

## Insider's Guide to Career Helpers

*You know there are professionals whose entire job is to help with your career. But they all seem to have different titles and names for what they do. It's like "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," trying to figure out which lidded snake pot hides the kind of help you need. So we asked legal careers expert Karen MacKay for the inside scoop. In her first installment, she focuses on those who can help you find a direction.*

### **Who You Gonna Call?**

To effectively navigate your search for a new job, it's good to know the difference between all of the players. Let's take a look at career professionals who might work with you to guide, focus and power your efforts.

**Outplacement Providers.** Many law firms recognize that every lawyer who passes through the firm has the potential to become a connected and loyal alumnus — and that happy alumni are great assets. So smart firms engage outplacement providers to support lawyers in their transition out of the firm. The providers are paid by the firm to support you. They are to be your ally as you work together to get you relocated. Their work with you is confidential. Be certain, however, that you clearly understand the relationship before you begin. Ask for definition of what is confidential and what might be shared with your firm—clarity about this from the beginning is important. If your firm offers you outplacement, take it. But make sure that the provider works extensively with lawyers.



by Karen MacKay, MBA, CHRP  
President

**Career Counselors** are coaches who are engaged by individuals who want to explore the next steps in their career in a focused and guided way. They can help you assess your strengths, for example, and look at the career options that might be a good fit. Some work hourly, others on a flat fee. Beware of career counselors who tell you they guarantee anything! There are no guarantees in life and your career is *your* responsibility. Find a good coach by personal referral.

**Executive Coaching** is becoming mainstream and the quality of the coaches and of their training can be quite rigorous. (Make certain that any executive coach you choose falls into that category. Ask for credentials.) Coaching has attracted a number of mid-career lawyers who transitioned into this field. A good coach can help you to make sense of your goals and your career and help you to get clarity about next steps. But be clear before you start: You have to come up with the plan and do the work, the coach cant do it for you.

Whether you choose outplacement, career counselling or coaching, find someone who is a lawyer or who specializes in working with lawyers. You don't want a dabbler helping you with your career.



*Next: The career professionals who make connections for you.*

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