

What's a Career Coach? Do I need one?

By Deborah Walker

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What's a Career Coach? Do I need one?

You may have noticed one of the latest trends in career management is to have your own career coach. It's not really a new concept. Executives have known for years the value of investing in the expertise of a career professional. You may still wonder, "What's a career coach?" and more importantly, "Do I need one?"

The best way to illustrate the value of a career coach is to compare them to personal trainers. Anyone can go to a gym and work out. Having a personal trainer is not a prerequisite to fitness. The value of a personal trainer is that he/she helps their client achieve their fitness goal quicker and with better results. Similarly, a career coach accelerates the job search process resulting in significantly higher starting salary.

A job-search campaign demands specific skills such as resume and cover letter writing, networking, interviewing and negotiations. The best jobs don't necessarily go to the most qualified, but rather, to those with the sharpest job-search skills. An effective career coach provides expert advise, insight and training on these essential skills giving their clients a tremendous competitive advantage.

The most effective job-search campaign has a strategic marketing plan and focus. No corporation would launch a new product without a marketing plan. Every phase is carefully orchestrated to maximize sales results. A career coaches can help you develop an action plan designed to 1) uncover more job leads, 2) secure more interviews, 3) maximize interview results, 4) increase the number of job offers, and 5) significantly increase your salary.

Not all job seekers need a career coach. If you already have headhunters calling you with job leads, you're probably OK on your own. Here are some situations were job seekers could benefit from the expertise of a career coach: 1) changing industries, 2) moving into management, 3) changing functional roles (like accounting to sales), 4) relocation to a new area, 5) unstable work history, 6) been with the same company for many years, 7) over or under qualified, 8) over 50, or 9) lack confidence in your salary negotiation skills. Another way to tell if you need a career coach is lack of positive results. If you aren't getting responses from your resume postings or you aren't getting called back for second interviews, a career coach could most likely help you improve your

skills and get your campaign moving forward.

If you decide to invest in a career coach, here are a few things you'll want to look for. A career coach should be an expert in the field of career management. Ask about their background and how they stay abreast of national employment trends. A career coach should understand employer buyer motivations. Ask if they've ever sat in the hiring seat. A career coach must be a good listener. If he/she talks more than listens, your objectives won't be heard or understood.

Like the athlete running a race, your job search is a competitive event. Prepare to win first place in your job search. As every runner knows, second place doesn't take home the prize.

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Deborah Walker, CCMC provides Career Coaching and Resume Writing to executive job seekers nationwide. Accelerate your job search! Get your Free job search skills analysis at <mailto:Skills@alphaadvantage.com> visit Deborah at her website at <http://www.AlphaAdvantage.com> or email her at <mailto:Deb@AlphaAdvantage.com>
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