

The Benefits of Working with a Career Coach

Professional golfers select coaches to improve their swing, stroke and accuracy. And, with those performance improvements come more tournament wins and bigger paychecks. Professional musicians choose mentors and instructors for the purpose of advancing their skills and deepening personal satisfaction with playing their chosen instruments.

A professional who coaches in the areas of career management and transition engages clients similarly to that of an athletic coach or musical mentor. Since we easily recognize the benefits that athletes and musicians derive from coaching, it shouldn't be a stretch to identify similar shifts in job performance and career satisfaction to be gained from working with a career coach.

A coaching relationship can begin in a number of different ways. Below are a few examples of situations that might bring an individual to a career coach.

George has been working at XYZ Company for three years and has applied for several promotions; but, has not been successful. He gets very nervous during interviews and feels that he has been unable to truly make an impression. After George's brother went through a lay-off and received career coaching, he recommended it to George to help him improve his interviewing skills.

Elaine had been in the medical management field for twelve years; but, she was burned out and wanted to make a career change. Since she had never done any other type of work, she had no confidence in her ability to search for positions or finding industries where her skills would readily transfer. Elaine was not experienced in resume writing or formatting; and, she did not see much value in using the internet to search for companies and openings.

Charmagne had worked in real estate and property management in a large metropolitan area. She went through a very stressful, unfortunate experience with a verbally abusive boss. An astute professional, she engineered an exit package; however, her stress and anxiety was considerable and she chose to take a full year off following the exit. During the year she also relocated to a smaller city, moving near friends and family. Although her credentials were impressive, Charmagne was very apprehensive about beginning a job search because she dreaded interview questions concerning her former employer. Additionally, she wanted to direct her job search toward finance rather than property management. In the exit interview with her former employer, the HR manager suggested that working with a career coach could help her make a successful transition through a difficult time.

Robert learned about career management in a seminar when he was a senior in college. Three years and two disappointing jobs later, he sought the advice of a career coach. "I must not know how to scope out a job so that I recognize warning signs before I accept the position. And, I've posted my resume on more than 50 websites and have not received the first phone call."

Shanaya and Tim are newly appointed managers in a growing distribution center. It's a fast-paced environment and they were promoted because of their enthusiasm and high quality work as customer service representatives. Although their manager is pleased with their output, she is beginning to be concerned about their people skills and ability to collaborate with the employees they are leading. The CEO of this company is very open to career management methods and he had recently hired a coach to facilitate a special project team. So, Shanaya and Tim's manager requested that the coach spend time with her new managers to help them identify their individual communication styles and to develop new skills for leading more effectively and becoming more successful in their new roles.

How would working with a career management coach benefit George? Since George wanted to continue working for his current employer and to increase his advancement opportunities, the likely benefit he would derive from working with a coach would be improvement in interviewing techniques, building self confidence and tips for internal networking.

Elaine would benefit from working with a career management coach who is knowledgeable about job market trends and variations in industries where her medical management skills would be transferable. All skills are transferable; but, some times it takes perseverance and creating a unique job search strategy to uncover more options.

Both George and Charmagne would gain confidence from one-on-one interview coaching and role playing with a coach. However, Charmagne needs assistance in creating a brief statement concerning her exit from her former employer that will not raise questions which would make her uncomfortable. Her confidence will receive a huge boost once she and her coach have tackled that issue. Fear of interviewing and dealing with difficult interview questions about former employment are frequent reasons that people seek assistance from a career management coach.

Robert will benefit from working with a coach to help him formulate a job search strategy to land "the right job," rather

than "a job he can tolerate." His resume may need some fine tuning; but, he is already confident about interviewing which serve him well when he has a prospective job that really interests him.

Coaching is essentially about performance improvement or change. And, it is as applicable in the business world as it is in the sports world. If you are a tennis player and you want to increase your defensive game you look for a coach focused on defense. To find a career coach, ask your networking contacts for their recommendations and you may find more people than you imagine are waking up to the benefits of career management coaching.