

## Career Counseling for Managers in Transition

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Mr. Turner brings over 25 years of global Human Resources leadership and organisational development experience Procter & Gamble, Pepsico, The Globe and Mail, Canadian Tire Corp., The Descartes Systems Group and Symcor Inc. from their Canadian locations. In his career he has led projects in acquisition due diligence/integration and developed performance management, succession planning, employee engagement and compensation/total rewards programs. Mr. Turner has a MBA from the Ivey Business School and a BSc in Chemistry/Biology from the University of Toronto, Canada. He speaks fluent English and conversational French.

### Overview

Losing a job in today's world can unfortunately be seen as part of the normal course of any professional's career progression - especially in these tough economic times. When revenues drop, expenses must be brought into line and for most service companies, payroll is their largest expense.

Pedersen & Partners offers the following steps in its career transition strategy to finding the right new job:

#### Step One - RECONCILIATION (or getting over the old job)

Job loss, usually brings with it 5 emotional stages - shock, denial, anger, reconciliation and acceptance. A skilled transition counselor is there to talk the individual through the early stages with the objective of getting through the anger as quickly as possible. Reconciliation is seen to begin as soon as the candidate is able to talk positively about the company that just let them go. There is simply no value in taking "the low road."

We encourage career transition candidates to create their "leaving story" as early as they can and then be prepared to "stick to it" with all who ask. There must be only one story on why they left and what they are now looking for. The marketplace is simply too small to tell different stories to different people

Next, ensure the candidate the right tools necessary to begin their new job of finding a job. For example, a personal cell phone - if they just lost their company phone; a home email address to replace the company email address; high-speed Internet service at home; business cards.

Finding a job is a project with a timeline and financial considerations and should be treated as such. A skilled transition counselor needs to be able to help the candidate develop and execute their project plan.

### **Step Two - REFLECTION AND SELF ASSESSMENT**

The next step is to get a good read on what the candidate liked most about the job they just left and what could have been better. In this step you list the accomplishments that provided the proudest moments as well as any shortfalls and what may have caused them. In this step psychometric testing should be used to give the candidate an accurate read on their personality profile.

This is the time to look at both job goals and life goals. It is just too easy to go back to the same kind of job even though there were things about it that put a strain on the candidate's personal life. Now is the time to understand this and plan for around it for the next job. Input from others is required, especially from family and friends. Self-assessment is a good start but it takes other's input to help understand any "blind spots." What competencies does the candidate need to develop? This could be the time to invest in the training necessary, making optimum use of the time that has become available.

### **Step Three - ESTABLISHING CAREER OBJECTIVES AND MAPPING A CAREER STRATEGY**

This step begins by looking at career objectives, to quote Stephen Covey: "beginning with the end in mind." When is retirement planned for and what is the ideal job to retire from? Now the candidate works backwards to understand the career ladder needed to get there.

In this step it is necessary to understand the trends in industry. Where are the jobs now? Where is the job market growing? Where are the jobs vanishing? This is the time to find the right industry for your next job. The overall strategy is to obtain the first job in that job succession strategy.

### **Step Four - DEVELOP YOUR RESUME AND INTERVIEWING SKILLS**

It is only now that the candidate is ready to create a draft of their resume. While the career counselor (especially one steeped in executive search) can provide input on style and content – it is also appropriate to share the first draft with others for their input. Make sure the resume is short and will make an impact with the right action verbs. Also realize that today, computers scan resumes looking for a fit to the job profile using "optical character recognition." The resume must also have both the right competency descriptions as well as the right technical words so the computer screens the candidate "in."

When was the last time the candidate was interviewed? This step teaches the 5 steps to an effective interview. It prepares the candidate in answering the most asked questions – from the dreaded: "Tell me about yourself" to the more specific: "Provide me with the situation that best tested your leadership skills."

### **Step Five - "GO" - NETWORKING AND MARKETING**

It is time to get out there and help the candidate to start networking. Their next job will most likely come from a contact of a contact of someone they know. It is not always a straight line.

The good thing about having a career counselor tied to a search company is the obvious powerful network they have developed. They also know the competition and what other search firms the candidates' resume should be forwarded to. It truly is about helping the candidate land – not waiting for a search to develop so the candidate can be slotted in. It is all about the candidate at this point.

Where are the best places to look on the Internet? The candidate is not only looking to find companies that have jobs but how to de-code their email format so that they can send their resume to the right person.

It is time to get the candidate out there. Time to start buying coffees. Finding a job is hard work and they must be "out there" talking to people who can steer them in the right direction.

### **Step Six - ACCEPTING THE RIGHT OFFER**

It is far too easy to take the first job that comes the candidate's way. Remember steps one through three above.

Remind the candidate about interview step number 4 - questions that they ask the prospective employer. They are interviewing the company that is interviewing them. They are looking for "fit" - just as the company is.

Success is achieved when they have an offer. Understand that this starts the negotiation and the career counselor becomes critical here. It is tough to receive more than "cost of living" increases after the candidate starts, ahead of any promotions.

The candidate needs to understand all of the various compensation components – total cash, total direct and total compensation

### **Step Seven - "THE FIRST 100 DAYS"**

Here the career counselor helps the candidate understand the "on boarding" program and how to create their 100 day plan. There are things they must do to get to know the company, the corporate culture and the people within it. Goals should be set collaboratively. The monitoring process should be agreed to. Help the candidate create a partnership with their new boss. Help the candidate create some "quick wins."

The career counselor morphs into a coach – where it becomes a co-active process. For the first 100 days the candidate continues to have a sounding board to ensure his or her success.

*Pedersen & Partners is a leading international executive search firm. We operate 36 wholly owned offices in Almaty, Athens, Baku, Belgrade, Bratislava, Bucharest, Budapest, Chisinau, Dubai, Helsinki, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Kiev, Ljubljana, Minsk, Moscow, Munich, Nicosia, Prague, Riga, Sarajevo, Skopje, Sofia, St. Petersburg, Tallinn, Tashkent, Tbilisi, Tehran, Tel-Aviv, Tirana, Toronto, Vienna, Vilnius, Warsaw, Yerevan and Zagreb. Our values Trust - Relationship - Professionalism apply to our interaction with clients as well as executives. More information about Pedersen & Partners is available on [www.pedersenandpartners.com](http://www.pedersenandpartners.com)*