

READ IMPORTANT DISCLOSURE SCHWAB BANK HIGH YIELD INVESTOR CHECKING®
Never pay ATM fees | **Earn** interest on any balance | **Linked** to a SchwabOne® brokerage account
• Brokerage products: Not FDIC Insured • No Bank Guarantee • May Lose Value **OPEN A SCHWAB BANK CHECKING ACCOUNT ▶** **TALK TO CHUCK**
 FDIC charles SCHWAB BANK



Should you hire a career coach?

Paying for a pro may make sense - but exhaust free options first.

By Arnesa A. Howell, Money Magazine
Last Updated: September 29, 2009: 10:57 AM ET

(Money Magazine) -- After being laid off this summer, Amy Bauer began to contemplate a career switch (from investor relations to corporate social responsibility). But it had been more than a decade since the 37-year-old from the Baltimore area had even crafted a résumé. For assistance, she turned to a career coach.

"She helped me determine which of my skills are transferable and tweak my résumé so it's applicable," says Bauer of coach Kimberly Bowen of Career Life Designs. Adds Bowen: "Amy and I have set really good goals together and every two weeks, we check in." Since they paired up in June, Bauer has landed several informational interviews, which she credits to the coaching.

"Any time there's an economic downturn, career coaching spikes," notes Christopher Metzler, associate dean for human resources studies at Georgetown University. With job searches now averaging 25 weeks, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, who doesn't want help marketing themselves?

Such assistance doesn't come cheap, and since anyone can call himself or herself a career coach, quality varies widely. Still, good coaching, in the right situations, can be well worth the price.

What you'll get

At its best, career coaching helps you clarify your job goals and develop strategies to reach them. That may include assessments (such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, used to determine which fields suit your personality) and discussions (starting with questions like, When have you felt especially satisfied?). It also involves practical steps like writing effective résumés and practicing interviewing skills.

You can go through a whole process with someone, or just get targeted advice on one particular area. With a good adviser, "you should leave each session saying, 'I've taken a step

EMAIL | PRINT | SHARE | RSS

Five signs that a coach isn't playing to win

Watch out for these red flags that suggest a career coach may not be worth the money.

Asks for full payment upfront and tries to lock you into a long-term contract.

Makes promises of any kind related to getting you a job or a certain salary

Refuses to give you references or to connect you with past clients

Gives vague answers about how to reach your goals, or doesn't give you any homework

Provides you with only positive feedback and no constructive criticism

Find a Job



Go

Find Jobs in

- Accounting
- Engineering
- Finance
- Management
- Marketing
- Sales

More from Money Magazine

[Should you hire a career coach?](#)

[Homes: Sell at a loss, buy at a discount](#)

[Microsoft stages a big comeback](#)

Best Places to Live

Current Issue

Top Stories	Most Popular Stories	Most Popular Videos
1. Blight could be here to stay		
2. Stocks slip after confidence drops		
3. 3.8 million Toyotas may have deadly floormats		
4. Pay up, banks: FDIC wants \$45 billion		
5. CIT not talking merger - sources		

READ IMPORTANT DISCLOSURE SCHWAB BANK HIGH YIELD INVESTOR CHECKING®
• Never pay ATM fees
• Earn interest on any balance
• Linked to a SchwabOne® brokerage account
• Brokerage products: Not FDIC Insured • No Bank Guarantee • May Lose Value **OPEN A SCHWAB BANK CHECKING ACCOUNT ▶** **TALK TO CHUCK**
 FDIC charles SCHWAB BANK

US Indexes	Fortune 500 Movers	
Markets	Last	Change
Dow Jones	9,742.20	▼ -47.16 / -0.48%
Nasdaq	2,124.04	▼ -6.70 / -0.31%
S&P 500	1,060.61	▼ -2.37 / -0.22%

forward in my job search,' " says Robert Hellmann of the Five O'Clock Club, a national coaching firm.

When it makes sense

A good coach can be helpful if your job search is lagging or you're getting discouraged, Metzler says. Part of his or her job, after all, is to keep you on task. A coach may also make sense if you're transitioning to a new career, returning to the workforce, or trying to advance within a company, he says. In such cases, an outsider may help you focus your efforts and identify necessary skills.

But sessions average \$161 an hour, according to the International Coach Federation trade group, and clients typically use three to six visits. So explore free options first. Most colleges offer their alumni gratis meetings, by phone or in-person, with the trained staffers in their career offices. Professional organizations also sometimes offer seminars to members.

How to find someone good

If you want to pursue individual coaching, some due diligence can help ensure that your money is well spent. Start by asking for referrals, both from people you know and a professional group in your industry.

Narrow your list to three, and interview them to find out about their experience, success rates, and typical clients. Be wary of coaching certifications, says Douglas T. Hall, professor of organizational behavior at Boston University's School of Management. (Some can be achieved in a single weekend.) Instead, look for a master's in counseling psychology, human resources, or organizational leadership. Speak with past clients about their experiences and, finally, request a free initial session.

As for Bauer, she's still looking for work, but she's happy to have paid for the coach. "It's great to have someone in my corner," she says. ■

First Published: September 29, 2009: 5:26 AM ET

[Subscribe to Money](#)



10-year Bond	102 25/32	Yield: 3.29%
U.S.Dollar	1 euro = \$1.461	▲ 0.002

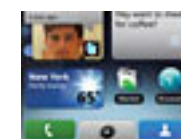
September 29, 2009 4:02 PM ET

symbol red by

Go

SYMBOL LOOKUP

More Galleries



Smartphones: System overload

With the launch of Motorola's Cliq, the battle between mobile operating systems reaches new heights - and there may soon be a new leader. We survey the top players. [More](#)



Snow job

A newbie entrepreneur creates a sled for grown-ups. [More](#)

5 most overpaid CEOs

Despite last year's financial tumult, these five CEOs are still sitting pretty. Here is the Corporate Library's list of the "Highest Paid Worst Performers" of 2008. [More](#)

Original Shows



▶ Money Tips Your parents' estate

Some tips on how to avoid the awkwardness of discussing wills with your parents. [Play](#)



▶ Energy Fix E-charging stations spread

ECotality's CEO discusses building a nationwide charging-station network for e-cars. [Play](#)



▶ Small Biz Tips Self-publishing empire expands

CEO of Blurb explains why she launched the self-publishing platform and how you can create your own book. [Play](#)

[All CNNMoney.com Original Shows](#)

YAHOO!
Will be right back...

Thank you for your patience.

GET A FREE TRIAL ISSUE!

Money

Name

Address

City

State/Pr

Zip/Postal

E-mail

[Privacy Policy](#)

GET A FREE TRIAL ISSUE!

Money

Name

Address

City

State/Pr

Zip/Postal

E-mail

Is job loss protection worth it?

Send feedback to Money Magazine

Features

Real Life: Your Stories



Labor gets tough

When faced with factory closures, workers at 5 companies fight back with mixed results [More](#)



▶ Deep in debt


One businesswoman struggles to repay her heaping credit card debt. [Play](#)



Fighting off the bear

How 7 investors are repairing their portfolios a year after Lehman Brothers [collapse](#) [More](#)

GET A FREE TRIAL ISSUE!



Money

Name

Address

City

State/Pr

Zip/Postal

E-mail

Continue Privacy Policy

© 2009 Cable News Network. A Time Warner Company. All Rights Reserved. Terms under which this service is provided to you. Privacy Policy

Home Portfolio Calculators Contact Us Newsletters Podcasts RSS Mobile Widgets Site Map User Preferences Advertise with Us
 Magazine Customer Service Download Fortune Lists Reprints Career Opportunities Special Sections Conferences Business Leader Council

Live Quotes automatically refresh, but individual equities are delayed 15 minutes for Nasdaq, and 20 minutes for other exchanges. Market indexes are shown in real time, except for the DJIA, which is delayed by two minutes. All times are ET.

* : Time reflects local markets trading time. † - Intraday data delayed 15 minutes for Nasdaq, and 20 minutes for other exchanges. Disclaimer

Copyright © 2009 BigCharts.com Inc. All rights reserved. Please see our Terms of Use. MarketWatch, the MarketWatch logo, and BigCharts are registered trademarks of MarketWatch, Inc. Intraday data provided by Interactive Data Real-Time Services and subject to the Terms of Use. Intraday data is at least 20-minutes delayed. All times are ET. Historical, current end-of-day data, and splits data provided by Interactive Data Pricing and Reference Data. Fundamental data provided by Morningstar, Inc. SEC Filings data provided by Edgar Online Inc. Earnings data provided by FactSet CallStreet, LLC.