

Flextronics Uses the MBTI® Tool for Inspirational Outplacement Counseling

Busting the Job Search Myths

We need Myth Busters in today's job market! The biggest obstacles in finding a new job, especially after being laid off, are the "job search myths." Let's face it, people are scared of searching for jobs, especially in the midst of a recession. However, the fears people have about job searching tend to be largely unfounded. We recently talked to Cheryl Bakke Martin, who is the president of Inspirations Unlimited, a Calgary-based career counseling and coaching company. Cheryl just finished an outplacement counseling program for employees at Flextronics, an international electronics manufacturer. She was very impressed with Flextronics for its commitment to helping staff through the career transition process. She said, "Flextronics really had their people's welfare as their top priority."

Flextronics is in the process of shutting down its Calgary facility, which employed 370 people. Cheryl told us that "people tend to create their own obstacles to finding satisfying jobs, and my job is to shift people's energy from despair to hope and optimism." She says the key is to realize what they are good at and what they like to do.

The first myth that career counselors need to break is the narrow view of what people believe they are capable of. Cheryl told Flextronics' employees to not define themselves as what they had done in the past, or think this is what they have always done, so it is all they can ever do.

Her goal was to shift people's tendency of looking back and preventing change to looking forward at new opportunities. In her lively self-assessment workshops she told them they could look at this as an opportunity to ask themselves, "Where am I, where do I want to be, what have I never had the opportunity to try, and can I make that happen now?"

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Cheryl Bakke Martin,
President, Inspirations Unlimited

Cheryl believes the self-assessment component of outplacement counseling is the most important thing companies can do for staff. She said, "One of the greatest tools that I have found to take people's blinders off is the MBTI® Career Report; it creates a new awareness of what they really enjoy doing and what kind of environments they would thrive in. This helps people understand what 'good job fit' means to them personally, and that they should not just try to get any job. It helps them direct their job search."

Cheryl said she saw a significant change in the energy level at Flextronics after she did the self-assessment phase of her transition program. People were energized with new possibilities. They were comparing their MBTI® assessment



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results in the lunchroom, talking about jobs they were going to look into and places they wanted to work.

The second myth career counselors are up against is created by the media and perpetuated by people's peer groups. Cheryl urges her clients to not believe everything they hear. Daily news stories about the recession and layoffs does not mean that there are no jobs; it all comes down to where to look.

Cheryl taught Flextronics employees how to approach the job market and how to find out about the opportunities that do not get posted. These largely come down to using existing networks and learning how to find new networks.

The last myth to be broken is that career counseling is only about teaching skills such as resume writing, interviewing, and how to find job opportunities. One of the most important aspects of career counseling is the encouragement and support it provides. "Career counseling does require a little bit of hand holding and encouragement," Cheryl said, "and an important part of this is giving people the confidence they need."

Tools like the MBTI® Career Report help identify their preferences and suggests possible jobs to look into. Depending on the client, Cheryl uses two, three, or sometimes four other resources to identify patterns that are presented throughout them. People need to be confident that they are going in the right direction, and confidence brings with it hope and optimism.

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