



Executive Recruiting
Outplacement
Human Resource Consulting
Professional Assessments
Training and Development

The Outplacement Advantage

Outplacement is a structured process designed to assist separated employees in finding new avenues of opportunity, while helping to minimize the trauma associated with being unemployed. The challenge of separating employees can result from market demand, mergers, acquisitions, reorganizations, changes in management, the introduction of technical innovations or performance. In certain circumstances, Outplacement counseling is needed across the board. In others, it must be tailored to the needs of the displaced individuals or groups of employees - production or administrative workers, professional/technical staff, line managers or top-level executives.

There are various aspects to considering Outplacement services. The benefits to both the employer and employee must be weighed, as well as selecting the right provider. Reflecting on these facts is key in making a decision that is successful for both the organization as well as the displaced employee.

The benefits to the employer include:

- Minimizing the risk of litigation - Outplacement counselors will help the employee focus on the future rather than retaliating against the company.
- Reducing benefit continuation and unemployment costs - Outplacement often reduces the job search process by up to 50% as compared to those who do not utilize these services.
- Protecting the company image - Customers, vendors, stockholders, competitors, the community and prospective employees will see the organization as conscientious and caring.
- Improving the morale of remaining employees - It's evident that former co-workers are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.
- Pre-termination planning - Addresses issues which delay or complicate the termination and ensures the conversation is conducted professionally.
- On-site termination notification meeting - The Outplacement counselor initiates the process by acknowledging emotions and providing an overview of the employee's services.

Although Outplacement programs differ by level, the benefits to the employee often include:

- Discussions on managing the emotional aspects of transition, the career continuation process, career development and future goals.
- Family counseling - Job loss often affects more than just the former employee. This is an opportunity to learn more about the job search and what family members may be experiencing.
- Resumé development - Counselors work with the candidate in developing the resumé as a professional marketing tool with emphasis on results and accomplishments.
- Research - Training on researching companies and identifying positions utilizing various techniques such as the Internet, directories, databases, newspapers, magazines and trade journals which provide the candidate with a broadened perspective of the job market and insights for effective interview preparation.
- Networking - Consultants provide thorough instruction on networking techniques and assist in developing contact lists and a networking script.

- Marketing - The job search requires a proactive marketing campaign. Counselors assist candidates in developing a marketing strategy and targeted marketing letters to companies and contacts.
- Interview Preparation - A discussion of interview styles, questions, selection tools and follow-up.
- Services may also include administrative assistance in preparing letters, fielding calls and printing materials which frees the candidate to spend time on other critical job search elements.

Before implementing any Outplacement program, management should meet with the provider to develop a plan. This plan should identify the type(s) of support provided, the duration of the services, the number and names of employees who will be eligible for services and the staff, facilities, equipment, or other support to be provided by both the employer and the provider.

Screening Outplacement Consultants

Before using any external Outplacement firm, the company should ask a number of questions, including:

- 1) What are the qualifications of the consulting firm's staff who will work with the employer?
- 2) Does the consultant have sufficient staff and resources to handle the projected volume of terminations?
- 3) Does the firm have offices in all areas where the company plans terminations or is it willing to work with other consultants to coordinate services to workers in other locations?
- 4) Does the firm offer both group and individual programs?
- 5) Which other companies have used the consultant and how do they evaluate the consultant's services? Were those companies' workers satisfied with the services?
- 6) What level of individualized services is provided? Are activities rigidly structured or adapted to workers' needs? Does the consultant maintain close contact with each client through face-to-face counseling, telephone conversations, and correspondence until a new position is found or outplacement services are terminated?
- 7) Which specific activities and equipment does the consultant routinely provide for outplaced employees? Has its staff kept pace with trends in using the Internet and e-mail to research jobs, send inquiries, and transmit resumes? Will the consultant develop job leads, prospect for recruiting networks, or provide information on obtaining capital or franchises for would-be entrepreneurs?
- 8) What other services are provided to enhance the effectiveness of the outplacement program and ensure a satisfactory outcome? Does the outplacement consultant provide training for managers involved in terminations? Does it offer counseling services for spouses of outplaced workers?
- 9) How will the consultant keep the employer informed of outplaced employees' progress in finding re-employment? Are follow-up and evaluation procedures provided?
- 10) What is the consulting fee? How does it compare with other providers' fees? If considerably lower than other providers' fees, can the consultant deliver the same level and quality of services?

The best way to ensure your candidates are receiving the full extent of their Outplacement program is to simply meet with your provider before services begin to clearly define services and work with them to customize a program that best meets your needs. Expect your service provider to follow-up on your former employees' progress through successful conclusion of their search.