

# **Career Counseling is a Valuable Benefit for Employees**

By Linda Ginac, Career Counselor

One of the most crucial issues facing management is preserving employee commitment to company goals and objectives despite organizational instability. We are experiencing a time of great organizational change led by overseas outsourcing, downsizing, global restructuring, and diminishing career advancement paths. Because of these changes, employees are less likely to rise up the ranks and more likely to change jobs or area of specialization often. With performance being a fundamental cornerstone to financial success, employers will need to implement continuous learning programs and enable employees to acquire new skills to thrive. Those employers who shift the overall responsibility for career development onto employees will be less likely to cultivate loyalty and commitment.

At any time, your employees may experience career challenges which may seriously affect their success at the company. If these difficulties go unresolved for a period of time they are likely to impact their ability to cope effectively on the job. For senior-level professionals, the impact can be even more devastating because their work usually has a direct impact on overall business strategy and direction. Career counseling is a strategic resource that employees can use and managers can rely on when work performance, career transition, personal conduct in the workplace and/or culture fit becomes an issue. It provides a means for employers to encourage their employees to seek career assistance early to prevent small problems from getting out of hand and creating greater barriers to success. It's also a way to help key employees reach higher career aspirations so that they continue to add significant value to the company.

## **What are the benefits to the employer's organization?**

Employers use career counselors not only as a cost saving measure, but, more importantly, to "do the right thing" for both the employees and the organization. The benefits of having career counselors in-house may include:

- Increase in employee productivity
- Increase in supervisory effectiveness
- Retention of valued employees
- Less time spent managing poor performers
- Increased quality in employee performance
- Improved employee morale
- Feeling that your organization cares about employee well-being
- Resource base for professional, experienced facilitators of training and staff development programs

## **What is a Career Counselor?**

A career counselor is someone educated, trained and experienced in helping employees tackle their toughest career problems and achieve their highest career aspirations. Career counselors typically are experienced in dealing with assessment, performance improvement, career transition, career pathing, workplace, and work/life balance situations that plague all of us at one time or another. Career counselors are experts in tailoring strategies and techniques to the specific needs of people or groups seeking help.

## **What does a Career Counselor do?**

Career counselors can provide a wide range of services. They will do one or more of the following:

- Administer and interpret assessments and inventories to assess work values, interests, skills and competencies
- Identify alternative internal career options for people in transition that capitalize on individual knowledge, skill and ability profiles
- Develop specific career paths with experience, knowledge, abilities, and skills defined
- Create career development plans to help employees grow and learn
- Maximize person-job-organizational fit
- Explore and prepare employees for internal job searches, including resume preparation, in-house interviewing and networking
- Identify and cultivate internal mentor and career advisor networks for personal career development
- Link employees with internal and external training programs based on performance improvement needs
- Provide unbiased, objective career counseling intervention/mediation/facilitation for people experiencing job stress, job loss or transition during corporate reorganizations, mergers or downsizing
- Teach internal career advisors and mentors how to be more effective in guiding employee development
- Facilitate employee training and development initiatives

## **Will a Career Counselor keep my issues or concerns confidential?**

Yes. Confidentiality is a requirement and a guarantee we make to all employees. Without it, the career counseling program wouldn't work. Every career counselor knows this rule. No information goes anywhere without your request and written permission.

### **How much will career counseling cost?**

Most organizations hire career counselors on retainer and can expect to pay between \$85.00 and \$200 per hour. Rates are negotiated based on the number of days a counselor is on-site at the client's facility and the duration of the contract. For example, one employer may pay \$3500 per month for 4 full-time days of service, while another employer may pay \$9000 per month for 12 full-time days of service. Many career counselors also price using a fixed-fee model based on project. For example, if an employer wanted to assess a department, a career counselor may propose a total fee for the assignment. Employees are not expected to pay for the service when it's offered via their employer.

### **How does career counseling work?**

Career counselors typically sit on-site at the employer's place of business. Most employees usually require 6-12, one-hour sessions but this depends on the nature of the career initiative. Employees typically make appointments with the career counselor and develop a meeting schedule based on availability. For services such as organization-level assessment and development of new or enhanced organization-wide processes and infrastructure, the approach for delivery of services and counselors' time on site is usually determined on a project by project basis.

Business is not only about achieving financial results, it is about valuing and developing human resources. This article suggests some ways for employers to understand the value of offering career counseling to employees. Career counseling serves the organization by developing internal talent, helping employees adjust to major change initiatives, improving the collective I.Q. of the organization and working to counter low morale associate with uncertainty and instability. If you are not currently employing a career counselor at your organization, please consider the many benefits of doing so and contact the Ginac Group, Inc. for more information.

Linda Ginac is a certified coach and career counselor. With more than 13 years experience in career counseling, marketing and staff development, Ginac owns and directs a private practice, [The Ginac Group, Inc](#) located in Austin, Texas. Ginac offers a variety of career management services to businesses and individuals, including: change management, individual and group counseling, career change and job transition, individual and group assessment and diversity career planning.