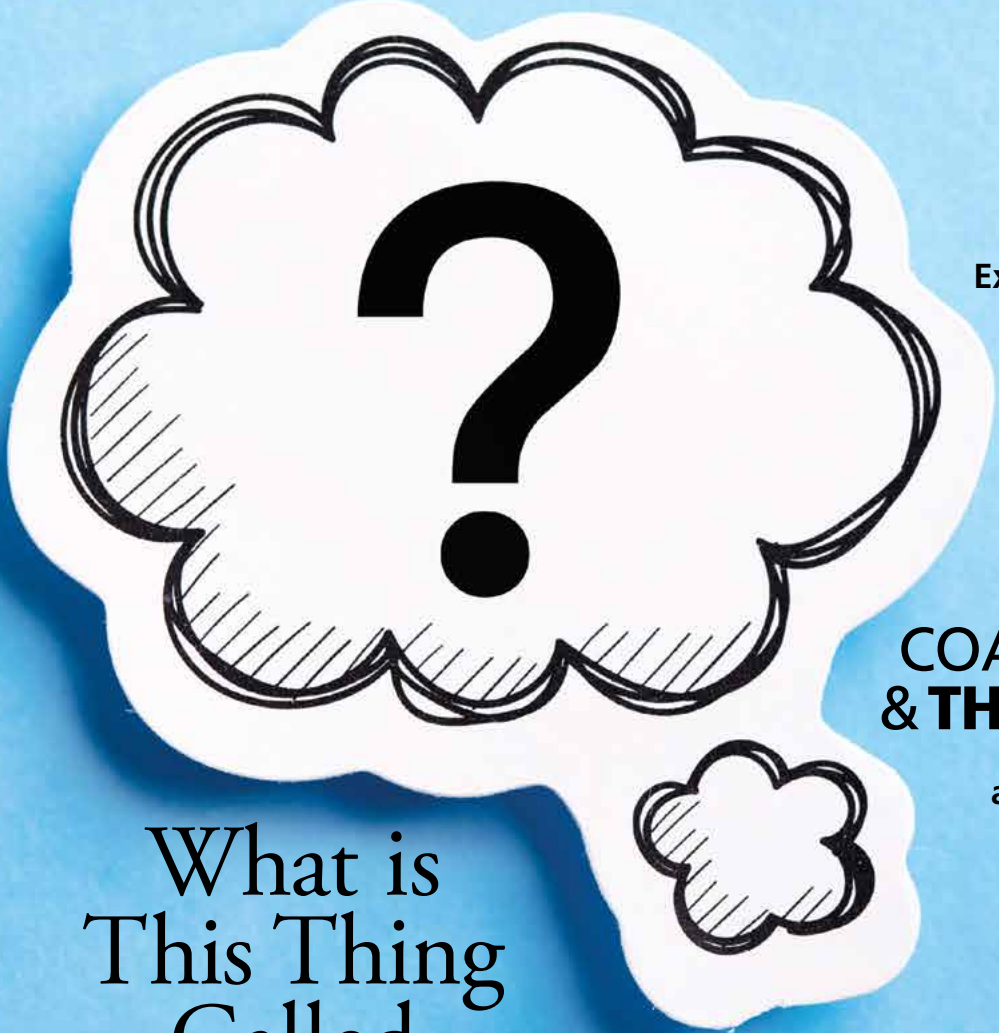


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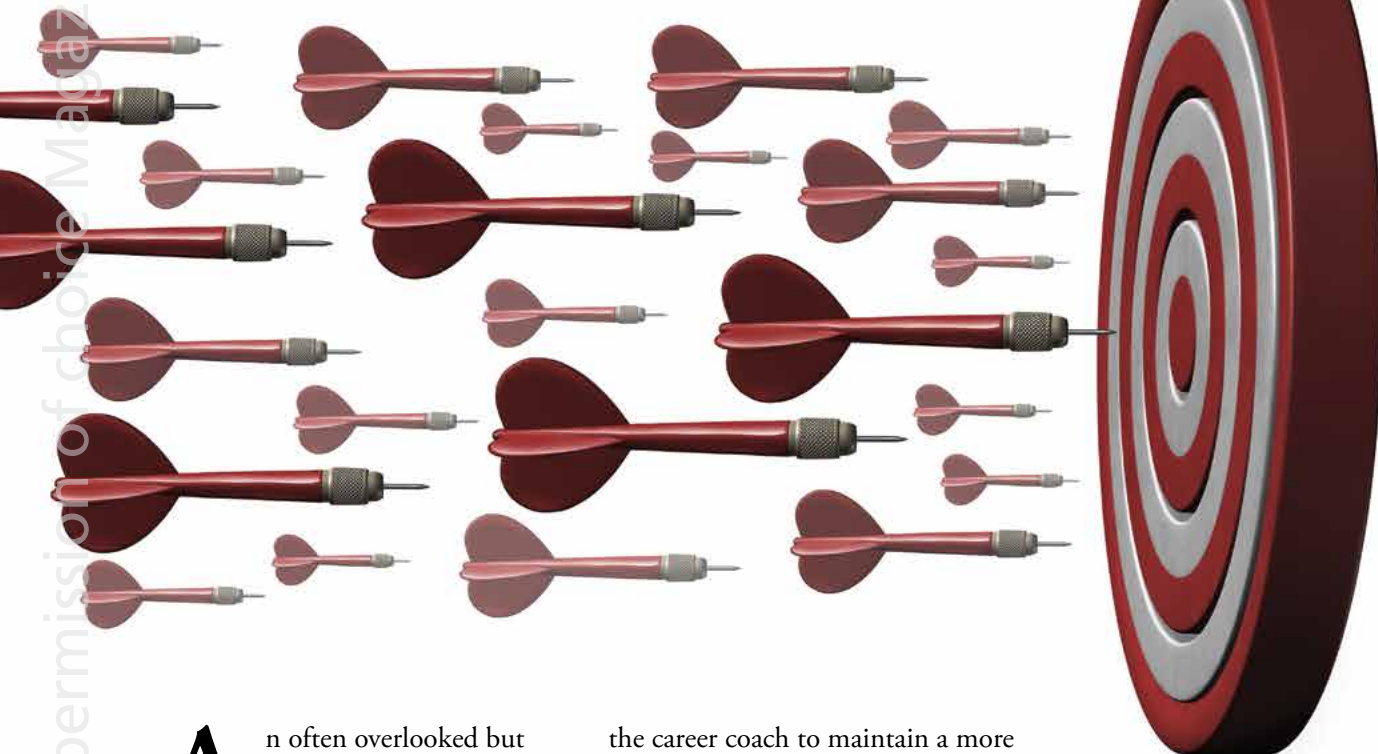
**COACHING  
& THERAPY**  
Correlations  
and contrasts

What is  
This Thing  
Called  
**Coaching?**  
What sets us apart

# CAREER COACHING

The recession-proof coaching niche

By Marcia Bench, BS, JD, MCC, CBC



**A**n often overlooked but highly fulfilling niche within coaching is career coaching. Quite simply, it is the art of helping dissatisfied and displaced workers define the next step in their career and/or successfully navigate a job search to find a job that meets their needs.

The demand for career coaching transcends any economic cycles. Unlike many other specialties, one can simply change positioning, depending on the consumer confidence level and whether the economy is up or down. This allows

the career coach to maintain a more stable and evenly growing practice, regardless of economic trends.

## WHAT CAREER COACHING IS

In over 20 years of interacting with both coaches and the public about career coaching, I have discovered a common misconception: many people think that career coaches simply advise on resume content and interview strategies, but don't do much else. Nothing could be further from the truth!

I define career coaching as "an interactive process of exploring

***The coach's role is one of catalyst and facilitator, not advisor or consultant. Their job is to further the client's agenda and goals related to their job and career, not to tell them what to do.***

work-related issues – leading to affective action – in which the coach acts as both a *catalyst* and *facilitator* of individual and, in turn, organizational development and transformation.”

The definition has four parts:

**1** It is interactive in the sense that it is two people talking using a specific structure, or one person working with a group of individuals.

**2** Career coaches address “work-related issues,” which distinguishes them from life coaches, who address life issues, or executive coaches, who help executives with organizational matters. But “work-related issues” is a broad term encompassing everything from choosing your major in college to integrating back into the workplace after a health crisis, death of a family member, child rearing, or a sabbatical. It also means creating a culture within the organization that fosters career development. And of course, it involves career choice, job search strategy, and negotiating compensation packages.

**3** Coaching leads to effective action. In every session, the client commits to an action step which the coach then keeps them accountable for at the beginning of the next session. This keeps them in action and not just learning concepts.

**4** The coach's role is one of catalyst and facilitator, not advisor or consultant. Their

job is to further the client's agenda and goals related to their job and career, not to tell them what to do. There are some stages along the way where the client may need to be educated about what to put in their LinkedIn profile or resume, and suggested answers to expected interview questions. But that educational process takes place outside the coaching session, so that the coaching session can focus on specific application and accountability around that strategy to the individual client.

So this gives us an idea of what career coaches do. How is it that we can call it “the recession-proof niche”?

#### WHAT MAKES CAREER COACHING RECESSION-PROOF

There are three key reasons career coaching is seen as recession-proof:

##### 1 Ongoing Need

There are always people who want to change jobs – or who *have* to change jobs because of a layoff. One out of every four executives changes jobs every year, and most people have 12 to 15 careers during their professional life. That's a lot of transition! And each time clients are at a little different place in their life than they were the last time it happened, so the guidance of a career coach can be welcomed at each juncture.

Not only is there ongoing demand for this type of coaching, but when the economy tightens, so do people's wallets. If they're trying to decide whether to spend limited available funds on a life coach to help them deal with anger issues, for example,

or to hire a career coach to help them get into a moneymaking livelihood that will pay their bills, many will opt for the latter. In the corporate market, companies tend to trim back on training during recessions, but as they lay off employees they often need coaches to help with outplacement.

##### 2 Alternate Settings

Most life coaches work strictly with individuals who pay them directly for their services. Most executive coaches, and the other hand, are paid by companies. But with career coaching, there are at least five different settings in which the coach can practice:

- Working from home or a shared office serving individual clients paying them “retail” fees.
- Providing contracted services to an outplacement firm, particularly during a recessionary time, doing seminars for displaced workers and/or individual coaching with them.
- Working in-house in a corporation helping to build a career development oriented culture and, when layoffs are needed, assisting with transitions for those displaced workers.
- Working in a workforce development center where the government partially funds the organization in order to provide services to disabled workers as well as to the public.
- Working in a college or university career center assisting the students and alumni with selecting the right major given their longer-term goals, as well as finding jobs after graduation.

This gives career coaches flexibility that many other coaching niches do not have.

##### 3 Alternate Positioning

All that career coaches need to do in order to ride out the cycles of the economy – and make sure they're relevant to the



workers they serve no matter what is going on externally – is to switch positioning periodically.

That is, when the economy is strong and there are plenty of jobs to be had, they can simply market themselves as someone who can help workers improve their situation, get paid more, and find a more fulfilling job. When the economy weakens

and layoffs are the dominant trend, career coaches can position themselves as helping workers get back to work more quickly.

Studies show that those who work with a career coach get a job 40 percent faster than those who don't.

Career coaching has come a long way since we invented the niche in 2001, and we continue

to train students in 50 countries and counting as well as in multiple organizations.

We see the demand continuing indefinitely into the future, regardless of economic shifts. And if you are the type of person who likes to help others find fulfillment, career coaching is definitely a niche that you should investigate. •

## TAKE THE QUIZ!

### Is career coaching right for you?

1. Is it important to you to accomplish something meaningful with your life?  
Yes  No
2. Are you passionate about helping others?  
Yes  No
3. Do you usually set and achieve your goals?  
Yes  No
4. Do you enjoy working independently?  
Yes  No
5. Can you think strategically?  
Yes  No
6. Are you self-directed?  
Yes  No
7. Do you like to be in control of your working environment?  
Yes  No
8. Do you take full responsibility for your successes and failures?  
Yes  No
9. Are you in excellent physical, mental and emotional health?  
Yes  No
10. Do you have the drive and energy to create a successful business?  
Yes  No
11. Do you have a basic knowledge of career transition, career development or job search? (If not, CCI's Career Coach Training can help!)  
Yes  No
12. Do you long for work that makes you so engrossed in it that time passes unnoticed?  
Yes  No
13. Do you consider "failures" as opportunities to learn and grow?  
Yes  No
14. Can you hold to your ideas and goals even when others disagree with or discourage you?  
Yes  No
15. Are you willing to take moderate risks to achieve your goals?  
Yes  No
16. Can you afford to lose the money you invest in your business?  
Yes  No
17. When the need arises, are you willing to do a task that may not interest you?  
Yes  No
18. Can you establish the appropriate amount of interaction with people to balance working largely on the phone and internet?  
Yes  No
19. Do you usually stick with a project until it is completed?  
Yes  No
20. Can you ignore the distractions inherent in working at home?  
Yes  No

#### SCORING

**17-20 "yes":**  
Career coaching is for you!

**14-16 "yes":**  
You may be suited to career coaching

**10-13 "yes":**  
Work within a team organization may be a better fit than self-employment

**5-9 "yes":**  
Carefully examine your choice to be sure career coaching is what you want to do!

**0-4 "yes":**  
Independent career coaching is probably not your best career choice