

# OUTPLACEMENT: The Smart Way to Navigate Layoffs



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# Introduction

Imagine the dinner conversation most people have with friends and family after getting laid off. It's probably punctuated by alternating anger, anxiety, and perhaps despair. Most people are inherently frightened of change. They're afraid of engaging with a rapidly evolving and extremely competitive job market and covering their expenses. Undoubtedly, a layoff is the kind of thing that makes a person lose sleep at night. And it's the kind of thing that can damage a company's brand if it's not handled properly.

But does the layoff experience have to be entirely negative? It depends on the employer's strategy. If an employee is abruptly removed and left without support, they can feel overwhelmed and frustrated. But what if there was a way to assist them during this transition? What if that assistance included career coaching and job search guidance, and it lasted until they found a new job? Imagine the conversation at the dinner table that night.

**By offering outplacement services to laid-off employees, your company can become the hero of the story.**

Outplacement services provide support and guidance for laid-off employees so that they can reorient themselves with the job market and smoothly transition into new positions. Outplacement is a substantial benefit for your staff members – and it's an effective way to safeguard three critical components of your business: your employer brand, candidate pipeline, and employee retention rate.



# How Do Outplacement Services Work?

Outplacement services offer resume assistance, career coaching, interview tips, and job search guidance for employees transitioning out of your company. Outplacement providers, third-party vendors that work specifically with laid-off employees, use their expertise to help your transitioning staff find new opportunities.

These services usually last from 30–90 days, but some companies offer support for as long as it takes for employees to secure new positions. Outplacement can be offered as part of a severance package and, although you can no longer offer them employment, employees will appreciate compassion under these difficult circumstances.



## Outplacement and Your Brand

Outplacement services offer protection for your employer brand by reducing the likelihood that employees will speak negatively about your company, potentially tarnishing your reputation online or among colleagues.

Transitioning employees will also be less likely to sue your company for unlawful termination. Plus, if your outplacement program is successful, employees will find a new job faster than they would on their own, saving you money from continued assistance through unemployment.

# Why You Should Use Outplacement Services



## **PROTECT YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND**

When you're ready to rebuild your team, how you handled layoffs may influence whether new candidates are interested in applying for your jobs. Providing outplacement services is a great example of how you can create positive sentiment among former and remaining employees in an otherwise difficult situation.



## **FILL YOUR CANDIDATE PIPELINE**

Offering outplacement services can help you maintain positive relationships with former team members to prepare your business for the future. Employees who were supported while transitioning to a new job will be far more willing to return, if the opportunity arises, than those who were not. When your company is ready to hire again, you can feel confident approaching former employees who may be interested in rejoining your team. This can save you time and money that would have been spent recruiting and onboarding new applicants.



## **REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT COSTS**

If you can quickly transition an employee into a new position, you will save money on unemployment costs. This could offset the expense of outplacement services while protecting your brand and fostering good relationships with former employees.



## **RETAIN CURRENT EMPLOYEES**

Providing these services lets employees know that they'll be taken care of no matter what happens, and it takes away the anxiety of potentially being left high and dry without a job. Plus, giving your departing staff members support during a difficult time will help you maintain trust and goodwill with your existing team. Be honest with your current employees about the future of their positions.



## **SET UP EMPLOYEES FOR FUTURE SUCCESS**

The skills employees gain from career coaching and job search guidance can help them when they change careers down the road or when they are ready to apply for a more senior position. Understanding the job market and how to promote themselves will carry forward into future endeavors.

# Selecting the Right Outplacement Firm

The best outplacement firms will be HR thought leaders that offer a variety of job guidance services and have coaches that are specialized in many different industries. They should provide personalized service, and that service should continue until the employee is placed in a new position.

Here are four things to look for in an outplacement firm:



## **PERSONAL APPROACH**

Your outplacement provider should offer personalized services that meet your employees' career needs. A CEO is going to need a different program than a mid-career employee. Avoid firms that provide group coaching sessions in lieu of individual coaching. Everyone's skills and circumstances are unique. A one-size-fits-all approach won't deliver the help they need, and it could result in a negative experience with your company's brand. Quality outplacement programs offer one-on-one sessions with a career coach who can give them their full attention and individualized advice.



## **FLEXIBLE SERVICES**

Outplacement programs should give your employees the flexibility to use services in a way that works for them. Many people prefer to search for jobs in the comfort of their homes, so consider choosing a program that offers virtual and online coaching. Consider firms that provide outplacement assistance to job seekers, regardless of their level, until they are placed in a new position – that way, you can be confident that each of your employees will make a successful transition.



## **STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS**

The right outplacement firm will have knowledgeable, specialized career advisors capable of giving advice in specific industries and they should have a team of certified resume writers. They should be able to provide success metrics for your program, and those metrics should be accessible and delivered in real time. A quality firm will be able to match your employees with advisors based on their career level, industry, or goals.



## **MODERN MINDSET**

There was a time when career coaching was done at brick-and-mortar offices during business hours, but those days are gone. Employees need access to services that fit their schedules. Make sure that the firm you select is using tech to complement their services. Ask questions like, what changes have they made to their tools and services over the last year, were those changes successful, how did they measure success, and did they provide ongoing training for their career coaches and resume writers?

# Virtual vs. In-Person Outplacement Services

We know that getting outplacement services at brick-and-mortar offices is becoming far less common, but you may be wondering if there is still some benefit to face-to-face coaching. At iHire, we have found that virtual outplacement can be a better option because it's easier to access for:

- People in rural locations.
- People who can't come into the office.
- People who need to access services outside of traditional work hours.
- People who took on temporary work after being laid off.

Job seekers can get personalized career advice, resume pointers, interview tips, and demonstrations on how to use a job search platform just as they would in a face-to-face coaching session. Plus, without the overhead costs associated with brick-and-mortar operations, virtual outplacement firms can invest in providing more value to the job seeker, like advanced technology and ongoing training for their career coaches and resume writers.

In-person outplacement may also limit the number of career coaches available to the job seeker, meaning they'll be placed with someone based on location, not on their actual needs. Virtual outplacement services offer more flexibility because career coaches can be matched to job seekers based on their industry, goals, and experience level without being limited by their location.

If you're deciding between in-person vs. virtual outplacement services, consider your unique situation, the needs of your transitioning employees, and what makes the most sense for your company.

# Outplacement Services for Small Businesses

When we think about outplacement services, we often think about large businesses that are laying off dozens or even hundreds of employees. So why should small businesses consider outplacement services?

- 1. RELATIONSHIPS.** Employees in small companies can feel like family members.
- 2. RETENTION.** Outplacement services can help preserve your internal reputation with employees who are left in the wake.
- 3. BRAND.** Assisting transitioning employees can boost your external reputation and encourage new candidates to apply for your jobs when you're ready to hire again.
- 4. COST.** Outplacement services can be affordable and save you money in the long run.

Letting go of team members, even just one, can have a lasting impact on your small business. Outplacement is one way you can lessen the risk of damaging your internal culture and external reputation. You can also give your transitioning employees a helping hand as they navigate a tough time.

## How Long Should You Offer Outplacement Services?

The general rule is: Offer outplacement services as long as it takes to transition the employee into a new position.

Many companies only offer 1-3 months of outplacement, but it usually takes at least one month just to generate a resume and cover letter and get acquainted with the latest job market developments. Finding a new position, especially a high-level position, can take 4-6 months. During that time, your brand and your finances could be impacted.

Offering career guidance, job search assistance, and resume writing services can help land your employee a new position quickly. Your employees and your reputation will thank you.

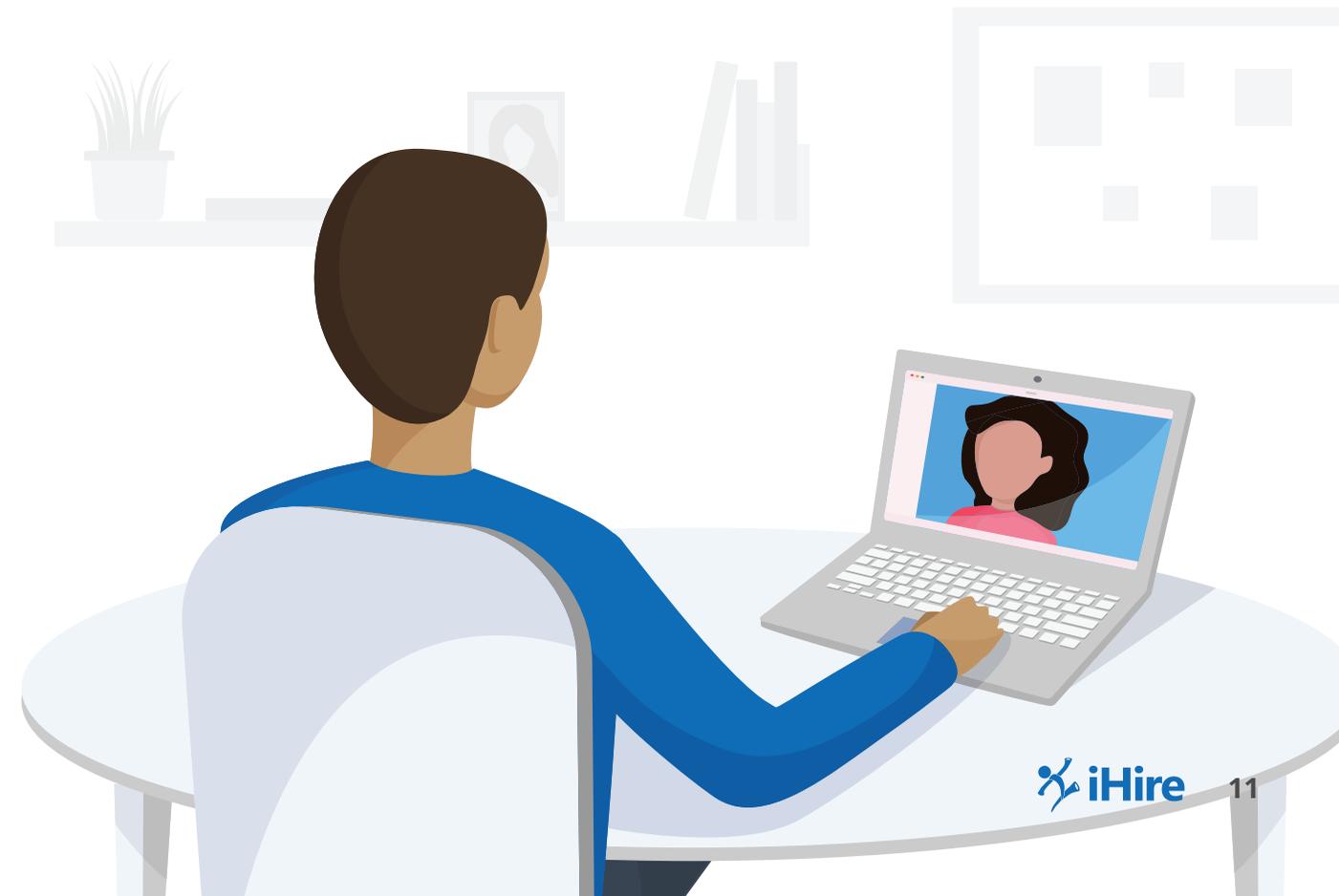
# Virtual Outplacement Services From iHire

iHire's Virtual Outplacement Services are an effective and affordable way to assist transitioning employees with finding new jobs while protecting your employer brand, reducing unemployment costs, improving the morale of remaining staff, and minimizing risk. Wherever you or your employees are located, our team of certified career experts can help.

At iHire, we offer:

1. Proprietary job matching technology.
2. Certified career coaches and resume writers.
3. Proven job search solution with 14 million+ users.
4. Guaranteed support until placement.
5. A candidate-centric career platform.

[Learn More About iHire's Virtual Outplacement Services](#)



## About iHire

iHire is a leading career-oriented platform that powers a family of 57 industry-focused talent networks, including WorkinSports, iHireVeterinary, iHireDental, iHireConstruction, and iHireChefs. For more than 20 years, iHire has combined advanced job matching technology with our expertise in the talent acquisition space to connect job seekers with employers in their desired sector. With an industry-specific, candidate-centric, and data-driven approach to recruitment, iHire helps candidates find meaningful work, and employers find unique, high-quality talent – faster, easier, and more effectively than a general job board. Visit [www.iHire.com](http://www.iHire.com) for more information.

