



**EXECUTIVE
CONNEXIONS**

Accelerate your career success



OUTPLACEMENT GUIDE FOR HR EXECUTIVES

*A road map to making the right outplacement
choices for outgoing staff*

By Steve Nicholls, MD, Executive Connexions Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

If you are looking to source a suitable outplacement provider, then a number of factors can come into play; **type of support you're looking for, budget available, and what your overall priorities are.**

In this guide, we will outline some factors which will assist you in making the right choice of outplacement provider, based on your own criteria.

TYPE OF SUPPORT

The type of support you might be looking for could be one-to-one tailored support for executives, right through to some group inputs for more junior staff members, or a mixture of the two types of support.

BUDGET

For those of you who want to talk numbers before you have decided internally on a budget: £200 to £10,000+ per person can be the case, largely dependent on your own policies and seniority of the individual(s) affected. A very wide range, but this is the breadth of company allocated budgets for outplacement. So, a discussion with the outplacement provider (with some of the above considered internally beforehand) is what we would recommend in order to obtain some options and get a good feel for what they can provide. We receive many enquiries, for example, where the company has not set any budget at all, which is why a discussion with further clarifications is always a first step.

YOUR PRIORITIES

There's what we term a '*continuum of concern*' here, with at one end company reputation being the primary concern and at the other end a deep commitment to support the outgoing individual(s). In the real world, most of the time it's a balance between the two factors.

Some quick pointers we'd suggest looking out for during any discussions or investigations:

- Culture/values match
- Budget realities — and do discuss this internally prior to talking with outplacement companies, even if very broadly
- Being asked questions by the outplacement firm during discussions; this should be a major part of any discussion. If it isn't, that's not a good sign
- Avoiding a 'conveyor belt' approach to outplacement (an all-too-common complaint among HR Professionals we surveyed) should be a priority.
- All affected staff should be treated as individuals and with appropriate sensitivity.

WHAT DO HR PROFESSIONALS WE SURVEYED SAY?

We contacted HR Directors, Managers, and consultants in our network and some of their views and considerations are included below:

'I look at testimonials and if there's a value/culture match'

'To begin with, the standard considerations of reputation, expertise, service delivery and cost'

'A service that is customisable'

'Opportunity for input from specialists'

'Some opportunity for face-to-face interaction in the early stages'

'The capability to facilitate group-based outplacement activity'

'Recommendation if I haven't already got a suitable contact. I believe this is a service that can vary a great deal in quality. - I consider very carefully, what the individual needs from the outplacement relationship as well as their personality. Also, the circumstances surrounding their departure.'

Personally, I prefer the service is delivered in a very personalised way according to the individual'

'Psychological abilities to consider the outplaced person', so considering emotional impact should not be overlooked'

'Proven track record of success'

*'Established head-hunter network' ***

**** NOTE:** Introductions of any sort are not a common feature of outplacement support; we will make selected introductions to our networks, which could include recruiters, ex-clients in positions of influence, other supports who have wide networks.

SO, WHAT ELEMENTS DO YOU NEED TO CONSIDER?

Outplacement agreements may include different inputs and expectations, but they primarily include preparing your employees for an interview, exploring career options, personal branding, networking skills, devising CV/Resume, interview skills and practice, and overall job search strategies. There is also a provision of network resources and network opportunities that an outplacement firm provides.

Employers who have worked with outplacement firms before will know what makes an outplacement firm good at what they do, especially when it comes to helping outgoing staff land a role within a good time frame. The initial experiences your employees have with the outplacement firm will show the chances of them getting their dream job offer by chiefly being a well-prepared candidate, hence reflecting well or poorly on your company. However, it's good to know first whether or not an outplacement firm will deliver results by the levels of their services and this is especially important as there is a cost involved, of course.

One HRD we spoke with went even further with their advice and we thought it was worth including in its entirety here:

I remember well the feeling of wanting to do the right thing against a very difficult background — last year we shut 300 stores with over 20,000 people affected. Getting positive messages, career placements and measurements were crucial to ongoing proactive communication. Maintaining the People Brand and Values was a challenge — Outplacement was the vehicle for this — but not as a hands off exercise the Company — HR had to remain accountable for this by working alongside — particularly with comms. The outplacement company needed to reflect the professional brand of HR with knowledge, expertise and careful consideration of all the elements of transition.

- **The psychological contract** — as an employer — taking ownership for the human side of the relationship during very difficult and stressful times by working with skilled professionals — **protecting** your Company and **People (HR) Brand** — so that employees can see that you do care — you do live the people brand. Important for employees exiting the business and for those remaining — if the same happens to them they will be looked after. Customers can see the same.
- **Communication** — Written with the HR Department (though most of work done by the outplacement company — (so some credit goes back in house to Company / HR) — including some **good news stories** — on going management of communications — taking the stress out of the HR team having to do this — although they could have the brand — a joint comms is always good
- **Flexibility** — group, individual, bespoke companion — able to provide different packages
- **Technology** — access to websites / podcasts / apps / webinars — so looks modern and designed with company brand — I have seen apps used on to exiting employees phones which was very popular. 24/7 access. Remote access. Mobile technology.
- **Professionalism of Consultants** — the right fit — with track records. Range of expertise for different levels.
- **Cost Effective** — so you need to be able to feel that you'll get a better service than say the market leaders — Look for something very customer focussed with direct check in with owner. Group and Individual options are key, with access to remote packages.

- **Cost Effective – Ability to Train internal** people to deliver if they have the resources – just need to watch the credibility of doing this
- **Return on Investment/ Measurements** – How do you as HR sell the outplacement concept to the Executive who are already cash strapped – most Executives need to see figures as well as quotes – HR need to be able to do this – love a graph / excel table / % / engagement surveys
- **Case Studies and Quotes** – to instil confidence and hope
- **Help with Internal Consultation Process** – Internal Job Board eg for internal moves – comms, applications, advertising

Now, what are the steps and advice to follow on how to choose an outplacement firm?

1. A programme should be established primarily to take care of *your* needs



This is the very first step that must be followed when planning how to choose an outplacement firm. Keep in mind the important fact that an outplacement service should be adaptable and always ready to meet your needs. The best outplacement firm will not throw you or your employees straight into a 'sausage machine' programme even if you may or may not be able to tell if the programme is suitable.

A good outplacement firm will cover many of the aspects previously mentioned, but one of the main things is that an outplacement company will tailor the programme to your employees' needs. Each employee, depending on which industry or seniority level, requires the outplacement services to be tailored around them to give the best results.

The outplacement consultants themselves should contact each individual to ensure that the programme is tailored to them as well as prior consultation with the organiser. For instance, we (Executive Connexions) make sure a thorough needs-assessment is conducted. This is to customise the programme in such a way that it doesn't just satisfy us or tick boxes, but it meets the needs of the individual, and that everything is set for a successful career transition.

2. Look for an outplacement agency that will help your employees succeed

Knowing how to choose the right outplacement firm entails finding out if the company offers outplacement services that work. An outplacement firm with a good track record of successful career transitions whilst also working with big agencies.

Look for a firm that has received good feedback both from a testimonial point of view and impartial online reviews. Many firms will showcase real or fake (sorry, but true!) testimonials on their website, but if they have received a strong base of real reviews on external sources, then that is a great sign.

Our success rate of over 92% reflects the 'going the extra mile'. Often in today's world, many outplacement firms are not interested in seeing the person through the complete re-hiring process.



Executive Connexions Ltd.

Reviews 13 • Excellent



As one of the best outplacement firms, we have the client's interest at heart and this shows in our success rates and feedback, both [on](#) and [off](#) our website. Sorry for the 'pitch', but we're passionate about genuinely helping people not just paying lip service to this.

3. Search for cost-effectiveness, not low value

While you may be searching for the best outplacement firm, cost may be at the top of your mind. Always remember that a low-cost programme does not mean that the outplacement services and contents offered are of lesser value. In some cases, they may be of high value. Have a discussion with the outplacement company. A key component is understanding how much of the input you want to be actual coaching vs online-only service for example.

We would not recommend selecting an outplacement firm just due to their sheer size as they often provide a service which is often not comparable with other agencies. When comparing the value to others, you can see the difference. While we can indeed scale for example, that personalisation approach is driven from the top down, so it sticks.

Darty PLC had a team of finance executives who were being displaced due to a physical office relocation. Here's what their company secretary had to say about their experience of working with us:

Executive Connexions has provided outplacement services for several of our employees. We found the team to be very helpful and adaptable in their approach which they tailored to the changing circumstances facing those leaving the business. They helped all of our employees to focus on the task of finding a new role, and have had a 100% success rate which is very satisfying for everyone.



Darty PLC, Outplacement Client

4. Social media and outplacement

In today's society, the world is referred to as a global village. Technology plays a greater role in our lives today. This should also be an important factor when choosing the best outplacement firm.

A good firm will have high-level knowledge of and make great use of social media and networking which are the key in the modern-day job search, and this demonstrates that the company is ahead of the game. Without good networking and social media presence, there's a massive chunk of the job market ignored, even including the so-called hidden jobs market.

We all know the importance of networking, but it is a serious skill that job seekers must have or be taught. It will also help you or your employees know about important measures to consider when planning on getting in front of a hiring manager. So knowledge of and the ability to teach social media usage is an important element to outplacement provision.

5. Flexibility

In knowing how to choose the right outplacement firm, it is important to select one that is truly flexible. Everyone knows what works for them, but in most cases, a 1:1 support service is a better method to use for learning and flexibility.

We offer our outplacement services that help job seekers access to career transition via 1:1, group support, as well as online services. This is a successful approach that allows the job seeker to work where they feel best, can access all the needed resources, and be able to continue working independently for maximum efficiency.



NEXT STEPS

In order to receive some personalised advice, click on the link if you would like to [arrange a complimentary introductory meeting or call](#), with our MD Steve Nicholls, or call him direct on his mobile number +44 (0) 7508 018470.

We hope this document has helped you to narrow down the type of outplacement service that would work for you and to prioritise your requirements.



*Thank you for reading,
and I sincerely hope that
this document helps you
towards making the right
decision regarding your
outplacement needs.*

Steve Nicholls,
Managing Director



**EXECUTIVE
CONNEXIONS**
Accelerate your career success

Executive Connexions Ltd

📍 20-22 Wenlock Road, London N1 9GU

☎ Tel: +44 (0) 203 384 4188