

BERLIN CONFERENCE REPORT

“CLASSIFIEDS IN A SHARING ECONOMY”

MAY 2015

WEDNESDAY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The ICMA Board of Directors meeting in Berlin took place across two days from Tuesday morning to Wednesday afternoon with a primary focus on the future of ICMA and the 5 year strategy to ensure we stay relevant and continue to grow. Thank you to all our Board of Director's for contributing valuable ideas that will ensure our next conference will be our best yet. It was agreed that the autumn conference “[What's Next for Marketplaces?](#)” will take place in Madrid on 21-23 October 2015.

BOOT CAMP

Wednesday afternoon welcomed 25 attendees to the "Analytics to Drive Your Business" Boot Camp, which was facilitated by 3 guest speakers:

*Patrick C. Price, Chairman of [BlueGlass Interactive Ltd.](#)
Dominik Schaetz, Founder and CEO of [schaetz.cro](#)
Thomas Hertkorn, Head of SEM at [netlead GmbH & Co. KG](#)*

The Boot Camp kicked off with an introduction and overview of current trends and developments. Patrick C. Price then explored how to grow your current organic traffic and implement state of the art tracking so you can reliably measure and improve your organic growth. Thomas Hertkorn was up next demonstrating how to grow your paid traffic and address any issues you might be struggling with. Finally Dominik Schaetz concluded the Boot Camp with the best practice approaches to measuring and optimizing your online success into increasing conversions on your site.

We are delighted to report it received top marks from the attendees, with 100% stating they took away practical tools to implement in their business. Due to its popularity ICMA will continue these smaller pre-conference specialised Boot Camps at future conferences.

That evening all 112 attendees from across 25 countries received a very warm welcome from *Martha de la Torre, CEO of [El Clasificado](#) and Chair of the ICMA Board of Directors*, at the InterContinental Hotel's Marlene Bar. Martha introduced our new members, the 45 first time attendees, and highlighted the continual support of exhibitors and sponsors! We continued the fun over good food, drinks and conversation.

THURSDAY

ICMA's very own Future Leaders Network took on the emcee role for the first time at an ICMA conference and what a wonderful job they did. They got the show on the road by welcoming the first of our two keynote speakers, *Ronald van den Hoff, author of Book Society 3.0 and co-Founder of*

[CDEF Holding BV](#). Ronald shared his expertise within the sharing economy, with particular focus to Society 3.0 “a road map to the new world”, highlighting how access is now more important than ownership.

We then heard from our second keynote speaker *Sangeet Choudary, Founder & CEO of [Platform Thinking Labs](#)*, who delivered an inspiring presentation on how emerging platforms in the sharing economy are creating entirely new behaviours and building entirely new markets in the process, disrupting the traditional classifieds business. Sangeet looked at the key behaviours that offer the sharing economy startups a competitive edge over traditional classifieds businesses and lay out a roadmap to enable classifieds to reinvent themselves to leverage the opportunities offered by the age of the sharing economy.

After the break we had a NEW ‘Marketplace Security Panel’. *Peter Zollman, Founder of [AIM Group](#)* brought with him more than 35 years of media experience to chair this exciting panel, which included panelists *Rami Essaid, co-Founder & CEO of [Distil Networks](#)*, *Carl Ferrer, CEO of [Backpage](#)* and *Wing Chan, Managing Director of [Preloved](#)*. These experts explored how to protect your online data and content, whilst increasing site performance and improving SEO. The feedback from this panel was very positive and people commented that they would like to see this again in greater depth at a future ICMA conference.

Ronald Jan Schuurs, co-Founder & Managing Director of [Everjobs](#) then hit the stage with “What it Takes to Build & Develop Marketplaces Today – the Rocket-Internet Approach”. Ronald explored how to build a marketplace in today’s sharing economy using Rocket Internet’s newest startup Everjobs as an example. Ronald’s open approach allowed him to share valuable examples of challenges they faced and lessons they learnt along the way.

Just before the break *Christoph Godderidge, Director Advertising Apps at [AppLift](#)* spoke on “User Acquisition for Marketplace Apps”. Christoph explored ways to optimise ROI for advertisers through a performance-driven approach within the increasingly crowded and competitive app marketplace.

After a delicious lunch *Andrew Hunter, Co-Founder of [Adzuna](#)* led a navigation into the rise of aggregators in all classified verticals. Andrew covered advice on how best to work with classifieds search engines and aggregators, reasons to be optimistic / reasons to be scared, and concluded by examining the future of classifieds search (and vertical search in jobs, property & cars).

Wing Chan, Managing Director of [Preloved](#), took to the stage for the second time that day to discuss “Ecommerce, Rewards and Classifieds – What Do They Have in Common”? Wing shared Preloved’s experience of building a central platform for global e-commerce, rewards and classifieds sites and how a focused understanding of customer data sets apart the leaders from the rest.

During the next session *Silvio Frison, CEO of [Pense](#)* explored Pense’s past and future strategies (the good and the bad) which have enabled them to grow at speed within a market (Brazil) which already had a market leader established. Pense was launched in Jan 2012, and in less than 3 years was generating R\$20M in annual revenues (three verticals combined: real state, automotive and jobs). This was one of our top rated sessions and we will be seeing Silvio speak again at our spring 2016 conference.

After the coffee break we had one of our very own ICMA members *Soren Skovdahl, Co-Owner of [Trendsales](#)* deliver a presentation of the development of Trendsales, their current market and revenue streams, and the future outlook for fashion marketplaces.

The jam-packed day was brought to a close by *Felix Erken, Managing Director at [Junk Mail Publishing Group](#)*. Felix delivered an energetic and thought provoking presentation into how “humble companies like Junk Mail classifieds” remain at the very top competing with giants Naspers, OLX and Gumtree, without the heavy marketing spend they have in their artillery. Felix’s open and honest approach really highlighted why ICMA is such a special and unique open sharing platform.

MEMBERS MEETING

Martha de la Torre chaired the Members Meeting which discussed the current state of ICMA and where the Board of Directors and Head Office are in formulating a strategy for moving forward in revamping ICMA for the future. We also elected two new Board Members – *Wendy Jordan, COO at [Encuentra24.com AG](#)* and *Sang-Woo Pai, CEO at [markt.de GmbH & Co. KG](#)*, who we would like to extend a very warm welcome to. Thank you to those who participated in this meeting and we continue to welcome any feedback and suggestions you have to improve upon the Association.

We then climbed aboard coaches heading to Berlin’s “beach” in the Mitte area. We had a relaxed evening sitting around warming fire pits, in beach deck chairs, in the sand, networking and enjoying a beach BBQ. An exhibitor described the evening as “the best business conference social event that I have been to in more than 10 years!” – Dave Wiseman, Scamalytics, May 2015.



FRIDAY

To start the days programme we welcomed to the stage *Roman Bach, CEO at [9flats.com](#)*. Roman’s presentation “Creating and dealing with disruption” focused on how 9flats.com has had to adapt to compete in a crowded market with big players such as Airbnb.

Next we heard from *Jacob Sachs, Global Account Manager at [Besedo](#)*, who explored the ways in which quality can be measured. Besedo has assisted some of the market leaders when it comes to Classifieds from when they were small start-ups to becoming the #1 in their respective markets. The focus has always been on providing the users a high quality experience when visiting, posting or contacting the sites. During the presentation he explained why this is important when it comes to the user's loyalty, how to measure the quality on classifieds and how this can become one of your success factors.

To bring the presentations to a close *Kevin Jackson, Global Sales Director at [Gravity R&D](#)*, explored how algorithms are impacting the rest of the web but not really classifieds yet and what they can do when you take this approach.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE

After the coffee break the much loved Sharing Best Practice session returned and it continues to be one of the top rated sessions of the conference! Each delegate chose 2 roundtable discussions which explored insights, opportunities and threats from their own experience. The topics covered were:

- Search Engine Optimisation in 2015
- Search Engine Marketing
- Web and Development Approaches
- Products, Pricing and Upsells
- Analytics – what are you measuring and why?
- Sales and Sales Automation
- Mobile and Mobile Apps; the future of marketplaces

WORKSHOPS

After lunch the finale of the conference was the popular workshop forums:

Business Leaders' Forum (BLF)

The BLF was chaired by Martha de la Torre and supported by Rob Paterson. This session was designed specifically for senior executives to come together in an intimate closed meeting in order to share their opinions and ideas with their peers worldwide. The BLF consisted of a short 30 minutes presentation followed by an active discussion into "The Future of Classifieds 2020", not just looking at the next 12 months but over the course of the next 5 years. What will it look like? What is predicted to be the next big thing?

Business Operations Forum (BOF)

The Berlin interactive BOF was facilitated by *Gabriela Martin del Campo, Senior Director of Digital Operations at [El Clasificado](#)* and *Frederic Hansen, International Sales & Business Development at [Click Performance GmbH](#)*. Frederic's fun and interactive presentation demonstrated ways to learn how much you could/should be spending on Google Adwords by looking at the right KPIs. There was a role play to challenge attendees to view the Adwords buying process from different perspectives. Gabriela's section was a group activity in which participants identified flawed processes with their business operations and found ways to improve them. For example: A participant's editorial process was unnecessarily time consuming due to difficulties securing enough relevant articles. The group then came up with ways to remedy that problem by providing solutions on how to obtain more content.

Sales Managers Workshop (SMW)

Back by popular demand the SMW was facilitated by Tomasz Odrobinski, *former VP of Sales and Internationalization at [erento GmbH](#)*. The attendees of this workshop looked at the top sales challenges they are facing today. From lead generation, activity tracking, top CRM tools, account management to the recruitment of top sales reps and how to keep them onboard. From commissions to cancelations, content marketing and telesales... you name it we covered it. Attendees were given solid practical solutions to implement upon their return to the office.

THE FRIDAY NIGHT OUT

The Friday Night Out was held at a cocktail bar, Bar am Lutowplatz, famous for its delicious and creative drinks menu. This was a relaxed evening where we all celebrated another successful conference with lots of new found friends (and of course lots of old friends too).

THANK YOU

Thank you to the outstanding speakers, facilitators and chairpersons for ensuring another successful ICMA Conference!

Also a special thank you to our exhibitors, ICMA's Future Leaders Network, Rob Paterson for a great programme, the ICMA Board of Directors for your continued support, and lastly of course to all the attendees who make ICMA the one-of-a-kind Association it is today!

We look forward to seeing you all again at the ICMA autumn conference taking place in Madrid on 21-23 October 2015 where we shall explore "What's Next for Marketplaces?"