



How Professionals Are Finding Jobs Amidst the Pandemic

As many workers face career uncertainty in the era of COVID-19, CareerCurve has sustained relationships with their candidates by continuing to explore virtual networking and pre-planning while addressing candidates most in-demand services: resume building & emotional support.

Since lockdowns began in February and March of this year, businesses in virtually every industry have had to rethink their operations. While many have managed to operate remotely and transition their services to virtual alternatives, the current situation has business owners questioning whether these changes will become permanent.

In the career transition industry, the arrival of COVID-19 has had a major impact on one of the fundamentals of professional coaching: in-person meetings. Prior to COVID-19, career coaches would meet with a candidate face-to-face and build interpersonal rapport as well as trust throughout the process.

In the current environment, however, the opportunity to meet in-person has been abolished, which has led coaching organizations to adopt a new set of practices that provide guidance and emotional support virtually.

Educating candidates on networking virtually

In order for coaches to sustain their services and stay safe during the current pandemic, coaching organizations such as CareerCurve, a leading North American provider of career transition coaching, has recently enhanced their already existing remote operations, expanding where needed during COVID-19.

The coaches have turned to helping candidates strengthen their virtual technology skills, like how to prepare for a virtual interview, how to effectively interview remotely, how to network virtually, and how to deal with the emotional challenges unique to this new environment. As such, coaches have been there to provide guidance, easing uncertainties and sometimes panic in order to help candidates evolve their skill set to include digital job literacy—a skill set that will be necessary for all career opportunities moving forward.

Indeed, some facets of career coaching—such as resume revision and email communications—have already been remote for some time. Unlike CareerCurve, who has been providing remote services for over 20 years, transitioning all services to remote has led to challenges for some outplacement providers during COVID-19.

While coaches everywhere would agree that periodic, in-person meetings are the best way to maintain close relationships with candidates, the coaching relationship has perhaps surprisingly not suffered during the progression of COVID-19.

Rather, candidates are relying on coaches for not only the fundamentals of job searching like resume building and virtual interview content, but also emotional support and personal connection, a service aspect that has been on the rise the past few months.

Interestingly, CareerCurve has found that the salary offers their candidates' have secured are remaining relatively consistent with figures from the past few years. For 2018 and 2019 combined, 39% of candidates experienced a decrease in salary in finding a new position, while 37% had an increase in salary and 24% remained the same. In 2020, 28% experienced a decrease in salary while 45% had an increase in salary and 27% remained the same.

Moreover, CareerCurve's data for the start of 2020 shows that the time it takes candidates to find a new position has remained approximately the same as in 2018 and 2019.

What this indicates is that for candidates who actively engage in the search strategies and techniques recommended by their transition coach, they are still able to identify and secure new positions with competitive salaries. This suggests that it is not all 'doom and gloom' for current job seekers despite the pandemic.

Increasing demand for resume development

In 2020, the most valued service by CareerCurve's candidates beginning their search is resume development, with 64.44% of respondents in a recent survey claiming this was where they needed most support. Interestingly, the coaching organization's most valued services in 2018 and 2019 was almost evenly split between emotional/personal coaching support and resume development.

Clearly, resume development is always in demand, but due to the concern of not being able to network face-to-face during COVID-19, the past few months have led to a surge in candidates seeking this service in particular.

This may also be reflective of the staggering unemployment numbers, which rose higher in three months of COVID-19 than it did in two years of the Great Recession, according to [Pew Research Center](#). However, it also might signify the newfound reliance on technology. Not only do job candidates need a solid resume, but they need to adapt it to their presence online.

With 32% of candidate's new positions sourced from Internet job postings and 47% of candidates finding their new positions through online networking, a candidate's virtual footprint—which includes their LinkedIn profile, professional websites and even their social media accounts—is equally as important in today's market as one's resume.

In combination, one's personal branding integrates all of these factors nowadays, since a large majority of employers scour candidates' information online in addition to interviewing them.

The need for virtual understanding and online networking will therefore be extremely important moving forward, which leaders in the industry like CareerCurve have identified as a top priority in a post-pandemic world.

Looking to the future of career coaching

Upon reviewing candidate data and assessing where support is needed most, coaches at CareerCurve have managed to enhance their services so that professionals can still thrive in an environment that's uncertain and even stressful for many.

Coaches like those at CareerCurve will need to continue to adapt to their candidates' needs and support them emotionally, which can be achieved by offering individualized guidance and encouragement. Resources like resume building will always be important, but in this unique time period of COVID-19, providing guidance for virtual engagements such as video interviews has become a key skill needed by every candidate.

While the pandemic has certainly created difficulties for traditional career coaching methods, fortunately remote candidate support can still build the 'trusted advisor' role that candidates seek—but careful planning and virtual literacy is vital for success.