

## Choosing a Career Counselor

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**Summary:** With the job market upended by the meltdown that started in 2001 and the ongoing battering of jobs in the high-tech and the manufacturing sectors, many are seeking professional help in their career plans and transitions. As a result of the market itself and the opportunity, many half-baked professionals have gone into practice by hanging out their counselor shingle on their cyber doors. Clients, frustrated by working with them, then go on their own, regretting or even repenting their experience. There is a better way!

**Transition Challenge:** Career transition is one of the most challenging events in one's life. Such a transition can be prompted by a variety of forces: a layoff, a termination, lack of prospects, disagreement, disillusionment, and so on. The quaked job market has permanently changed the rules and very few have understood the new game. Most job seekers looking to land a job have not come to terms with the new paradigm of job searching. They still pursue their elusive dream by continuing to embrace the fossil methods of search that have become outmoded just as the job market redefined itself. Although the old methods are still in use and do work for some, to truly tap into the opportunities that exist today, a new mindset and approach are needed. Those looking for help in this area by locating a career professional usually fall into the trap of going along with whatever the career counselor has to offer and following their "expert" advice, regardless. So, what is one to do?

**Questions to Ask:** The following questions may help you become more aware of how to select a coach who can be more aligned with today's market realities:

- How many career transitions have the counselor *personally* made? Were they ever laid off? (Only those, once jobless, truly understand what it's like to be out of work)
- How many of these transitions were reinventions and not a mere job hop?
- How many clients have they helped with reinvention?
- How do they approach reinvention to help get their client a dream job?
- How do they address the anomalies in a traditional resume such as gaps in chronology, job hopping, failed start-ups, changing industries, age issue?
- How many clients can they provide as references? Are their clients global?
- What is their success rate?
- What is their client satisfaction rate?
- What have they published? Are there independent reviews of their work?
- Are they featured in any media or press releases?
- Do they have a Website with samples of their work and *named* testimonials?
- Do they practice full time from a real office? Can they do this globally?

These are some of the questions worth asking. Many clients just want their resumes written and some advice on how to proceed. Almost anyone with sufficient writing skills can write a resume. To really create your value message, however, a coach must understand who you are and not merely what you did! In this market a more holistic approach is required to pursue an opportunity that is life altering and *that* inevitably requires unconventional methods.