

## **Managing the Moment**

*Dave Crawford had seven years of successful service with his employer. His dedication to the organization was acknowledged and appreciated, his work was considered top notch and he was a valuable member of the senior management team. The company had fallen on hard times; Dave was aware of the financial realities facing the company and had heard the rumours of possible downsizing. He thought that his years of contribution would provide him with a shield should those rumours prove true. Now, having been told his division was closing and his services no longer required, he was being led out of the office by a security guard.*

*The remaining employees were in shock. If this could happen to Dave it could happen to them as well. Productivity suffered, top performers started to look elsewhere for new opportunities, absenteeism grew and the employees no longer felt that the company had their best interests in mind.*

The scenario described above is for illustration purposes only and does not represent a real person or situation. It does, however, depict one of the most difficult decisions to make in a business, that of employee termination. Many organizations now use the services of career transition or outplacement firms to help deal with these key organizational decisions.

Whether the decision to terminate an employee comes about as a result of a reduction in workforce numbers, merger and acquisition, outsourcing of divisions or personal performance the fact remains: that employee now has to deal with the reality of job loss. The career transition specialist can prove helpful in this time of change. Their focus will be on assisting the former employee in the search for a preferred new position, while at the same time helping the organization preserve their image of caring for, and being committed to, the welfare of its remaining employees.

It is important to ensure that the transition firm chosen for this assignment has the experience to assist the departing employee. Determining factors should include the number of years that the firm has been in operation, their organizational depth and the years of relevant experience of their career coaches. Differentiators that may influence the decision around which firm to hire should be examined. These may include market knowledge, unlimited timelines and access to key decision makers. In keeping with current business practices, the transition specialist offers assistance to the organization once the decision to terminate has been made. They are often asked to be present on site the day of dismissal, as immediate support to the employee is essential. They are then able to assist the employee in preparing and conveying the news to family, friends and colleagues. Plans for further meetings offsite are made. Consultations with a lawyer and a financial expert who are skilled in the field of employee terminations should then be arranged. This additional information will provide the employee with a more comprehensive understanding of the severance package. Together with the former employee, the transition firm counselor will then design a customized job search plan for the individual that focuses on success in identifying their next preferred career choice.