

Taking the “Out” out of Outplacement

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The concept of Outplacement was introduced in the US about fifty years ago. Industry pioneers took expertise they had accumulated in assisting WWII veterans re-enter the workplace and, in the sixties, expanded those services to consult with corporations in the midst of downsizing. A lot has changed in the world of work these last fifty years, which, in our opinion, warrants a fresh, new look at outplacement. In fact, we’re advocating taking the “out” out of “outplacement”.

For the past couple of decades, outplacement has primarily focused on helping people figure out how to get a new job. The focus has, for the most part (and pardon us for greatly simplifying), been on helping the individual candidate assess his/her strengths, figuring out a new path forward (whether, for instance, a job in the same industry as before or an entirely different path) and working with the candidate to create a personal brand to embark upon a search. These coaching services remain critically important, including for executives who often require more time and services devoted specifically to the unique challenges of the executive suite.

However, for several reasons we’ll discuss below, we believe the emphasis today on outplacement needs to change to “placement”. We contend that outplacement, in addition to coaching individuals on the process of their search, must help to place them by going one step further to match them with legitimate job leads within their sphere of interest, skill set, and geographic location.

Here’s why:

- What’s ultimately most important, from an individual’s perspective, is to find a good job. Usually, the quicker that happens, the more positive their career transition experience will be, provided it’s a high quality option. As we know, that is good for HR and for the company too. While personal career and job search coaching is an important component in achieving this objective, it is not enough today.

- It's obvious that technology plays an enormous role in the job market. But most people need a way to navigate efficiently, effectively and proactively through the thousands upon thousands of jobs that are posted. Today, many spend endless hours searching for a 'needle in the haystack' using tools such as *indeed.com* and others. We understand that now is the time to harness technology to supplement coaching, and to translate the candidate's needs into search algorithms that unearth qualified job leads.
- Our workplace has changed dramatically. When outplacement first came into its own as an industry, it was rather unusual (and therefore all the more unsettling for those laid off) to switch jobs more than a couple of times during one's career. Today, it is the "new normal" to have held many positions, even changing industries and career tracks. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average person born in the later years of the baby boom held 10.8 jobs from age 18 to 42 alone. A July 2010 report¹ by two professors at Rutgers found that 73% of Americans have either been unemployed themselves (14%), had an immediate family member lose a job (12%), another member of their family (30%) or a close friend (17%) lose a job in the last few years. The reality is that so many people have already been through outplacement and possess the basic skills they need to go through the process of finding a job. What they really need are good coaching provided by an expert coach, and high quality job leads.

Stay tuned for more on this topic from BPI group.

Interested in learning more about Career Transition at BPI group?

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¹ http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/content/Work_Trends_September_2010.pdf