

INSIGHTS

FIVE QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CONSIDERING AN OUTPLACEMENT PROVIDER

Leading organizations realize that providing outplacement services shows respect to their former employees, improves retention and engagement with those who remain, and protects their employer brand. I have yet to meet a decision maker who is not concerned with how business decisions, such as mergers, acquisitions and downsizings, affect their people, making outplacement programs even more valuable. But, more and more, the conversations about outplacement are centered on the inability to evaluate an appropriate provider.

Outplacement is not a one-size-fits-all service. To ensure a proper fit for both company and vendor, consider the following questions:

What services are provided?

Having a knowledgeable professional to partner with and to help guide your employee through unfamiliar territory can greatly reduce his or her search time if the consultant is offering more than talk therapy. Ask about help with resumes, LinkedIn, creating a professional brand, networking scripts, interviewing, job search strategy, career change, starting a business, etc. Ask the potential firm if there will be group sessions, classes, webinars, and trainings as well.

How are services delivered?

Many career transition firms are moving to a mainly virtual platform. Virtual coaching can be beneficial for rural workers who don't have easy access to a coach, and these services are typically less costly. But, if you are outplacing more seasoned workers or if your exiting employees have not utilized a high-tech platform in their roles, the virtual platform can be intimidating and anxiety provoking. Make sure that the services will be delivered in a way that is familiar and comfortable for your exiting employees. Most workers find major benefits to direct interaction with their coach.

What are the coaches' backgrounds?

Your exiting employees are diverse. You'll want to choose a firm that offers a diverse and relatable coaching bench. Ask about the firm's talent. Are they certified? Do they understand your industry? Are they geographically located in a way that allows them to have knowledge about your employees' target markets?



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Does the firm have connections?

Connections are critical to the job search process. Your exiting employees will be encouraged to network. Ask questions to determine if the firm can offer connections to recruiters, hiring managers, and decision makers. Survey the tools, technology, and employees to ensure that you are putting your exiting employees in the best possible position to secure their next roles.

Do you want a vendor or a partner?

Choosing an organization to handle your outplacement needs is like deciding on car insurance. Some of us just want the bare minimum, and some of us want comprehensive coverage. If you're asking what the very least amount of coverage looks like, there are companies that will partner with you in that way. If you are looking for a partner who knows your needs, goals and values and will provide comprehensive care in planning, delivery and reporting of your career transition services, you will find organizations that will provide you that level of service. In evaluating providers, you should consider your end goal.

Choosing an outplacement provider should be done with care. Simply reviewing a proposal may not give you all of the information that you need to enter knowledgeably into a contract. Your potential provider should take time to meet with you, answer the above questions and thoroughly understand your needs. You may find it beneficial to reconnect with your current advisor and reassess the relationship on an annual basis. Remember that the level of service that the provider offers can impact your relationship with your employees and your consumers. Choose wisely!



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