

Knock 'em Dead Guide: Finding a Career- Management Consultant

By Martin Yate

Try as you might, you can't seem to settle on a new career direction. Hard as you work at it, that job hunt never seems to get out of first gear. Or perhaps after weeks of effort on your resume, and months of using it, you know it just isn't doing the job required. It's in situations like these, when you know you could use some help but you don't know where to turn, that a career consultant might be worth consideration. Sometimes two heads are better than one.

A career-management consultant is just that: someone trained and experienced with practical approaches to problem areas in your career. I've worked in different areas of the career management industry for what is approaching thirty years, and in the process come to know many professionals in this growing field. In the process, I've met the good, the bad and the ugly; and in the next couple of pages will share with you some essential ideas for finding and choosing a consultant who is right for your needs.

When choosing a consultant to work with you in any capacity, it is a good idea to have a methodology for determining exactly how you will decide on the most suitable match for your needs.

- 1. Ensure the consultant can work with you based on your objectives.** You should also differentiate between career coaches and life coaches. Although some are qualified to do both, you are best advised to choose someone with career management credentials to help you with the practical issues of making a living. Define where you need help and find someone who has experience in that area.
- 2. Get specific details regarding the coach's process in aiding you with your goal(s).** Some consultants help you identify what it is you have to offer, and work with you to determine possible areas of career application. Others help you identify and apply the skills you have in pursuit of your worklife goals, whether that be in preparing a resume, planning and executing an effective job hunting strategy, or negotiating a competitive package.
- 3. Understand time factors involved as well as related costs.** All your problems cannot be sorted out in half an hour. If there is a specific issue, sometimes this is the case, but typically, several sessions are needed in order to meet the objective. Invariably the first session is spent in clarifying your needs. All too often in career issues, the cause of confusion comes from misunderstanding the causes of your problems and their appropriate solutions. It's important to understand the guidelines and the cost factors, and to budget accordingly for this expense. You can expect to pay somewhere between \$75 to \$300 an hour, just as you would with an accountant or lawyer.
- 4. Make sure there is mutual respect.** A really helpful coach is not looking to be LIKED by you, but rather, to ensure your goals and objectives are attained. From your point of view, the same holds true, you don't necessarily have to like the coach but you do have to have a sense of respect.

- 5. Know the training/credentials of the coach.** While credentials aren't a sure sign of a knowledgeable consultant, it does indicate a level of commitment. While the professional world's of coaching and consulting are beginning to spawn respected degree programs, the majority of credentialing goes on in the context of membership and ongoing education through active membership in professional associations.

At the same time, someone with the highest credentials but no real world work experience in the field, can lack understanding of your challenges, and with only the theoretical experience lack the ability to customize practical techniques to the solution of your particular problems.

Ideally you are looking for an experienced consultant, who comes with a professional background from somewhere in the in the career management industry, and whose credentials are a signal of an ongoing commitment to his or her professional development. Something to which we all (and that includes you!) should be committed.

Understanding credentials

Now we come to the alphabet soup of credentials. Here is a list and explanation of most of the relevant career coaching credentials. I will follow this with a list of highly experienced and credentialed coaches from around the country, and also organizations where you can find more of the same. I know all of these people from their active involvement in the professional community.

Remember credentials typically accrue to career management consultants from their ongoing commitment to professional education and involvement in the professional community.

NCC - Nationally Certified Counselor

- Offered through the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC).

Candidates must:

- Have an advanced degree in counseling from an accredited college or university.
- Complete certain hours and standards of supervised experience in counseling.
- Present two professional endorsements
- Achieve a passing score on the National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification (NCE).

GCDF - Global Career Development Facilitator

- Offered through the Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE).

Candidates must:

- complete 120 hours of training which include 80 hours of direct classroom learning
 - have one year of experience in career development in combination with a 4-year degree
- OR
- have two years of experience in career development
 - agree to the ethical guidelines established by the CCE
 - agree to seek supervision and consultation when needed
 - complete 75 hours of Continuing Education Credits (CECs) over 5 years to maintain the credential

IJCTC - International Job and Career Transition Coach

- Offered through the Career Planning and Adult Development Network

Candidates Must

- be assigned to a job that requires career development advisement
- Complete a 3-day, intensive, hands-on training program
- Are recommended to attend at least one professional development conference per year

CJST - Certified Job Search Trainer

Candidates Must

- be assigned to a job that requires career development advisement
- Complete a 3-day, intensive, hands-on training program
- Recommended that CJSTs attend at least one professional development conference per year

CMP - Certified Career Management Practitioner

CMF - Certified Career Management Fellow

- Offered through the International Board for Career Management Certification (IBCMC).

Both Certifications

- Academic Training – Bachelors degree or equivalent
- Life Experience – personal learning that has contributed to who you are as a person.
- Commitment to Professionalism – professional development and study – earned through presentations, article publications, case studies, etc.

CMP

- 5 years career management experience
- 5 years industry experience

CMF

- 10 years career management experience
- 10 years industry experience
- Offered through the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP).

CWDP - Certified Workplace Development Professional

Candidates Must

- Meet certain standards of education and experience combined... for example a Bachelors degree and 24 months experience in the field.
- Agree to adhere to the code of ethics
- Demonstrate a commitment to excellence through membership in a workforce development related association
- Possess knowledge and skills in 12 distinct areas of competency
- Provide 2 references including an immediate supervisor

CPC - Certified Personnel Consultant

CTS - Certified Temporary Staffing Specialist

- Offered through the National Association of Personnel Services Certification (NAPS). This certification, and it's importance, addressed In Chapter Four, on pages 26 and 27 of the

Both Require

- 50 hours of Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) every 3 years.
- current employment in industry – provide written verification
- agreement to uphold NAPS standards of ethical practices and certification program rules

CPC

- 2 years experience in direct hire placements
- pass the CPC exam

CTS

- 2 years experience in temporary staffing
- pass the CTS exam

SPHR - Senior Professional in Human Resources **PHR - Professional in Human Resources**

- Offered through the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

Both Require

- 2 years HR experience as a HR practitioner, HR educator, HR researcher or HR consultant
- employment with at least 51% of daily activities in HR functions

or

- meet eligibility requirements for students and new graduates

PHR

- focuses on the technical/operational aspects of HR
- recommended candidates have 2 to 4 years experience
- pass examination

SPHR

- focuses on the strategic policy issues of HR
- recommended candidates have at least 6 years experience
- pass examination

ACC - Associate Certified Coach

MCC - Master Certified Coach

PCC - Professional Certified Coach

- Offered through the International Coach Federation (ICF).

ACC

- 250 client coaching hours
- 5 coaching references
- 60 hours coach specific training

PCC

- 750 client coaching hours
- 5 coaching references
- 125 hours coach specific training

MCC

- 2500 client coaching hours
- 10 coaching references
- 200 hours coach specific training
- pass written and oral exam
- documentation of contributions to the coaching profession

All

- pass the ICF written and oral examination

CCC - Certified Career Coach™

- Offered through Career Coach Institute
-
- completion of CCI's Core Courses (96 hours), plus one elective (24 hours), plus 6 months of coaching (12 hours)
- passing score on Coaching Review and Career Development Review (during 2 day retreat)
- written case study report on one individual coached
- journal article of at least 1000 words in length
- favorable review on Coaching Effectiveness Survey from 5 clients coached for at least 90 days

CCC - Certified Comprehensive Career Coach

- Offered through Comprehensive Coaching U, Inc.

CCC

- Completion of 24 hours of training over 12 weeks
- Pass written / oral examination

CCMC - Certified Career Management Coach™

- Offered through Career Coach University

CCMC

- Complete a 12-week Career Management Coach™ program with no more than 3 absences
- Pass the CCMC testing module – includes a written exam and live coaching evaluation with a Professional Certified Coach
- Conduct 10 **optional** coaching sessions with a professional coach (PCC or MCC credential preferred); Sponsor coach must be on the approved mentor coach list and have at least 30 hours of coach training.

CRW - Certified Résumé Writer
CERW - Certified Expert Résumé Writer
CMRW - Certified Master Résumé Writer

- Offered through the Professional Résumé Writing and Research Association (PRWRA).

CRW

- All résumé writers are good candidates for this credential

CERW

- Experienced résumé writers and career developers should apply for this certification

CMRW

- Experienced résumé writers, career developers and industry leaders who are active participants in PRWRA egroups and chats and who demonstrate commitment to service through community work may choose to apply for this credential.

CECC - Certified Electronic Career Coach

- Offered in association with the Professional Résumé Writing and Research Association (PRWRA).

CECC

- Complete the 14 week training program
- Complete and pass the final Web Portfolio development project

NCRW - Nationally Certified Résumé Writer

- Offered through the National Résumé Writers Association (NRWA). www.nrwa.com

NCRW

- Meet continuing education requirements prior to and following the examination
- Pass the 2-part examination consisting of a written exam and résumé / cover letter writing exercise

CPRW - Certified Professional Résumé Writer

- Offered through the Professional Association of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches (PARW/CC).

CPRW

- Pass 4-part examination testing a candidates:
 - Industry knowledge
 - Command of grammar, spelling, punctuation and proofreading
 - Strategic thinking skills through essay questions relevant to the résumé writing field
 - Develop a written résumé and cover letter based on provided client information

CEIP - Certified Employment Interview Professional

- Offered through the Professional Association of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches (PARW/CC).

CEIP

- Complete the 2 day workshop or home study via video tape and study manual.
- Complete and pass the examination