



JANUARY 2009

## A LITTLE GOODWILL GOES A LONG WAY



*At CPI/RW Caldwell helping people navigate change is our business.*

A **Career Transition Assistance Program** may be the most important separation benefit you provide in a "Down Market".

The current credit crisis is impacting corporations across all industries without discrimination. **Executives are facing extraordinarily tough decisions** in the design of severance packages supporting separating employees.

In an era where this critical process is becoming commoditized and impersonal, our experienced consultants provide career transition candidates with one-on-one, **face-to-face consulting**. Boasting the field's **best consultant-candidate ratio**, we support our consultant-candidate relationships with state-of-the-art human resources technology, but never let it take the place of human contact. The online portal provides resources to support job searches, company intelligence database searches and networking. **Small-group training modules** and **support groups** occur regularly at the career center. (cont'd page 2)

### Client's Corner

**Networking** remains the most lethal arrow in your quiver in the job search battle. And the beauty of it lies in the fact that it is simply talking to people. You know someone who knows someone who knows someone. That someone may hold the key to your next exciting and satisfying career!

Monica came to the career center with an extensive background in marketing. She had been using her personal network to open some doors, but the leads failed to materialize into a firm offer of employment. Sensing her frustration, I contacted a friend and owner of an educational marketing firm and asked him to give Monica 20 minutes of his time to help her brainstorm. At first his comments were ones that we often hear, "I don't have any current openings" and "I don't know how I can help her." With a little persuasion on my part, I finally convinced my friend that he would be doing Monica, himself and me a favor by meeting with her. (cont'd page 4)

### RECRUITING IN A DOWN ECONOMY

Job opportunities are down slightly as companies see negative growth, a turbulent financial market place and a tight economy. The NY State Department of Labor stated that the Buffalo area lost 4,700 private sector jobs; one percent of it's total in the past year. Unemployment is up sharply to 6.27% compared to 4.5% last year. Meanwhile, candidate numbers are up due to corporate layoffs and a chaotic car industry which impacts us here in Western NY. Hiring managers now have the chance to pick from a larger and wider range of experienced professionals than in the last several years, **but not all is doom and gloom**. In this type of market, hiring managers tend to wait longer and interview more candidates before they make an offer. However, swinging too far in this direction can lead to harmful results in the long term. (cont'd page 4)

## **For the Separated Employees...what is the value of Career Transition Assistance in a Down Market?**

Being laid off is a traumatic event in the life of the employee and his/her family. The best programs are designed to help the employee overcome this trauma while also providing the tactical weapons they'll need. The most effective will:

- Create a market-driven, results-oriented resume in the shortest timeline possible.
- Proactively market your separated employee to prospective companies rather than passively making a database available to the public. Provide guidance and support in creating customized marketing campaign. Rigorously prepare candidates for the interview process through mock interviews and feedback.
- Pick candidates back up after a rejection, dust them off, and coach them through lessons learned to help them get back into the fight with confidence and stamina.
- Programs delivered through one-on-one, personalized coaching relationships, by nature, provide a more supportive and productive environment compared to those programs that herd employees like cattle through a series of classroom lectures.

## **For the Sponsoring Employer...the value of providing Career Transition Assistance in a Down Market is cost savings and risk reduction.**

Employees given the benefit of a solid program have an enhanced chance to re-employ faster than those who don't. As a result, the employer can save in many ways not always considered:

- Employees are less likely to linger on your health plans via COBRA reducing the claims exposure.
- Fewer unemployment claims reduces the employers UE contribution rate.
- Successfully re-employed employees, well treated in transition, are less likely to file post employment claims for unlawful harassment, discrimination or other disparate treatment types of claims.
- Those employees left behind, not part of the RIF, are watching how separated employees are treated. You end up with a happier, more productive remaining workforce.
- A community that regards you as a good corporate citizen.

**Since 1986, CPI/RWCA** has provided many companies like yours with customized programs that help displaced employees execute smooth career transitions. We offer both individual and group programs, complete with consultation, tailored to your needs and budget.

## **JOIN US FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2009 7:30 a.m.** Semi-monthly **HR Roundtable** discussion group. Interested in joining? Contact Mark 716.632.0850/mweigel@rwcaldwell.com.

**Excellence In Leadership (Level I)** class session for the Winter Semester  
**Friday January 23, February 6, February 20, March 6, March 20, and April 3**  
**8:00 a.m. – Noon.**

### **Management Development Seminars:**

**Crucial Conversations:** *Winter* February 25, March 4 & 8 (3 full days, 8am – 5pm)  
*Spring* May 1, 8 & 22 (3 full days, 8am – 5pm)

**Execute with Excellence:** February 27 (8am – Noon)

**Hire the Best:** April 1 & 8 (2 half-days, 8am – Noon)

**Speed of Trust:** May 15 (8am – Noon)

### **CEO Seminar:**

**9 Lies Holding Your Business Back:** May 29 (8am – Noon)

Interested in registering or finding out more about these courses? Visit our website at [www.rwcaldwell.com](http://www.rwcaldwell.com) and click on **Leadership Institute Curriculum** or contact Diane Denton @ 716.853.7601.



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*problems that are ignored don't conveniently go away.*

Leadership Institute

# World-Class Performance Evaluation

Early in my management career at General Electric, I learned that the least favorite activity of a majority of supervisors/managers was the performance evaluation process; and as my career progressed I realized that there is nothing more important.

Leaders tend to avoid the evaluation process because **most people inherently try to avoid conflict**. Yet, most problems that are ignored don't conveniently go away. A mentor of mine once told me that the top priority for a manager is to develop the top 20% of his staff into future leaders, to motivate and encourage the middle 60% to maximize their performance, and to address the bottom 20% for the benefit of the company and those individuals.

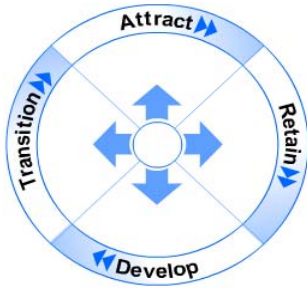
An effective performance **evaluation process is a lynch pin** to achieving that priority. Characteristics of an effective process include...

1. Buy-in and support from the **senior leadership** team.
2. **SMART** goals and objectives (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable **R**ealistic, and **T**ime sensitive).
3. An objective **grading system** that differentiates high & low performers.
4. Direct tie-in between the evaluation and any scheduled salary actions.
5. A 360-Degree **evaluation process** including a self-evaluation and involving the direct supervisor, critical customers/suppliers, peers, and direct reports.
6. Effectively communicating positive and negative feedback.
7. Specific **action plans** to address any needs for improvement or development.
8. Providing on-going follow-up/feedback.

World-Class Performance Evaluation is a course we recently developed in response to the perceived **weakness in this area** we've received from several area firms.

The course is taught in two four-hour sessions with homework/practice for the participants to complete between sessions. For further discussion call Mark 716.632.0850.

"There is only one way to get anybody to do anything. And that is by making the other person want to do it." Dale Carnegie



## Talent Management Cycle

Attract

Retain

Develop

Transition

## Staff and Associates

**Dottie Austin**

*Principal*

**Mark Weigel**

*Principal*

**Diane Robinson**

*Search Services Manager*

**Todd Nicholas**

*Senior Consultant*

**Nick Boccolucci**

*Executive Coach*

**Laurel Brown**

*Career Counselor*

**John Leamer**

*Career Counselor*

**Diane Denton**

*Administrative Associate*

**Carol Merrill**

*Bookkeeper*



www.rwcaldwell.com  
716.632.7662

## RECRUITING IN A DOWN ECONOMY

(cont'd page 1)

The best possible candidate is still a **balance between a talented skill set, sincere professionalism and future growth** potential with the organization.

Even though the market seems depressed, companies continue to hire. While candidates must work harder, hiring **companies are discovering a wider choice**. Hiring managers may falsely assume that in this type of job market they can raise the bar. This in turn could bring on board an overqualified candidate.

For the typical needs within an organization, an overqualified hire could hurt the budget at a time when the bottom line is extremely scrutinized. The general rule is that it is a likely chance that an overqualified candidate will become bored quickly and leave the job when the down market returns to normal. It may be a better idea to find a less expensive junior person, **someone competent and bright with potential** for growth, which could help with some fiscal reprieve. It may take some extra time to train a lesser-experienced person but this could fit well in an environment where projects have been put on hold, until economic conditions improve.

Letting go of talented employees today means that sometime in the near future, short falls will appear. Upper management will begin to increase demands put on existing employees and the **lack of experienced professionals with intimate knowledge of company workings will impact growth**. It is extremely difficult to change the minds of executives bent on reducing the bottom line, but middle managers serve both themselves and the company by keeping areas staffed as much as possible.

Once an organization requisition is permitted, move swiftly to gather resumes, conduct interviews, and complete the hiring process. Review job requirements and descriptions to ensure clear and concise communication. **Make an offer that is a worthwhile financial incentive**. Don't allow the pressures of the temporary economic conditions to lead to someone turning down a lowball offer.

Organizations should take advantage of the ability to hire. Set realistic parameters and **use common sense when making decisions**. Try to ignore the discouraging influences associated with a down economy and push ahead to prevent worse problems in the future. For further discussion call Diane Robinson at 716.853.7600.

## CLIENT'S CORNER

(cont'd page 1)

If nothing else was accomplished, he would be providing a somewhat defeated lady with a little more hope and purpose. Prior to the meeting, I coached Monica on my friend's preferences and tendencies. She also went online and did some extensive research on his background and on the firm that he operated. We discussed some potential questions that she may want to ask, and I encouraged her to promote her own marketing attributes and skills. I reminded her that this was a networking meeting and not a job interview, but said she would be well served by treating it as such. One final reminder from me was for her to ask for help and not a job—then she was off to her meeting. Later that afternoon my friend called me to say "Thanks"; she turned out to be the perfect fit for the culture of his company. He wasn't being untruthful about not having an opening, but after spending 90 minutes (not 20) with Monica, he decided to create one for her. Networking is simply the process of the right person being in the right place at the right time. Offers of employment are many times (as in Monica's case) a networking by-product.