

# Key Findings from Career Strategies' On-Site Career Coaching Programs

## March 1, 2000

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These findings are based on client surveys of two Career Strategies Career Coaching programs in two financial services companies in Boston. One program has been in existence over a period of two years, and the other over the period of a year. Approximately every six months, clients were surveyed who had received service in the previous six months.

### ***On-site career coaching has a positive impact on associate retention.***

32% of all clients served thought that quitting was their only option before talking to the career coach. Almost all of these people were retained. Slightly fewer than 7% actually left the two companies. This number is far lower than the turnover rates for those companies.

### ***92.8% of all clients served actually took action as a result of the coaching.***

In comparison with more passive delivery mechanisms like workshops, on-site career coaching is a highly effective way to get results. An average of 22% of those served received promotions after seeking the advice of a career coach. Other actions included enrolling in training, having a career discussion with their manager, informational interviewing and preparing or updating a resume.

### ***Associates in whom the firm made a substantial investment are on-site counseling users.***

Unlike career programs, which attract mostly entry-level associates, on-site career coaching attracts higher level, more experienced people. Forty-five percent of those coached were mid-level, had a bachelor's degree or higher and had more than five years of professional experience. An additional 17% (nearly one in five) were senior level specialists, consultants, directors and above. The replacement cost of only one of these mid-level or senior level associates would pay for one day of on-site counseling a year.

### ***On-site career coaching is cost effective.***

Our on-site clients use an average of only 2.65 coaching hours to achieve their goals as contrasted with an average of five hours that the clients in our Beacon Street office use. The average direct cost on a per-client basis has remained under \$500 a person, even though the on-site counselor is also responsible for meeting with internal referral sources and for program administration. In addition, clients take very little time away from the job when they participate in on-site career counseling, which costs the firm less than if they had been at a workshop.

### ***On-site clients want to develop a career direction within their current firm.***

The most common reason clients site for seeking career coaching is to develop a career direction within their firm. Typically this means determining career interests, gaining an understanding of their skills and developing an action plan. Other common reasons clients seek career coaching are to pursue a job change or to develop a career plan within a changing environment. In all these cases, the clients view their job market as that of the firm.

### ***Unbiased advice from an external expert was seen as a plus.***

A frequently mentioned benefit of on-site coaching is the advantage of having an external expert providing a safe environment to discuss career ideas. Clients value the "objective outsider" whose advice can be trusted.

### ***On-site clients were very satisfied with the service.***

On-site coaching has a very high satisfaction rate. Across all the surveys, fully 100% were very satisfied with the service and 62% have referred others to the program.

## How We Obtained These Findings

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The findings in this report come from statistical data and user surveys of on-site career coaching programs that were directed by Career Strategies, Inc. Two Boston area financial service companies out-sourced their on-site career coaching through Career Strategies. Both companies were assigned the same Career Strategies career coach. In both cases the career coach was available to meet with associates one day a week. One-on-one meetings were the norm. Follow up work was sometimes done using the telephone or e-mail.

The on-site career coach maintained a database of pertinent service user information. This database included user name, contact information, organization/department, title, job level, reason for seeking career coaching, number of meetings, whether or not a career test was used and the referral source.

The two companies employed vastly different program communication strategies that ranged from no program publicity to a comprehensive communications using print and electronic media vehicles in addition to the human resources organization.

Twice a year a survey of service participants was conducted. The same five-questions were asked in all surveys, allowing Career Strategies to measure the program's effectiveness from survey to survey and from company to company. Survey questions were as follows:

1. *What prompted you to contact the career coach/seek the advice of a career coach?*
2. *What actions have you taken since the session(s)? - or - What plans have you made as a result of the coaching sessions?*
3. *What was the most important benefit to you of the coaching?*
4. *Have you referred others to the coaching program?*
5. *Is there any additional information you would like to share with me?*

## Sample Client Comments

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- *I was on the verge of quitting and I ended up changing jobs and staying with (the company).*
- *Because the coach is from the outside, I feel that the allegiance is with me and not with (the company).*
- *(The service) expands thinking and creates a more flexible mindset.*
- *Without the career coaching I would have remained totally without direction. I'm happy at (the company) and now have a focused career direction.*
- *An outside consultant really lets me see things from a different perspective.*
- *It is very useful to have someone as a sounding board that is independent of (the company) but knowledgeable about options here.*
- *Extremely useful. Enlightened of (the company) to offer such a service.*
- *The service is invaluable. I would not have been able to figure this out on my own. Outside resource is helpful, helped me to figure out what's best for me.*