



EIGHT COSTLY OUTPLACEMENT MISTAKES

Staring into the eyes of a hardworking, loyal employee and breaking the news of their redundancy would have to be one of the most difficult parts of a HR professional's job. That is why the topic of outplacement is so important, it is the last act a HR professional can do for an employee in need, and often the last memory a transitioning employee will take with them when they leave.

When it's done right, it can have incredible results for both the company and a transitioning employee – but when it's done wrong? The costs to your employment brand and the negative perception remaining staff have of your company can be catastrophic.

To ensure you handle it the right way, here are the eight common and costly mistakes HR make with outplacement – and how you can avoid them.

MISTAKE 1 – ASSUME YOUR EMPLOYEES KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

In most cases, an employee won't see a redundancy coming let alone know what needs to happen after it. So don't make the mistake of assuming an exiting employee knows what to expect. Being in shock, they will likely not have the mental clarity to ask the questions they need to, it will be up to you to walk them through it.

For this reason, it is crucial that you explain the process they will no go through as they leave the company. If you have organised outplacement services (and you should have!) now is the time to tell them about the outplacement program, who their career coach will be, what the service will include and the benefits for them, and what their next step is.

MISTAKE 2 – ORGANISING IN-HOUSE OUTPLACEMENT

While in-house outplacement can seem like a good way to support your exiting employees and cut costs, it can often set them back further in their career transition.

When going through redundancy, transitioning employees can often experience mistrust and a range of emotions from embarrassment to betrayal. This can make employees close up during in-house outplacement programs and become stuck in the trauma of the event unable to focus on moving forward in their job search. An external partner has the right experience - and the right emotional distance.

What many people don't realise is that outplacement isn't just about teaching how to write resumes and cover letters or have a great interview, it's about providing the emotional support employees need to transition from one career to another. You can't expect an employee to be open and receptive to receiving that support internally from the people who are transitioning them out.



The best person to be able to provide the support your employee needs is an independent career coach who knows what they will be going through and can provide them with the expertise your transitioning employee needs to get a competitive edge in the job market.

MISTAKE 3 – LEAVE OUTPLACEMENT UP TO THE EMPLOYEE

Outplacement is as much for your reputation as it is for your exiting employee's career benefit. So don't give your exiting employee a card with your outplacement provider's details and say "give them a call if you want help." Ideally, the employee should be introduced to their career coach immediately after their meeting with you.

This will allow your employee the opportunity to debrief after their meeting, ask questions, build a relationship with their coach and commence their outplacement program immediately. Your employees need to see the 'what's in it for me' benefit of the outplacement program, so they continue with it, and their career coach is the best person to do that can do that.

MISTAKE 4 – INFORMING STAFF ABOUT OUTPLACEMENT BY LETTER OR EMAIL

If you are serious about helping a transitioning employee and protecting your reputation through transition, then you need to have a face-to-face discussion with your team about their redundancy and outplacement program.

While letters and emails can be great for confirming the details and outlining the next steps if you want maximum take-up of the outplacement program you need to talk to your employees about the benefits and have a career coach available on-site to engage with them.

MISTAKE 5 – DELAYING OUTPLACEMENT TO LET IT "SETTLE IN"

Sometimes mistakes are made with the best of intentions, and this is definitely one of them. Giving your employees space for their redundancy to sink in may seem like a respectful idea, but in reality, the sooner you provide them with support, the better. A great many job search mistakes are made in the first few days - before employees start their outplacement program.

An immediate outplacement solution can shift their mindset from focusing on the problem to focusing on the solution, helping them to maintain a positive outlook and see opportunity through their redundancy.

MISTAKE 6 – THE ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL SOLUTION

While a one-size-fits-all outplacement solution can seem ideal to an employer, the fact is all transitioning employees have different hopes, aspirations, skills, experience and career plans and require a bespoke outplacement program. If you don't, you limit the possibilities of your employee's next career move.

If you are undergoing a significant restructure in your business, you will find that some of your employees will want to find a similar job; some may want to upskill and go for a management position or change industries entirely. Others may want to explore consulting work or entrepreneurship, and some may use it as an opportunity to transition into retirement.



All of these different career moves require different information, training, and coaching. As an employer, you can help your transitioning employees greatly by offering them different options in outplacement programs that will help them towards achieving their next career goal.

MISTAKE 7 – BECOMING TOO INVOLVED IN OUTPLACEMENT

While it can be a stressful time for all involved, it is important that you don't end up too involved in the outplacement process. Your outplacement provider is there to manage the process for you, alert you to any problems and protect your employment brand.

By all means have an open door policy for your transitioning staff to answer any questions, but also make sure you keep a healthy distance from the outplacement process to allow your provider the space they need to get your impacted team to open up and find other employment options.

The right outplacement provider will give you regular updates on each participant and their progress anyway to ensure you're informed during every step of the process.

MISTAKE 8 – RUINING JOB PROSPECTS WITH POOR REFERENCES

The whole point of outplacement is to help give a transitioning employee the best chance at a new career, so why then ruin it with a poor reference?

Should you be deceitful or mislead a potential employer? Absolutely not! If you are asked a question about a transitioning employee, and there have been issues, you must be honest.

But also be balanced. While you are uncovering weaknesses also discuss strengths, talk about their achievements or the skills you valued while they worked for you. It is possible to be both honest and fair.

Need help transitioning employees out of your workplace? Want to provide different **outplacement programs** for your transitioning employees? Call the transition experts, Turning Point Partners today on 1300 27 83 45.