

Outplacement Services Positively Impact Employee and Employer

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No matter what you call them – outplacement services, corporate outplacement services, executive outplacement services, or career transition services, outplacement positively impacts both the ex-employee and the employer.

A Typical Outplacement Scenario

Jill worked for ABC Company for over ten years in a middle management position. While she was technically competent, her networking and teambuilding skills weren't well developed. Jill's base of support within the organization steadily eroded. She became progressively isolated and, as a result, the results in her department have not kept pace with expectations.

While few people "like" Jill, no one wants to see her get hurt. After considerable thought and unsuccessful coaching and counseling, the decision is made that outplacement is the only reasonable option available to meet both the business' and Jill's needs.

Rationale For Outplacement

Outplacement does many things for the employee and the organization.

First, those in outplacement often find jobs in only a fraction of the time that it takes similarly situated employees who are not provided outplacement assistance. This reduces unemployment costs – a significant issue today.

Second, those who are offered outplacement are typically much less prone to seeking legal or regulatory relief. The kinder, more caring approach to career transition provides a supportive, positive source of guidance when they most need it. Outplacement helps people focus on their next job, not their last one, on future success, not past failure.

Companies who do not offer outplacement, risk driving ex-employees to seek their comfort from the person staring at them on the back of the local phone book. Both the operating and financial impact of legal involvement with an ex-employee strongly argues for the use of outplacement. The cost of high quality outplacement services is often a fraction of the cost of successfully defending a case filed in anger.

Third, the morale of the employees left behind and your reputation in the community and with your customers can be tangibly and positively impacted by providing outplacement services to departing employees. Every call an upset employee makes to current employees and customers potentially hurts their faith in your organization. Departing employees have also been known to divulge company secrets to competitors and customers and even make up stories to discredit their previous employer.

Picking An Outplacement Provider

Today, many outplacement providers are staffed by inexperienced personnel who don't truly understand the needs of those in transition and who can not help them develop good search strategies. The first thing to check is the professional and "life experience" of each outplacement provider. If they haven't come from a human resources or similar background and haven't been outplaced at least once personally, you should look elsewhere for help. You want service providers who aren't reading this stuff from a book. They need to have "been there and done that" to ensure that your ex-employees gets the emotional and job search support they need.

Look for providers that truly care about those in transition. Most don't – it's just a business. At 430pm on Friday they go home whether their clients are in need of them or not. While this is a typical business strategy in the outplacement industry today, it is a sad and unproductive one. It slows down the placement process and deprives the ex-employee of the counsel they need. Look for providers who are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Providers with the "servant mentality" will deliver what is needed, whenever it is needed.

Don't let your vendors time-limit outplacement services. To keep costs down over the last several years, there has been a trend in outplacement firms to limit the duration of outplacement from two to 12 weeks. This is often false economy because it may then take longer than necessary for the now unguided ex-employee

to find a job. This causes unnecessary stress and can land you into exactly the type of situations mentioned above. If outplacement is worth doing, it is worth doing well. Demand that your providers stick with your employees until they've been placed. You won't have to demand this from the type of provider you really want to work with – they will have it no other way.

Providing good outplacement services helps your company and the ex-employee. It is unusual that the “right thing to do” has this direct and meaningful impact upon your company. In this case, using outplacement is the only reasonable business option.

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