

3 Reasons To Hire A Career Coach

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Recovering from a career setback? Looking to pivot to a second-act career? If your game plan is to send out resumés and hope for the best, you'll quickly find that the old ways of approaching this kind of challenge aren't working today. That's why a good career coach can empower you to get back to doing the kind of job you want (and love) to do. Here are three reasons hiring a career coach is a good idea:

1. A career coach can accelerate your job search. Hiring a career professional often can reduce the time it takes to get back to work. These days, people over 50 frequently spend twice as long as younger ones to get hired.

The career coach can get you to: stay on track creating a solid job-search plan (more on this shortly), prioritize action steps, learn how to network effectively, prepare for a job interview and understand the best ways to follow up. Her or she will offer perspective, expertise and empathy. Most of all, your coach will make sure you hold yourself accountable to the goals you set and the outcomes you want to achieve.

2. A career coach can help you develop a solid job-search plan. Do you know what your value is to a prospective employer or client? Do you know how to best describe and pitch yourself? Do you know who the most important contacts are in your database? A career coach will assist you with the answers to come up with a strategic plan of attack to get hired.

Your coach will ensure that you are telling the right story through your bio, resumé and LinkedIn profile. This adviser will also help you sort through various possible opportunities (open positions, networking events, conferences, existing contacts, new contacts and the like) and prioritize the ones that could generate the most results.

Having a plan will aid you in blowing past the inevitable discouragement of knocking on doors day after day. And if your plan gets fuzzy, your coach will encourage you, helping you face the next day.

3. A career coach can show you how to invest in yourself. Putting your money on the line as an investment in your career coach will be an expression of your commitment to yourself. Even (and especially) if you're on a tight budget, spending the money can light a fire under you. It will make you more focused and more directed, because the clock is ticking and the coach's meter is running. Then, your commitment will be palpable to everyone from networking allies to recruiters and hiring managers.

The Right Way to Hire a Career Coach

Many small-group career coaching programs, and even some one-on-one coaching plans cost roughly one or two weeks' salary. When you see it in those terms, hiring a coach looks like a no-brainer for the potential value you'll receive. But it has to be the *right* coach.

When you're looking for a coach, talk to a handful of candidates and ask yourself three questions about each: *Does this coach have a system?* You're not looking for a shoulder to cry on. You're looking for an accountability program with clear milestones.

Do you respect the coach? You're more likely to if he or she has a proven track record, a relevant degree or certification, a professional website with testimonials from clients, a compelling and professional LinkedIn profile and a public or social media profile. Most of all, you'll want to determine if what the coach says makes sense to you and if you feel confident the approach can work for you.

You need to feel a simpatico with your coach to get results. You want to feel safe, appreciated, supported – and believed in.

Your coach should be able to identify and acknowledge all of your amazing and valuable qualities while holding your feet to the fire and encouraging you to overcome any inner blocks that may be holding you back from connecting to a new job.

But remember this: your coach is your partner in success, not a magician. At the end of the day, you're the one who will have to do the work. Working with a trained and compassionate professional, while leveraging his or her methodology, is a proven way to get you off the sidelines and into your new job.