

# San Diego Daily Transcript

---

## Executives, call your agent

### Job Search

By Bob Glasberg

Fired or looking for a new gig? Guess who savvy executives call first? Their agent, of course.

Corporate executives have discovered what professional athletes have known for a long time -- hiring an agent is good business. In the high stakes corporate world, fortunes are won by being the best in the right place at the right time.

Today, the competition for the best leadership assignments is intense. Many executives are finding that it is far too complicated and time consuming to go it alone. Making a wrong decision about your next job can cause significant damage to your career. It is common for a highly talented executive to be overlooked for a job, which is a perfect fit for his/her background and experience. Many executives receive offers at a professional and compensation level far below their capabilities. Others go for long periods without any offers, diminishing their skill level, dignity and ultimately their marketability.

How do savvy executives keep their careers vertical? The same way professional athletes do. They engage an agent. Agents understand the goals and career aspirations of their clients. They know their strengths and weaknesses and work to make clients the best they can be. Agents research companies where clients will thrive and prosper and orchestrate ways for them to capitalize on those opportunities. Agents are constantly searching for ways to promote their clients' professional recognition and career growth. Good agents bond with their clients so that the client's success becomes the agent's success.

Executives often defer the cost of engaging an agent through outplacement benefits provided by corporations that fire them. Whether you hire an agent or go it alone, here are eleven steps to consider when transitioning from one leadership assignment to another:

- When you are fired, cut your best severance package going out. Everything is negotiable at the top.
- Never doubt yourself. Regardless of the circumstances surrounding your termination, that event should be viewed for what it is, a single loss in a series of wins. Put it in perspective. You have been, are and will continue to be a successful executive.
- Negotiate a mutually agreeable "reason for leaving." Include it in your separation agreement to ensure it will be communicated in a consistent manner. Patch up adversarial relationships before you leave.
- Define yourself. Know what you have to offer. Identify a company in which you will thrive, one who appreciates your strengths and will reward you for expressing them. Being in the wrong company is career suicide.

- Market yourself professionally through your resume, the interview and your references. You can be the best in the world at what you do, but if you are unable to communicate effectively through those three mediums, the galaxy will not be a large enough marketplace.
- During the interview, carefully manage your communication. Prepare and rehearse your presentation with a professional. Interviewing is a sophisticated selling process and you are the product. Remember, 50 percent of your success will be determined by what you know and 50 percent by how you communicate what you know.
- Develop relationships with key business contacts, executive search firms and members of the board of companies in which you have an interest. Reach out, do favors. They will come back to you in a nice way when you need help ... like a new job.
- Limiting your career geographically before you make your financial mark may not be smart. San Diego is not the Mecca of corporate opportunity. Find the best opportunities regardless of the location. You can always come back.
- When you are hired, cut your best base salary/bonus deal going in. Negotiate a sign-on bonus, a predetermined separation agreement and stock options if they are available.
- Recognize that age is a factor in corporate America. For more mature executives, regardless of the laws protecting us from discrimination, a large portion of leadership opportunities will be unavailable. Consulting or acquiring a business may be your best long-term career option.

Competing for high stake leadership jobs and top-level compensation packages is hard work and very time consuming. You may get lucky, but why take the risk? Invest in an agent. The yield will be greater, and you will better understand the process. When things get tough, you will have a trusted professional at your side to get you through professionally and financially unscathed.

---

*Glasberg has been consulting with San Diego based executives on career matters for 21 years. His firm, Executive Coaching & Career Consulting, specializes in senior executive career transitions and leadership development.*

---