

Actively Caring for Those You Exit

Does anyone else think “outplacement” should be a four-letter word? Or better yet, should it be banned from our vocabulary?

Outplacement is one of those words that means people are losing their jobs—and being offered resume/search services. Help that is:

SUPER NECESSARY!

SUPER INSUFFICIENT!

There is so much more that sits between “Announcement” and “Getting Your Next Job” ...

Namely, *people*.

People reeling from the news, its implications for them, their families, and their livelihood.

People with heads, hearts, families, college tuition bills, mortgages, aging parent issues, stressed out kids.

People who, in their most honest moment, admit to being ready for a change, and have the creds to land something different.

There is a lot that sits between “Announcement” and “Getting a Next Job,” and employers can help their soon-to-be former colleagues in ways that impact how they finish, leave and land—while strengthening the company’s brand.

People have so much untapped potential that they haven’t yet explored. When employees are let go and simply given resume/job search services, without being encouraged to pick their head up and ask new questions, too often they land something with all the trappings, disappointments, and frustrations they had in the job they are leaving.



Why not encourage them to pause and discern what they’d choose to replicate and what they’d like to leave behind? What new areas are they now qualified to do given their most recent experiences? What passions or prior experience do they have that they would like to reignite in their next role?

Actively caring for colleagues in authentic, discretionary, and helpful ways resonates deeply with people impacted—and *inspires those who remain with the company*.

The top three things we recommend:

1. Provide clarity.

Timeline, compensation/stock/benefits treatment, and implications. So many people experience stress when information needs go unmet. Only HR can provide such answers, so do that well and thoroughly. It’s table stakes for supporting your colleagues well. Ambiguity makes a stressful situation even more stressful. It also engenders anger and resentment from employees and their family members.

2. Provide support navigating the transition.

There are many steps to leaving a company and finding a next role. Enable your employees to travel that journey with the support of someone who can help, who cares, and who is confidential to them.

Support from a caring advisor helps individuals:

- a. Manage the stress. There is no physical health without mental health. There are proven strategies to successfully manage life's stressful events.
- b. Communicate internally and externally about the change in a way that ensures barriers/uncertainty are not created with colleagues, customers, suppliers, and other key stakeholders.
- c. Recognize the opportunities that come with career transitions—a time to pause, reflect and re-invent as they discern what they want to do next taking into consideration their career stage and life circumstances.
- d. Update their resume/CV, bio and/or LinkedIn in a manner that highlights their most significant career accomplishments, positions them best for their target job opportunities, and facilitate networking with people who can be helpful to their efforts.

3. Demonstrate respect for all they have done for the company, by how you treat them and how you enable them to land elsewhere.

- a. At a minimum, provide resume support and job search assistance.
- b. Use your network to help them in their search for a next job.
- c. Launch a site that posts jobs/who is hiring.
- d. Demonstrate you care by checking in with them, monitoring their needs and situation—so they feel respected and appreciated.

Companies will always need to flex their workforce size and composition, commensurate with strategy, market needs, and performance of the business. That fact is as old as time.

Providing (only) outplacement for employees being let go is also as old as time.

People are the life blood of organizations. They deserve better, even if they leave your company. Wherever they land next, and on the road to getting there, they will speak often about their former employer.

What do you *want* them to say?

How the company treated them under unwelcome transition circumstances will be their most recent data about whether or not the company values its people. *That's* what they will talk about.

Empower your HR leaders to change the narrative and support provided around employee exits. Departing employees can grow *closer* to your company by how you care for them, and by *truly* helping them transition well, and begin well. That is what real respect and actively caring for your people includes at this stage of the employment lifecycle.

Treatment of soon-to-be former employees matters not only to them but to those who stay and to your brand. Exits do not have to end badly. You have the power *and the obligation* to ensure colleagues impacted by job loss: Finish Well. Transition Well. Are Well in their next season.

It's **so** much more than outplacement.

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Dr. Leslie Braksick—executive, entrepreneur, CEO coach, board member, and author—co-leads MyNextSeason to support companies and individuals during important transitions across the career continuum—and ensure they happen well.

MyNextSeason provides companies and individuals with support in navigating strategic career transitions such as succession, retirements, and development of high-potential leaders. Transitions need to happen exceedingly well for individuals to realize their purpose and potential, and to ensure company cultures and reputations are enhanced through strategic talent management.