

TOP EXECUTIVES TRANSITIONS: COACHING MORE THAN TRADITIONAL JOB SEARCH

Have you ever seen a top level CEO pick an outplacement firm for himself when he has to face an unexpected transition? Probably not! And if he does, let's assume no one will ever see him on the premises. He will most certainly meet his coach somewhere else.

His needs are different. He's got an amazing network at opinion leader level, including politicians, peers, actors, pop stars and will focus on the (undoubtedly many) options he is offered. Traditional outplacement is not the answer, coaching might be.

But of course not every senior executive is necessarily a top level CEO. Still, their route to a successful repositioning can be fairly similar. Whereas most outplaced candidates find a true benefit in the various stages of a traditional outplacement program (assessment, self-marketing, workshops on CV, networking, job search, interview techniques...), top executives will be inclined to approach their job search strategy differently.

At such level, open jobs on corporate company and head hunters websites are few and job boards tend to cover less senior positions. Networking is the key source of most opportunities and top executives generally have a wide network at senior management level.

Their expectation is therefore less technical than behavioural. In a growing number of cases top executives see a job transition as an opportunity to start or acquire their own business. And whenever they choose to find a new senior management position in a corporate business, their positioning and communication strategy will make the difference.

Building a strong CV, a suitable project, identifying adequate target groups would of course be a prerequisite, but certainly not a sufficient added value. The need for logistics is also less important and in many cases, top executives are reluctant to spend time on the premises of the outplacement firm (even among peers) to organize their job search campaign.

One of the key issues is actually their communication exposure and strategy. Is their positioning in line with the position they have been holding? What sort of digital presence should they aim at? Are social media essential or not to promote their image?

As senior executive, they must act as such in the message they deliver to head-hunters (when relevant), HR and corporate leaders. The right posture and attitude combining self-assertion, expertise and vision will have the necessary impact on all the parties involved in the recruitment process.



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The November ACF Europe Newsletter will feature an article by Bev White, (Managing Director HR Consulting at Penna Plc, UK and President of ACF Europe)

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Some outplacement firms have decided to focus on the top executives segment with success and they all stress the importance of handling such transition programs with a career management mind set. Specific tools, workshops, premises, logistics enrich more traditional job search programs, but it is often perceived by the prescribers as a marketing approach to justify higher prices.

Fortunately, there is more to it. Outplacement consultants in charge of that segment of the market have most of the time a senior management background and they understand the need for a different service.

More and more of these consultants are trained and certified coaches and they use their coaching skills to help their candidates move in the right direction.

Often, the next move has to be the right move in a career management perspective. Assess the options will embrace a much wider scope than simply the next job: environment, work-life balance, personal asset and risk management, tax issues...

Coaching a top executive in a transition period requires a specific focus on behavioural content: on options, on communication, on networking. Occasionally, the coach will make sure the coachee benefits from his personal network, but most of the time the coaching will be about addressing the network: contact level, approach strategy, follow-up. And often leads the senior executive to overcome a natural resistance towards asking help.

To measure the efficiency of this coaching approach, repositioning is definitely not the only and most important criteria. The ability to create a link with the targeted environment and show understanding of the stakes and vision of the organization are equally important.

And in the case of entrepreneurial projects, alongside expert counselling on set-up, legal aspects, business plans, fundraising, top executives expect to get assistance on this key change of direction (including moral support to overcome any doubt issues).

A coaching approach is a guarantee to offer the top executive a broader perspective for his next step. With a change management posture!

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ACF Europe Mission

ACF Europe is the representative body of the Outplacement Industry in Europe. Our mission is:

- To strengthen the positioning of the industry in the political circles**
- To assist national chapters in their PR work**
- To help possible customers to find the right provider**
- To develop the outplacement industry in emerging markets**
- To promote quality standards in the industry**

Our target is to represent companies where outplacement is a major part of their business, to extend coverage to 6 countries with local chapters and 14 countries with individual company members.

To contribute to achieving these targets ACF Europe will provide:

- An up to date website (3 languages)**
- 10 newsletters per year**
- 4 webinars per year**
- 1 conference every second year**

To measure the progress we will set the following targets:

- To grow membership by 10% p.a.**
- To gain the engagement of at least 2 members without board seats in contributing to newsletters**
- To attract at least 12 participants in the webinars**

Regarding the membership:

The ACF Europe's strategy is to strengthen the building of national chapters. Where national chapters exist and are members of ACF, then membership of ACF will only be available to organisations via the country chapter.



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