



Job Tips for 50+ Workers

www.aarp.org/jobtips

Do You Need a Career Coach or Counselor?

Career professionals are individuals who charge a fee to make your job search more successful. Most people who work in this field call themselves either career counselors or career coaches. But how do you decide if you need their help?

You may be looking for a job, wanting to switch careers, or at a dead end about your career choices. Wherever you fall on the spectrum, think carefully about your needs before making your decision to use a career professional.

Evaluate Your Situation

Ask yourself: What factors are hindering my ability to get the job I want? For example:

- Am I unclear about what I want to do and whether my goals are realistic?
- Are there too few jobs of any kind in my area?
- Am I too busy to develop a good job search plan?
- Is my lack of self-confidence holding me back?
- Am I talking to someone who knows what it's like to be job hunting at my age?

Check out free or low-cost alternatives

Before hiring a counselor or coach, be a good consumer and do your homework. Explore these free or low-cost online and community resources:

- **Career books and websites.** An increasing number of print and online resources are available for the mature job seeker.
- **AARP Foundation WorkSearch.** Provides detailed assessment, counseling and job search help for qualified individuals. For locations see www.aarp.org/worksearch.
- **Job clubs and career workshops.** There's no centralized database for job clubs or workshops, but they are offered by many religious and nonprofit groups. Check online and at your public library. The website QuintCareers.com] tells you how to start your own support group. http://www.quintcareers.com/job_club.html
- **Networking.** Find job leads and support through family, friends, neighbors, and former colleagues. Make a list of leads and contacts and follow up with each one. Join the AARP Online Community at www.aarp.org/thewatercooler.
- **Labor market information.** Learn about jobs and the job market in your area. The Career OneStop website (<http://www.acinet.org/>) profiles hundreds of occupations and tells you what jobs are in demand. Check out salary information sites such as www.salary.com.
- **Career assessment tests.** Some are free; others charge a fee for more personalized service. Find out more at The Riley Guide www.rileyguide.com/assess.html and the Job Hunter's Bible www.jobhuntersbible.com.

Know What Career Counselors and Coaches Do

If you feel that you've done what you can on your own, then the individual attention of a career professional may be the answer. A good counselor or coach can help you:

- Help you clarify your life and career goals. A counselor may also administer and interpret tests and assessments of your abilities and interests.
- Prepare you for job interviews by helping you frame responses to potential questions—such as whether you can master new technology or report to a younger boss.
- Help you develop a fresh resume highlighting your skills and achievements.
- Provide career planning and occupational information to help you better understand the world of work.
- Work with you on an individualized career plan, and help you follow that plan with assignments and planned learning experiences.

A Word of Caution

Career counseling and coaching are unregulated fields, so be sure to check the credentials and experience of your prospective candidates. Bottom line: success in landing a good job is up to *you*.

Your To-Do List

1. Do your research. Network to find leads and learn from others' experience.
2. Consult free- and low-cost resources before you make your decision.
3. Think about what you want to get out of using a career counselor or coach. Before you interview prospective advisers, write down your concerns.
4. Take a reality check. Every field has honest and competent practitioners as well as unscrupulous ones. Check out your candidates.

