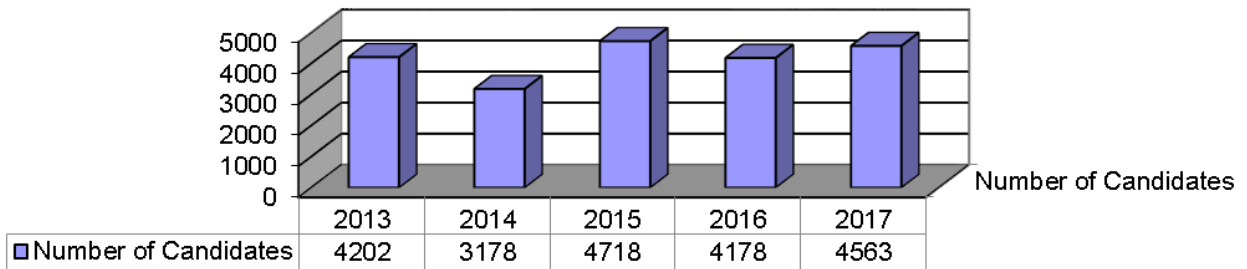


Figure 1

Comments

The number of candidates seems to be stable. However, after the departing of a major player in 2016, the gain of two new members since 2017 has almost compensated the loss.

Assumption. Even if we consider a gap caused by a departing member in 2016, the trend is positive so far.

2. Where is the demand?

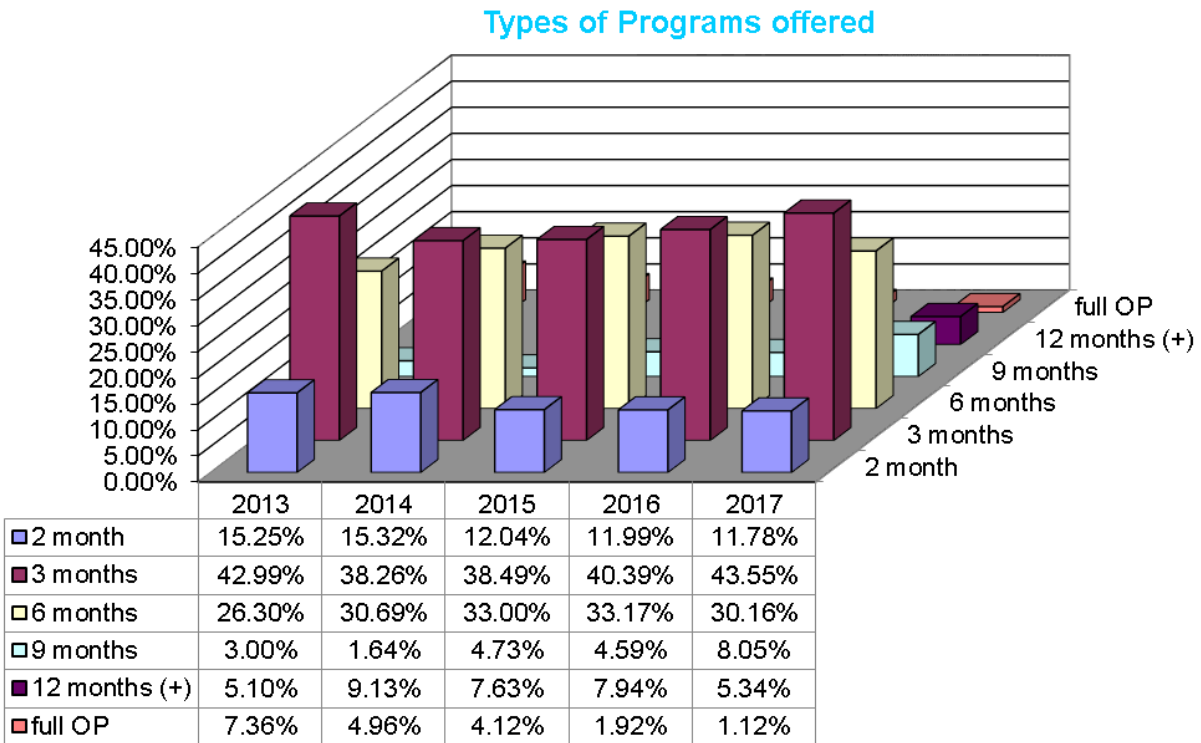


Figure 2

Comments

A more detailed analysis of Figure 2 shows that, the 3-month program duration is gaining over the years. The 6-month programs are second most selling. Together, these two program durations represented 73.71 %. It was only 69.29 % 5 years ago. The increase is steady over the past 5 years.

Assumption: The demand for Outplacement services is more and more concentrated for a duration around 3 to 6 months.

Percent of Individual and Group Programs

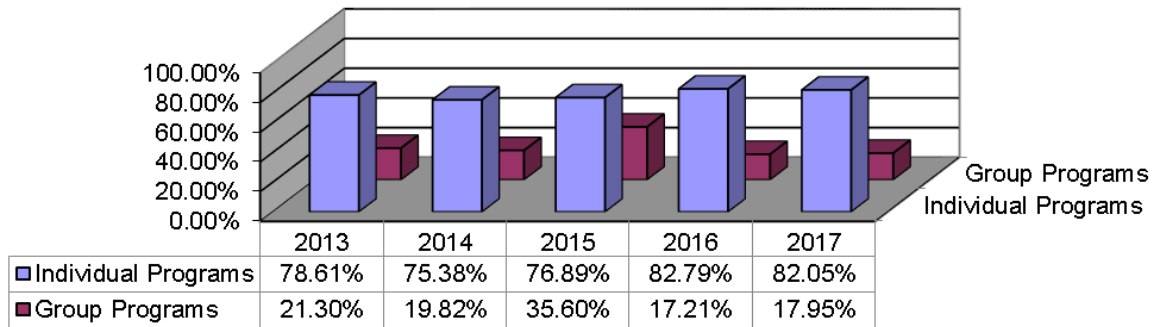


Figure 3

Comments

In the past two years, 2016 and 2017 the number of individual programs has made more than 80 % of the whole. This is an increase compared to the former years since 2009.

The underlying assumption here is that the need for individual career transition programs is slightly growing.

3. How much time to go back to work again?

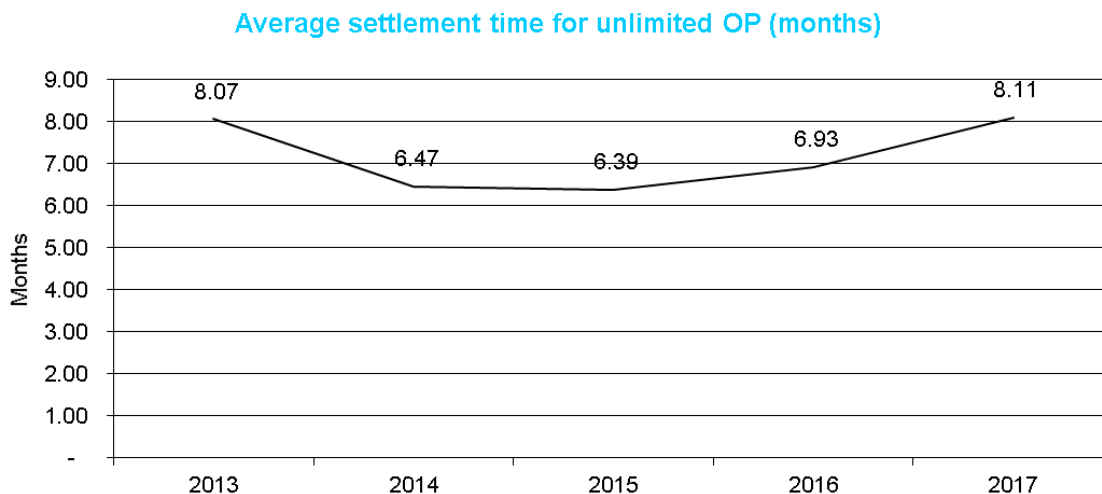


Figure 4

Comments

Please note that this average settlement time is measured for the unlimited outplacement only. The rationale is that we have no tracking evidence for shorter programs i.e. candidates in shorter have completed their programs before they have come back to a job. However, we can take these values in consideration as a solid and realistic sample of the job market.

The average settlement time came back to its higher level from 2013. As mentioned and expected in our 2016 statistics, the average settlement time has increased in 2017 to reach again the 2013 level.

Since 2016, ACF Switzerland has also sampled the average settlement time for candidates over 50 years of age. The established value has increased from 9.0 months in 2016 to 9.02 months in 2017!

Assumption. In a difficult economical context, the settlement time has been reached the same level as 5 years ago. The often-repeated refrain that, job seeker over 50 years hardly find a job is not established. For the second year in a row, senior job seekers made it after 9 months whereas the junior seekers had to wait longer in 2017. For the first time we have an evidence that senior job seekers have not been more impacted by a tougher job market in 2017. At least not if they are coached in their transition. We have also gathered numerous quotes, which confirm this assumption.

Settlement Time - Other OPC Services

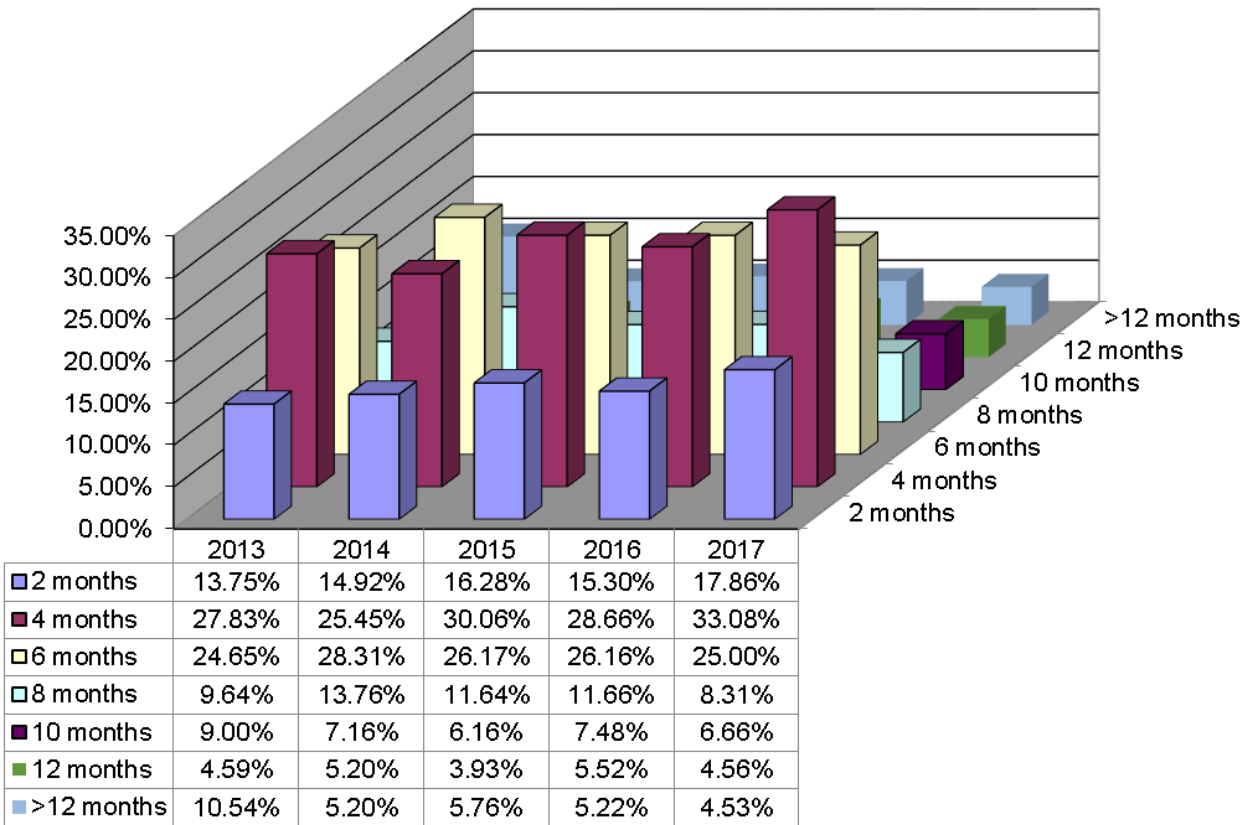


Figure 5

Comments

If we aggregate the values from 2 months up to 6 months, on average 75.94 % of the candidates had found a new job in 6 months or less in 2017 compared to 70.12 % in 2016.

Assumption: this also establishes the fact that in a tough job market. Outplacement services helps the job market has been more difficult in 2016, however not as difficult as it could have been expected

4. How did candidates find a new job?

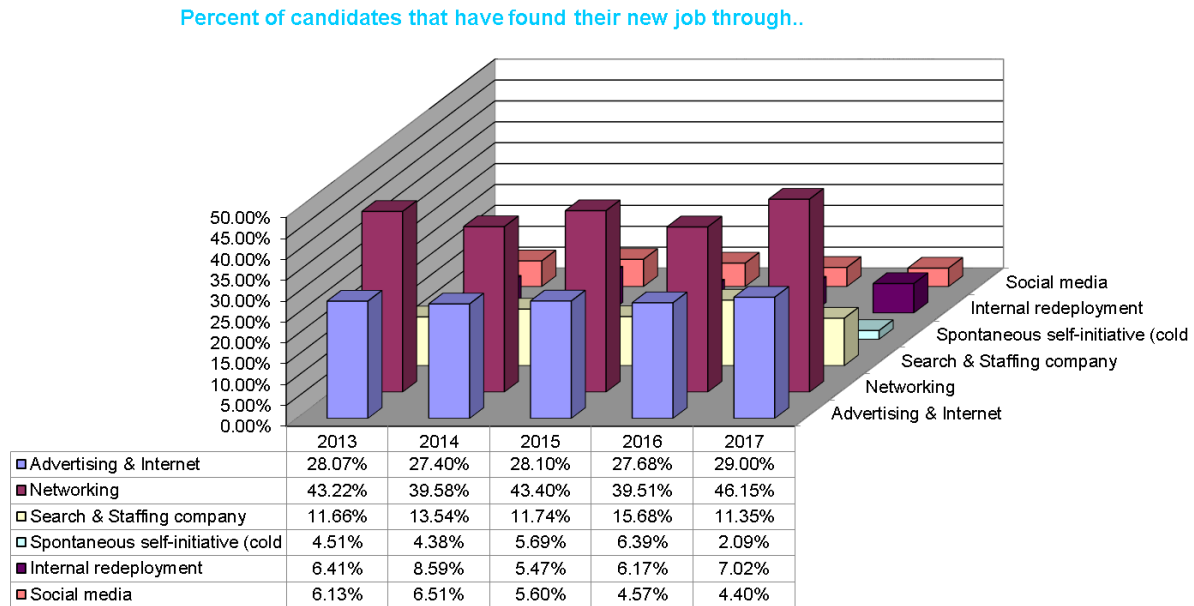


Figure 6

Comments

With 46.15%, the highest value over the past 5 years, networking remains by far the most effective technique for job search. As second, advertising & Internet (29.00 %) is even stronger as in the past years. Search and staffing companies have been accountable for 11.35 % of all cases, the weakest in the observed timeline. Internal redeployment (7.02 %) is on a steady course. Social media (4.40%) is not increasing; it stays at a low level. Spontaneous applications (2.09 %) has dropped in the last rank (2.09%).

Assumption. Outplacement services companies should give due consideration to these findings when designing their services. Networking is king; spontaneous applications are out. The latter can be easily understood: the difference between networking and spontaneous application is the preparation and the targeting not only of the companies but also the insiders within them.

5. Educational level of candidates

Educational Level of Candidates

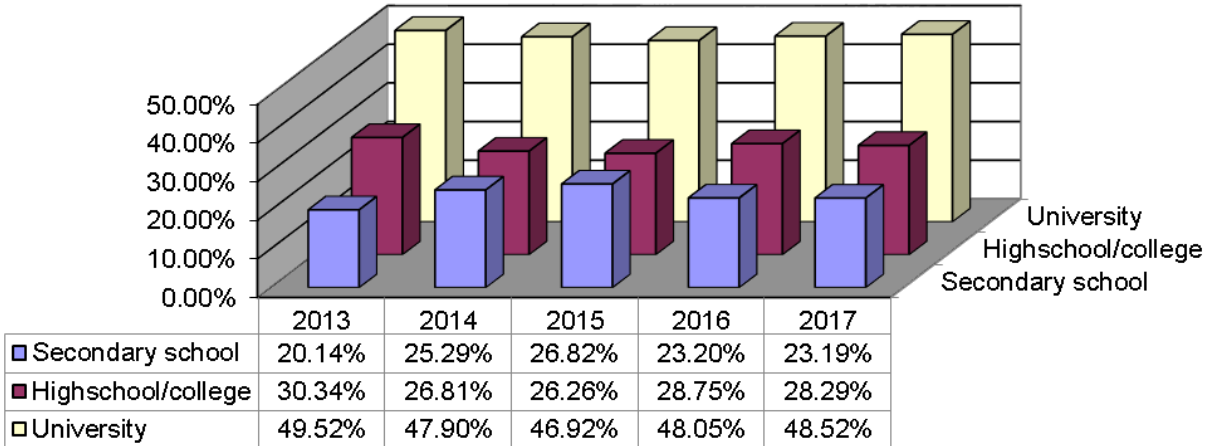


Figure 7

Comments.

The educational level of the candidates is stable over the period considered, and can be summarized as 23.19% secondary school, 28.29% high school and 48.52% university. Since 2013, these figures are not changing dramatically.

Assumption. The educational level of the candidates has no impact on the demand for Outplacement Services

6. Cross Sectorial Mobility

Where did the candidates come from?

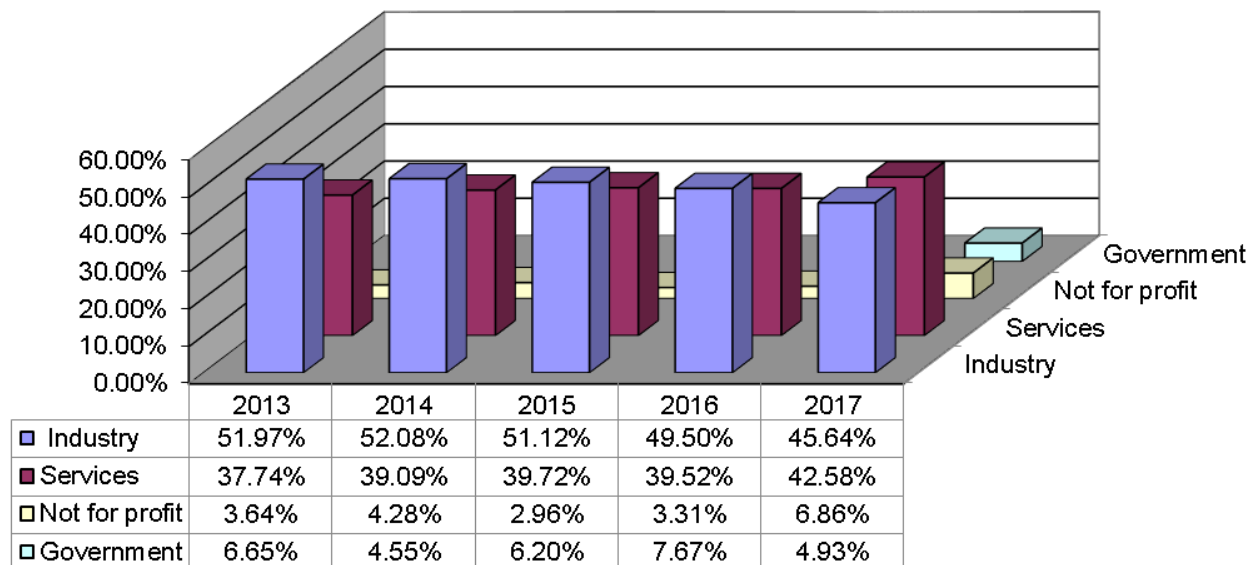


Figure 8

Comments

On a decreasing trend, less than half of the candidates came from the industry sector (45.64 %) followed by the service sector (42.58 %) on an increasing trend. The Not-for-profit sector has increased in 2017 up to 6.86%. Government positions have provided 4.93 %% of the candidates; compared to last year's 7.67 % it is a significant decrease however on a low scale.

Assumption

In 2017 on can see an equalization between the industry and services sectors. Not-for-profit and government sectors represent together 11.89 % of the whole.

Where did the candidates go to?

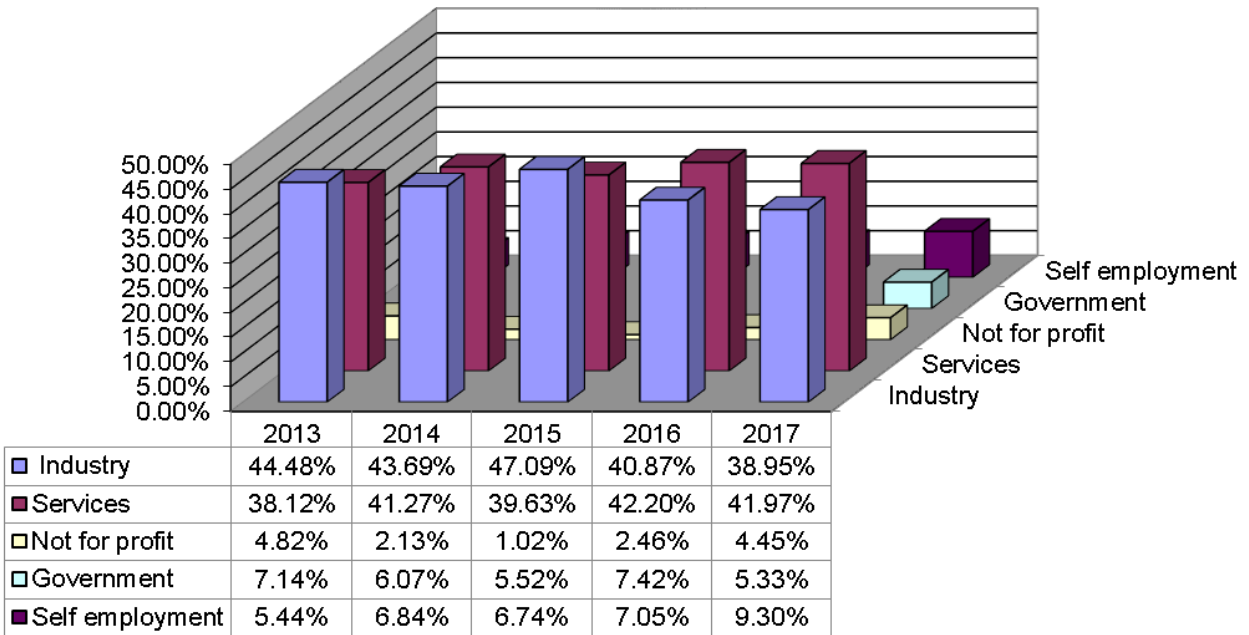


Figure 9

Comments

Whereas almost 45% of the candidates came from the industry sector, only 38.95% have found a job within the same sector. 41.97 % of the candidates went to the service sectors. Related to 42.58 % originated from there. Self-employment is confirmed to be on the rise and accounts for 9.30% of the total.

Assumption

While the industry sector loses jobs, the services sectors hardly hired as many candidates as it laid off. Not-for-profit and government jobs losses are also not completely compensated by new hires. Those ones who start their own business fill the gap in between among these four sectors.

7. What trends do you see for the near future?

(An extract of our members' comments)

1. Reduction of outplacement budget
2. Development of web networks and tools like online assessment and other advices in career management
3. Looking for more meaning at work => more sustainability in the next step
4. More candidates with shorter programs
5. Higher proportion of women
6. Additional workshops (new media etc.)
7. Shorter programs
8. More groups
9. Private investments for private programs
10. Digitalization of our services to competitive prices within the next 2 years
11. We need to adapt our programs to customers' needs and budget. Very few "standard" prices
12. Importance of technology in the search process increasing (social networks and internal platforms)
13. Customization of programs for candidates became a standard
14. Motivation of candidates reduces search time
15. Quality is important
16. More restructurations
17. Candidates are considering more and more alternative options to Corporate employment: Interim Management, entrepreneurship, being independent (notably via salary hosting)
18. Individuals are looking forward to the OPC program, as they welcome the opportunity to reflect on their career, profile, needs, etc... Others just still think that we only help to redo the CV !
19. HR and/or line managers still consider OPC as belonging to a package, as regularly proposed to departing individuals. However, then within the negotiation phase or after, the final decision belongs to the individual.
20. Geographic mobility within Switzerland and abroad is confirmed this year. This is mostly verified for more Senior Profiles but not exclusively
21. For profiles with long employment history within a sector and/or company and not necessarily linked to Seniority of the role, time to land new position is longer than for average profiles. Is loyalty and/or engagement less rewarded in a job market in mutation?
22. Recruitment processes becoming more technology based and relying on Social Media shifts the need to focus on personal/professional self-awareness and personal branding, rather than on standard job search document excellence (CV, Letter,...)
23. Clients wants to have tailor made services
24. Quality and specialization is wanted

8. Please quote 2 candidates +50 years old, happy with the help provided

1. L'accompagnement m'a été d'une grande utilité notamment dans la phase de recherche d'emploi : j'ai un excellent souvenir de la préparation du pitch qui m'a été très utile lors de mes entretiens mais surtout lors de mes rencontres réseau. Le consultant m'a sur ce point beaucoup apporté, m'apprenant comment développer et aborder mon réseau de la juste manière. J'ai d'ailleurs trouvé mon nouveau poste par ce biais. Les réunions à plusieurs où l'on rencontre d'autres personnes dans une situation similaire à la sienne, font beaucoup de bien, sont chaleureuses et dynamiques.

2. La consultante m'a accompagnée durant ma période de transit professionnel avec une grande qualité d'écoute, beaucoup de disponibilité et d'ouverture. Son accompagnement très chaleureux et professionnel m'a permis de reprendre confiance en moi et de retrouver rapidement un emploi qui me convient parfaitement. Elle m'a apporté plus qu'un outplacement, elle m'a donné un accompagnement personnalisé et de très grande qualité.

3. Companies are more open in hiring candidates +50 years old

4. For candidates +50, networking is the key

5. I have done it. I can work again... in procurement. ... I cannot really believe it yet...but it has worked out and I was able to sell myself well and convince. Thanks to your good preparation and support.

6. " I was so depressed when I lost my job, but luckily my consultant was able to help me to rebuild my self-confidence, and supported me a lot with his contacts in the market. In addition, after a short year of search, I landed in a new job, despite my age of 58"

7. " I have been working in the financial sector all my life and this market was closed for me. So the work done with this company allowed me to open new perspectives and I finally decided to completely change my target and I found a new opportunity in the the consulting business"

8. "I have an invitation for a first interview. Without you I would not have come this far!!! It is the semi-finals!"

9. When I left my previous employer at the age of 53 and after 7 years in the same position as risk manager of an alternative investment team, I was kind of convinced of possessing some good experience and skills but without a clue of which financial firm would be willing to hire me in the aftermath of the financial crisis. The work with my outplacement provider allowed me to completely rethink my approach to finding a new work-life situation: Firstly, to focus on what the market needs and not just on what I am good at. Secondly, to improve my communication on what I can provide as benefit to potential clients (as employee, as consultant or in any other kind of working relationship). Finally, and most importantly, to overcome the conventional stereotype of what a job should look like to think more in terms of a portfolio of activities. At the end of this process, I combine consulting assignments and several part-time employments into an interesting and flexible professional activity at – surprisingly – an income never seen before.

10. What I most appreciated were the sessions before my interviews, which helped me to prepare them. I also very much liked the workshops, especially the one on Interview preparation and Interview simulation as well as the role-play. Having access to the infrastructure has also been a real added value for me, as it provided the perfect opportunity to meet and exchange with other candidates in the same situation.

Quotes from Candidates aged 50 +

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2. Change is never easy, especially when it's forced upon us. A growing number of senior professionals are discovering that loyalty and experience no longer hold any value for the companies they built their careers with and unexpectedly find themselves cut adrift into a Darwinian job market. To survive and thrive in your 50's through such a transition one must be ready to compete and evolve. As someone who had built a 20 year international career in finance and supply chain with one company, this drove me to explore many different paths, including mentoring an agro-tech startup, pursuing a non-executive director diploma and working in the NGO space. The upside was I met some great people, got exposed to lots of new ideas and challenged myself to be effective in very different work environments. Not easy! So be brave, resilient and go find your new valuable self!

3. Currently, there is a hype in the media of not finding a job when you are older than 55. Thanks to the OP program, I was able to find a new challenge within a reasonable time.

4. I would never have thought that I would find a new satisfying job as almost 60 years old

5. I have appreciated the outplacement program I did with your company because for the first time in my career I was able to question myself about what I did in the past and about what I wanted to do for the rest of my professional life. It was extremely helpful when I was due to decide about my future job

6. The fact that during my Outplacement process I was able to reflect and interact with a neutral person about my strength and my weaknesses was very helpful. As a manager, we have generally no time to make these kinds of reflexions. With your help, I was obliged to face myself and understood what was right and what was wrong in my behavior.

7. Für mich war 2016 ein prägendes Jahr. Dank meiner Firma durfte ich mir Gedanken zu meiner Zukunft machen und Sie haben mich bei der Entscheidung nach dem neuen Weg begleitet. In meiner neuen Funktion, kann ich alle meine bisherigen IT-Erfahrungen in die IT-Revision einbringen. Vielen Dank

8. In den wenigen Monaten, in denen wir zusammengearbeitet haben, durfte ich dann Ihnen viel Hoffnung erfahren. Ihr Wesen und Ihre positive Art konnten mich immer wieder von Neuem motivieren!