

Busting the "Job Search Myths"

SHIFTING CLIENTS FROM DESPAIR TO OPTIMISM

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 Counselling and Coaching Company. Cheryl just finished an outplacement counselling program for employees at Flextronics, an international electronics manufacturer. She was very impressed with Flextronics for their 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 their Calgary facility which employed 370 people. Cheryl told us, "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 career counsellors 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 peoples 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?"

Cheryl believes the self-assessment component of outplacement counselling 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 results in the lunch room, talking about jobs they were going to look into and places they wanted to work.

▶▶ continued on page 2...

Save Us From Our House

USING THE MBTI® INSTRUMENT BEHIND THE SCENES

A sure fire way to bring relationship issues to a head is to do a home renovation. They test a couple's ability to work together to set and follow a budget, a project timeline, and a work schedule. Home renovations also require a great deal of creativity and flexibility.

We had the good fortune to talk to Alex Gellman, the chief negotiator on the **W Network's "Save us from our House"** television show. In this fun and moving relationship-renovation reality TV program, the "house-saving team" responds to frantic families who have been suf-

fering in their space. The show deals with all aspects of renovations from the budgeting, design, and construction side to the emotional impact that the completed renovation has on the couple.

Behind the scenes, Alex helps couples negotiate their on-air renovation projects. She has 30 to 45 minutes to figure out what each half of the couple wants out of the renovation and what each of them needs to carry it out. She says she "always reaches happy resolutions with the couples."

So how does Alex do it? For a successful negotiation she needs to understand how each person makes decisions, thinks, gets energized, organizes their lives, and sees the world. To do this she has couples complete the MBTI® assessment before she meets them at the negotiation table. Alex said that participants are sometimes reluctant to do an assessment, but she convinces them that it would greatly improve the negotiation process and save a great deal of time. She said, "without the MBTI tool it would take me a good five hours to find this same information out." Because

of her 30-45 minute timeline she tends to focus on one or two of the dichotomies per couple.

Alex noticed that Judging-Perceiving differences between a couple often causes problems. The person with the Judging preference usually wants a set plan, and they want to get things done quickly. On the other hand the person with the Perceiving preference usually wants to explore different options and likes to leave room for spontaneity and creativity. Here are a couple of her adventures related to Judging-Perceiving differences.

Creativity versus Efficiency

Dax is an ENFJ; a man who relies on structure, routine, and plans to organize his life and projects. Once a direction is set he is happy, because he knows he is working towards an end

.....
NETWORK

► The Second Myth

.....
...continued from page 1

The second myth career counsellors 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 lay-offs 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.

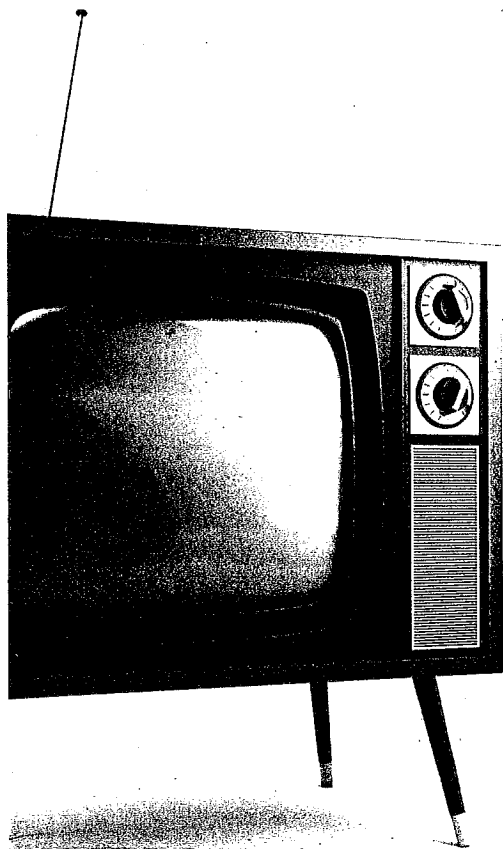
The last myth to be broken is that career counselling is only about teaching skills like resume writing, interviewing, and how to find job opportunities. One of the most important aspects of career counselling

Daily news stories about the recession and lay-offs does not mean that there are no jobs.

.....

is the encouragement and support it provides. "Career counselling 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 helps 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.



After their 50th Anniversary

An Italian couple who had been together for over 50 years was about to renovate their house. Even before the renovation they had been fighting so severely they were on the brink of separation.

Sarifino is an ENFP who has been retired for a couple of years, and who enjoys his free and flexible lifestyle. Before the renovation he was spending his days with his buddies shooting the breeze, playing cards, having a couple of beers... just enjoying hanging out. Beatrice is an ISFJ who just retired from being a school teacher. However, she likes structure and plans.

Sarifino was used to taking off with the family car and coming back when he pleased, but Beatrice wanted to know his plans so she could organize her days around when she had access to the car. Alex realized that if their renovation was going to be successful she would have to focus on his need for freedom versus her need for structure and plans. She worked with them on understanding why each operated the way they did and how to compromise for each other in life and in their renovation.

Two to Tango

It is not only Type differences that cause problems in home renovations. Alex also looks for Type similarities that can lead to problems. For example, two Introverts can struggle through a renovation, because they do not communicate enough.

Nick and Harry are both Introverts, and they were not getting along well before their renovation project. Neither was good at expressing himself, and their main problem was they did not want to or even know how to air their disagreements. They both tended to withdraw rather than express their feelings, so their conflicts tended to play out through indirect means.

Introverts tend to like notice, because they do not like to be put on the spot, and neither Nick nor Harry were an exception to this, especially Nick who really did not like to have things sprung on him.

Alex worked on teaching Nick and Harry the importance of being more direct in expressing their concerns, and worked with them to create a structure to air their issues. They built an arranged way to communicate, which included giving each other notice if one wanted to discuss a concern, and approaching the issue with a mutual understanding of the importance of being direct. With an established communication process Nick and Harry were ready to start their renovation project.



Alex Gellman is an Executive Coach, Motivational Speaker, Author and Team Facilitator. Alex is also working with the MBTI tool on a new, reality TV show about rehabilitating criminals to become Sous Chefs.

goal. Colleen is an ISTP; a woman who is open to anything including new ideas, different ways of doing things, or a change of plans at any stage of a project.

I am sure you can imagine the potential for conflict! While meeting with them Alex realized their Judging-Perceiving difference would be the main contributor to renovation friction.

Alex worked with Dax and Colleen to communicate how the other operated, and how this influences how each of them would like to carry out the renovation. Dax needs a plan and a budget laid out so he is comfortable spending money and time on the renovation. Colleen needs an outlet or an opportunity to be creative and explore ideas before they start. With this understanding they were ready to begin their project.