



## **THE JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE PROFESSIONS**

*-Prepared by the CTC Staff*

The new job seeker will find many references in recruitment and employment literature to “career counselors,” “career coaches,” “executive recruiters,” and “headhunters.” These terms -- and the advertisements for their services -- can be very confusing. In the following notes, we will try to define these employment services. The important thing to remember is that the best – and, perhaps, the only -- person who will find the perfect job for you is you yourself. Career counselors and coaches, like the CTC staffers in the Job Search Program, can help get you on the right track, but headhunters and recruiters generally work for companies, not individuals.

### **What is a headhunter?**

A headhunter is an independent recruiter whose client is a company that is searching for candidates for a particular job. Although their cleverly worded advertisements and websites may lead you to believe your interests are a priority with their company, it is important to remember that the headhunter/recruiter is working for their client company – not for you, the candidate. Some headhunters specialize in searches for high-level executives, others specialize in specific professions or industries.



### **Where to find a headhunter?**

The Association of Executive Search Consultants (AESC) has set forth a Code of Ethics and Professional Practice Guidelines for recruiting firms worldwide. Their website is worth a visit at [www.aesc.org](http://www.aesc.org) and includes a list of member firms. If you deal with a headhunter/recruiter, their membership in that association is generally an indication of their adherence to AESC standards. Another source is “The Directory of Executive Recruiters” (compiled and published by Kennedy Publications).

You can also find lists of executive recruitment firms on the Internet. (Be sure to use that term as “headhunter” will lead you to some rather bizarre websites!) One particularly good list is found on The Riley Guide website at [www.rileyguide.com](http://www.rileyguide.com).

The location of the recruiting firm doesn’t necessarily indicate the geographic focus of the firm. Some firms perform country-wide searches. In the Washington, D.C. area, some of the most frequently mentioned executive recruitment firms are:

Chamberlain Williams Tison & Associates  
Dahl-Morrow International  
Dinte Resources  
Grant/Morgan Associates  
Kforce Professional Staffing  
Korn Ferry International  
Logue & Rice  
McBride Associates  
Paul-Tittle Associates

Christian & Timbers  
DHR International  
Future Source  
Heidrick & Struggles  
Klein Landau & Romm  
Krauthamer & Associates  
MBA Management  
McCormick Group  
Roger I. Sekera & Associates

Rurak & Associates  
S.R. Clarke  
Spencer Stuart

Russell Reynolds Associates  
Savoy Partners

### **How a headhunter is employed and paid?**

A headhunter working for a “contingency fee” only gets paid by the client company when the search is completed and the candidate is hired by the company. There may be many headhunters involved in the search for a candidate to fill that position, but only the headhunter who finds the candidate hired will be paid the contingency fee.

In the Washington, D.C. area, it is often difficult to differentiate between a contingency paid headhunting company and a government contractor company. Some USG agencies work through contractors to hire personnel. This is good for USG retirees because they are being hired by a contractor, such as Chugach Systems Integration, and are not risking suspension of their annuities by working directly and fulltime for the government. He or she works in the government office and is usually supervised by a government employee, but the government pays the private company who pays his salary. Other JSP graduates have been hired by private companies contracted by the government for a specific project or function. Examples of these private companies include Innovative Technology Applications (ITA) which provides the crisis management course at FSI, and Strategic Staffing which provides information management support at FSI.

A headhunter working on “retainer” is usually the only headhunter involved in the search and gets part of their payment from the client company at the beginning of the search. Headhunters who work for retainer fees are generally working to fill very high level executive positions.

Contingency or retained fees may range from 25 to 50 percent of the hired candidate’s first annual salary. These fees are generally paid by the company receiving – i.e., employing -- the candidate.

Even in a tough job market where there are few jobs and many applicants, a company may choose to employ a headhunter to search for candidates instead of using their own Human Resources recruiters. The headhunter has the time and the personnel to weed through applications and interview candidates before presenting the very best to the client company. The headhunter also has a wider network in which to perform the search.

A company is most likely to “retain” a headhunter only for its most senior level executive jobs. While HR personnel are sorting through resumes, the headhunter goes out and hunts. Headhunters frequently lure the best candidates for those positions away from companies in which they are very happy. These are not candidates who would answer a vacancy announcement in the print media or on the internet.

With the downturn in the economy, some headhunters say that they are able to provide even better service to their corporate clients. They now have the time to find the perfect candidate for the job and the company culture and to perform deeper reference checks.

### **How a headhunter hunts**

A headhunter may recruit at career/job fairs, but generally pursues other avenues in his search for viable candidates. Headhunters network, advertise, and research the internet. They may also check with trade and professional associations, conference speaker lists, and alumni directories. Some headhunters have websites on which you can register your resume in their database. The

registration may be free, but there is often a fee charged. Here are a few websites on which you can register your resume:

DHR International, Inc.	<a href="http://www.dhrintl.net">www.dhrintl.net</a>
Dinte Resources, Inc.	<a href="http://www.dinte.com">www.dinte.com</a>
Heidrick & Struggles	<a href="http://www.heidrick.com">www.heidrick.com</a>
Kforce Professional Staffing	<a href="http://www.kforce.com">www.kforce.com</a>
Klein Landau & Romm, Inc.	<a href="http://www.jurisjob.com">www.jurisjob.com</a>
Korn/Ferry International	<a href="http://www.kornferry.com">www.kornferry.com</a>

A few websites even list the job vacancies they are trying to fill. Again, a fee may be charged for access to these lists. These websites include:

Chamberlain Williams Tison	<a href="http://www.bosssdogs.com">www.bosssdogs.com</a>
Heidrick & Struggles	<a href="http://www.heidrick.com">www.heidrick.com</a>
Klein Landau & Romm, Inc.	<a href="http://www.jurisjob.com">www.jurisjob.com</a>
Korn/Ferry International	<a href="http://www.kornferry.com">www.kornferry.com</a>

You can register (for a fee) with the AESC at [www.BlueSteps.com](http://www.BlueSteps.com). All recruiting firms who are AESC members have access to that international database.

Ways to be noticed by a headhunter include:

- Be a speaker at a professional conference
- Publish an article in a professional journal or other national print forum
- Make sure the movers and shakers in your profession know you and can recommend you if asked for a reference by a headhunter
- Get your name included in your current company's or association's news releases

### **What is a recruiter?**

A recruiter works for a particular company, usually in the Human Resources Office. He or she is responsible for identifying and recruiting candidates for certain positions in that company. He receives a regular salary and receives no bonus for filling a position in his company. Recruiters use many of the same search tactics as headhunters and they often recruit at job fairs.

### **What is a career counselor?**

The career counselor helps the client to understand himself, identify his career goals, and explore his career options. Career counselors usually have master's degrees in counseling.

Job Search Program graduates have received a lot of career counseling during the month in the JSP course. To find a career counselor in your area, check with the National Board for Certified Counselors at [www.NBCC.com](http://www.NBCC.com). Career counseling standards and ethics are governed by the National Career Development Association whose website ([www.ncda.org](http://www.ncda.org)) also lists career counselors by state. The Association of Career Professionals International certifies outplacement, coaching and career counseling professions. Their website also offers a list of counselors by region ([www.acpinternational.org](http://www.acpinternational.org)). If you feel the need to employ a career counselor, then it is best to search these sites for a counselor who adheres to the published standards of these associations.

Career counseling requires face-to-face interaction and the work is directed internally at the client's personality and desires. Career counseling usually involves several sessions, the cost ranging from

\$50 to \$150 per hour. Of course, nowadays, you can also receive career counseling on-line! You can find an on-line certified career counselor at [www.readyminds.com](http://www.readyminds.com) .

The career counselor may encourage and support the client during his job search, but the career counselor does not aid in the actual search.

### **What is a career coach?**

The career coach helps the client attain his career goals. The career coach motivates and challenges the client, urging the client to action. Career coaching focuses on the client's external goals and may require more time than counseling. The career coach helps the client make an individualized action plan to achieve his career goals. The career coach may also help the client develop better tools, such as resumes, for his job search.

There are few education requirements for career coaches. Most career coaches have taken some sort of training, but that ranges from two-day courses to more extensive certification programs.

Again, JSP graduates have received a lot of career coaching during the month in the JSP. However, if you want to find a career coach in your area, then it is best to use reliable resources. Explore the Coaching Circles website at [www.coachingcircles.com](http://www.coachingcircles.com) . You can also check both the International Coach Federation ([www.coachfederation.org/coaches/search1.cfm](http://www.coachfederation.org/coaches/search1.cfm)) and Coach University ([www.findacoach.com/index.html](http://www.findacoach.com/index.html)) websites for lists of coaches by specialty areas, including career coaching.

Sometimes career coaching doesn't involve actual personal interaction between the career coach and the client and can even be done by telephone or e-mail. A career coach may sign the client to a contract, but charges are still by the hour and range from \$100 to \$200 per hour.

The career coach may teach resume writing and interview techniques as well as other job search skills, but the career coach does not identify actual jobs for your application.

### **Summary**

Is there anyone out there that you can hire to represent only your interests in an actual job search? The answer is "well, maybe, kinda, sorta" and we will explore those possibilities in subsequent newsletters.

For now, we will end this article with a few words of advice. Before dealing with a private headhunter/recruiter or a company recruiter, read their advertisements and offers very, very carefully and remember that they are not working for you. Before employing the services of a career counselor or a career coach, review the materials you received in the Job Search Program. You may find that we have already given you the tools and guidelines you need for your job search. The CTC staffers — Bill Owen, Nedra Klee Hartzell, and Amy Pitts — are also available to talk with you in person or by e-mail or telephone, if you would like to consult with us about career counselors and coaches.

# THE JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE PROFESSIONS – THE SEQUEL

- Prepared by the CTC Staff



We have defined and discussed career coaches, career counselors, recruiters, and headhunters. Now we will attempt to address the important question, “Is there anyone out there that I can hire to represent me and my interests and find me a job?”

That question started a long and frustrating search through the Internet, the yellow pages, the newspaper, and our network of contacts in the

“industry.” We were looking for a professional person or company who could take up where the career coaches and counselors might leave off, someone the job searcher could employ like an actor’s talent agent.

Our first clue that this service might not really exist was linguistic. There doesn’t seem to be one term for the service – like talent agent. Here are some of the names we ran across in our search:

permanent placement service  
staffing company  
career specialist  
outplacement firm  
advance fee firm  
executive management consulting firm  
career marketing

career placement service  
employment agency  
executive search specialist  
retail or consumer outplacement firm  
career management company  
career consultant  
search firm

These names all sounded promising and we investigated each one, but, reading the fine print on their websites and advertisements, we soon discovered that they generally fell into the categories of recruiter, headhunter, career coach, or career counselor.

For want of a better term, let’s call these possible talent agents “career marketers.” Some work only in one industry, such as information technology, others handle all types of professionals. Unlike career counseling and coaching services, most of the career marketing services we found in our search were offered by companies, not individuals, and it appears to be a largely unregulated “industry” -- Clue Number Two. We did find the International Association of Career Consulting Firms ([www.iaccf.com](http://www.iaccf.com)) that sets forth some standards for the industry.

## Career Marketing Services

Like a career counselor, some career marketing companies offer assessments of your skills and preferences. Like a career counselor or coach, some will help you revise your resume and hone your interview skills. Like a counselor or coach, some will instruct you where and how to look for a job in your chosen field. Like a counselor or coach, some will help you devise a job search plan. Like some recruiting companies, the career marketers may refer you to their corporate customers for a job, thereby providing services to both that company and you – charging you both and dividing their loyalties. Sometimes this is done by allowing you to list your resume – for a fee, of course - on

their website which is accessible only to their corporate customers. Some use third party job listing databases – which may be available to you for free on your home computer.

In addition to the services traditionally associated with counseling, coaching, and even recruiting, the career marketing companies may offer you clerical support and stamps in addition to office space, telephones, fax machines, and Internet terminals. Others may offer research on the companies you are targeting.

### **How Career Marketers Recruit**

Some career marketing firms will even call you! They may get your name and number off the resumes you posted on the Internet (a scary topic for another article!), then call you with a slick sales pitch. Some advertise their close, personal relationships with the movers and shakers in your profession, offering to mail introductory letters for you to these contacts. Some claim access to unpublished, unlisted, unadvertised job vacancies. Some promise a weekly meeting in which they will provide you with a certain number of job leads, but tailoring those leads to your personal search criteria (location, salary, etc.) may not be one of their priorities. Sound too good to be true? Clue Number Three.

Some career marketers claim to be very exclusive and interview you to make sure you are good enough for them. This is a legitimate tactic when they need to make sure you really do have a Professional Engineering license in that state or that you are a senior executive earning a 6-digit salary. Unfortunately, there are some companies that use the tactic as a sales technique. Many of the articles we read on this phenomena joked that the company's review usually took only long enough for your check or credit card to clear!

Another tactic used by the more disreputable career marketers is to place job announcements in newspaper and professional publications. When you respond and go to the interview, thinking you are applying for a specific position, they lead you to believe they are recruiters, tell you that job has been filled, but you would be perfect for other jobs they are handling. You just need to spruce up your resume, practice your interview skills, etc., etc. Watch out for these silver-tongued devils! The literature we've been reading says the red warning flags are too much flattery and too much criticism.

### **How Career Marketers Get Paid**

Most career marketing companies target executives with high salaries and provide minimal, if any, services to mid-level professionals like most of us. They can certainly earn much larger fees from a person earning \$500,000 plus than they can from a humble ex-government employee! And, in their new jobs, the executives will have the power to hire more of the career marketer's clients.

Please note that NONE of the services they offer are free! And their fees are usually not listed in their advertisements and websites.

Unlike the career counselors and coaches who charge hourly fees, they often require payment or, at least, a down payment, in advance. Some career marketer advertisements specifically state that the company is not an "employment agency" because in some states, employment agencies are not allowed to take payment for services in advance. Clue Number Four.

Their fees vary dramatically from a few thousand to many thousand dollars. Sometimes they base their fee on your last salary. No matter how much you pay, the services you receive may be the same.

A few of the less reputable career marketing firms will assure you that their rather daunting fees will probably be refunded to you or paid by the employer they find for you. Some declare that there will be no charge at all if they fail to find you a job – but, again, beware of the fine print!

### **Summary**

If you detect a note of cynicism here, you are right! Reading fine print will do that to you! Most of these companies offer legitimate and useful job search services. They will not, however, pound the pavement for you. This research has only reaffirmed our belief that you are really the only one out there looking out for you!

So, we will end this article with the same words of advice we gave you last month. Before dealing with any job search professional or company, read their advertisements and offers very, very carefully. Be especially careful before signing a contract that may cost a lot for very little in return. Don't rush and don't let the company or individual pressure you. This is your career and deserves your time and attention.

Here are some more tips on protecting yourself from the less honest job search professionals:

1. Read their advertisements and contracts carefully and ask lots of questions about the services advertised. Especially scrutinize the money back guarantees – many are payable only if you have filed certain progress reports or filled out several forms. Look for loopholes!
2. Get everything in writing – make sure all those promises are on paper and clearly defined. If they guarantee job placement, make sure it's not at the Wal\*Mart front door!
3. Ask them where they find their job leads. You have access to Monster.com and will not be impressed if that is their source, too. If they are promising interviews with CEOs of big name corporations and access to a hidden job market, ask for proof. Beware a pig in a poke!
4. Ask for references and actually check them out. We read about one company whose references worked for them!
5. Research the company with a search engine like "google." Make sure the company has been in business for at least 2 years under the same management. Also check the company with some good consumer advocacy resources like your local Better Business Bureau ([www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)), [www.ripoffreport.com](http://www.ripoffreport.com) and sites such as [www.jobscams.com](http://www.jobscams.com) (which even has a "Hall of Shame!"), The Riley Guide ([www.rileyguide.com](http://www.rileyguide.com)), and Executive Career Management ([www.execcareer.com](http://www.execcareer.com)).
6. Talk with the company's staff and check their credentials. Sometimes you will be interviewed by the smooth talking sales staff, then find – after you've written the check -- that the company's counselors have been working with the local high school vocational program, not seasoned big city professionals like you. Also find out how much time your counselor(s) will actually spend with you, how big is his/her/their caseload, and what has been his/her/their success rate.

7. If you post your resume on an Internet site, be very careful. If you can avoid including your physical address and telephone numbers, do so. Include only an e-mail address on the resume and make it a special address just for this purpose.

Now here's a slick little ad for the CTC:

Before employing the services of a job search (career marketing!) professional, review the materials you received in the Job Search Program. You may find that we have already given you – for free! -- the same tools and guidelines they advertise for a fee. The CTC staffers are also available to talk with you in person, by e-mail, or by telephone, if you would like to consult with us about the job search industry.