

# 20 Questions

Candid responses from  
outplaced executives

Donington interviewed a number of executives who had been through the Donington Career Transition process. Here is what they had to say.

### **1. Can you tell me what you believe Outplacement to mean. In other words how would you explain it?**

- It is an opportunity to sit down with a professional mentor and evaluate what you want to do and to get the resources to help you.
- It is one on one and helps to develop a strategy to position you for looking for a new job. It gives you the framework.
- The term Career Transition means nothing to me and it is a word that should not be used – a better term would be Career Transition Support. It is not a known word in the public sector.
- Helping an Executive understand more about themselves and to look at their options. It is very people based and gets executives to focus on themselves, lots of tools to help.
- It is a service to reassess where you are and re-plan the rest of your life.

### **2. What was the reaction to your redundancy?**

- Anger. Loss of community. Sense of being all at sea – what do I do now? Loss of confidence – the sense of “must have screwed up”.
- Anger and hurt.
- I instigated it because I wanted to move back to Sydney after two years in Adelaide.
- I was part of the steering group that decided my position was not needed. I am still a contracted employee.
- Shocked at first and then relieved as I reported to the worst manager in my life.

### **3. How well did your employer handle the communication?**

- Career Transition was offered by the HR people who said they preferred Donington but that I could choose to go to whomever I pleased. I had a meeting with Don and was convinced Donington was the place to go.
- At first well but then the relationship deteriorated when I realised I wouldn't be getting my entitlements. Had to fight for the Career Transition program, even though it was in my letter of termination. I had sent people to Donington before, so I naturally wanted to do my program with Donington.
- It was handled very poorly but the HR people were very professional.
- Very badly. Did not get my entitlements. I heard of my demise through a colleague who was to take over my job!

“The term Career Transition means nothing to me and it is a word that should not be used – a better term would be Career Transition Support.”

“It was so good to have a place to go to that wasn’t home.”

#### 4. How valuable was it to have a Donington consultant available to you after the communication?

- I was directed to another Career Transition agency and had a meeting with one of their Consultants. Their premises were more lush than Donington but their consultants showed little interest in me and I got the feeling he was just going through the motions. I was then recommended to Donington and I had a meeting with Nan. Nan and Cheryl were very welcoming.
- Other colleagues who have been through programs with other agencies say it was more like a sausage factory so I'm glad I pushed for the Donington experience.
- After the first meeting I felt very positive. Here was someone who knew exactly how I would feel. Nan was supportive, could offer solutions and was empathetic.
- I had one month of angst before I was put in touch with Donington. Nick was great. It was so good to have a place to go to that wasn't home.
- I was sceptical because I had no idea what to expect. Thought I would get a list of contacts for marketing but it was totally different and very valuable.
- Very valuable – Marcia gave me direction.

#### 5. What was the value of the program on your own Career Transition?

- The strategic insight. Coming from a public sector background it has made me more hardnosed.
- Carol was tough on me and has made me value my time. The emotional support, the honesty and the no-nonsense approach. I have to say that all the staff at Donington have been very professional.
- Very. It was like having a therapist. The tests were very interesting. Career Anchors was valuable. Helped to reaffirm where I could add value and the strengths I had to offer somebody.
- It made me think of things I wouldn't have considered. It taught me the value of networking and the value of maintaining relationships. I have a change of mindset about my commitment to an organisation and I now think of my job as a project.
- It made me focus on tasks. Using my network was therapeutic. Doing the CV – well structured. The positive reassurance from Rosemary that I was on track.
- The networking was very valuable and it positioned me for interviews. I was kept on track by Marcia with weekly meetings.

#### 6. How prepared were you to find another job?

- It has made me a lot more prepared. It has made me tougher and taught me to value myself and my skills. I looked at different models of communication. How was I going to perform in an unfamiliar market?
- Emotionally it took a while to get prepared – a sense of “if I get a job will the same thing happen” – the fear factor. Technically I was prepared - had the network and the resume.
- I had structure which made me very prepared.
- It focussed me on task type activities to make the networking more useful. Marcia made me understand that I had a very varied background that head-hunters would find hard to define. I needed to be upstream of companies with problems
- I felt I was prepared before starting the program and had a resume prepared. After a few sessions with Don I was very well prepared – it put the finishing touches to my presentation.

“It has made me a lot more prepared. It has made me tougher and made me to value myself and my skills.”

### 7. How long did it take you to find another job?

- Am now consulting back into the public sector.
- Three months. Job came up via networking.
- I got consulting work almost straight away and spent ten months on a project. I had to do that to realise I don't want a career as a consultant. However, I am now focussed on getting a job back in the corporate world. Have a lot of irons in the fire.
- I was ready and working my network at four months. The longer away from work the more difficult it is to get back to a 8 – 6 job.
- Eight months

### 8. How important was the coaching component of your Career Transition Program?

- Very important. That is what benefited me the most. Having someone neutral who didn't make judgements – someone to listen and help me get to the right answers.
- It was very important. I was being coached but not aware of being coached. Nan was a friend as well. She kept me honest.
- Critical. The advice, support and feedback has helped me well on the way to establishing myself. It was a slow start and I was bewildered by that. Carol checked that I was doing all the steps and encouraged me to believe this was normal.
- It is excellent and keeps me on the rails. Don kept me focussed and I have complete confidence in him. It is good to have a coffee and have some feedback.
- It was very important. I bounced a lot of ideas off Nick and he helped to clarify my thoughts and decisions.

“I was being coached but not aware of being coached.”

### 9. What elements of the technical part of the program did you find most useful?

- The Systematic Analysis. The resume building – reworked it 1,000 times – forced me to learn by heart all the things I had done which is great in an interview situation.
- Career Anchors – the testing component and the resume development. Being in PR I am a natural networker so didn't need help or discipline there.
- I enjoyed the tests which told me a lot about myself. I liked the one that gave a view of the level you had reached and where could you get to in company life. I also liked Career Anchors.
- Reorganising resume – much more professional. Career Anchors was useful as were some of the other assessments.
- The various questionnaires put things in perspective. The process was excellent.

“The tests told me a lot about myself.”

### **10. In summary, what was the greatest value that you derived from this program?**

- The coaching is very cathartic and very positive. Rosemary helped me regain my confidence and I felt I had found a friend.
- It gave me focus. Peter gave me insights to myself that would not have come across. Met people and broadened the network.
- The whole program was very good. The use of networking was the greatest value and got me the job.
- Gave me a game plan.
- Love the facilities. It would make me feel part of a team, especially with Louisa, Cheryl and Carol. I would use it once a week.

### **11. How did you rate the facilities provided to you? How often would you use them?**

- Fabulous facilities. Used every day for the first few months.
- Fine. Didn't use them as I had an office at home.
- Sensational. Initially would use it five days a week. I then went away for ten months and then three days a week. Currently, whenever I am in town for a meeting.
- Excellent. Only used them two or three times throughout the program as I had my own office.

### **12. How appropriate was the choice of your Career Transition Consultant?**

- Very appropriate choice
- Very appropriate.
- Don and Carol have different things to offer. Don has a considered view of the world. Carol very bright, empathetic – constant source of good suggestions.
- Very appropriate – a perfect match. Carol is smart and supportive.
- Very good choice. Peter was excellent.

### **13. Is there any component of the Donington program that could be improve?**

- Going into the program I thought it would give me a lot of contacts that I didn't already have. However, I can understand now why my own network was crucial.
- Don would challenge me on my CV but would not give me the answer. Some people found that frustrating as they expected it to be done for them. I do appreciate Don's help and that he did it for a reason, which was to give me ownership of my CV. I would find it hard to be critical about anything to do with Donington.
- Your marketing. When I was made redundant I went to the department for a list of career transition providers. No-one could make a recommendation as to who to use. I stumbled upon Donington quite by accident but your website does not do you justice.
- I believe the drinks evenings should not be called "Alumni". I find it quite off-putting. It isn't the right word as it has nothing to do with academia. Call it a networking evening or something.

“I can understand now why my own network was crucial.”

#### 14. Do you think your employer did the right thing by you? What could have been done better?

- My employer was open to whom I could chose so I think they did do the right thing.
- No. Could have paid my entitlements
- My boss is very bad with people and the communication could have been done better and with integrity.
- The HR people were very helpful and did give me a choice.

#### 15. What do you think of your former organisation now?

- I could not care less about my former organisation—their management is appalling
- Not much as I am still in a legal dispute.
- I'm still very bitter. I haven't spoken to my colleagues since.
- Working with Donington I have moved on but still have good friends there.

#### 16. If you were to recommend the use of Donington's services to anyone, what would you say?

- Go and have a good chat to the consultant first. Donington will give you personal focussed attention as opposed to the factory approach of other Career Transition specialists. Donington under promised and over delivered.
- I would recommend the services of Donington to anyone – your people are the most professional I have come across – you obviously recruit well and have a good culture.
- A really positive and essential process that everyone who leaves a senior role should go through. It gives you the opportunity to take time out and evaluate who you are, what you are and where you want to get to. It makes you feel good about what you have to offer and find the perfect match.
- I would ask them what their expectations were. I would say that Donington is technically good but you must be prepared to put yourself under scrutiny. If it was a friend, I would request that they deal with Don.
- I would say that Donington gives you a general job hunting strategy with an emphasis on networking. It also gives you greater self awareness.

“You must be prepared to put yourself under scrutiny.”

#### 17. As an employer, why does using Career Transition Services make good business sense?

- Because you would be seen as an employer who does the right thing by its people. More an employer of choice.
- If you want to foster a culture within your organisation of fairness and where it is important to treat employees with respect then it makes good business sense. I would offer it to all people leaving the organisation even the most junior levels as well. I would want my company to be thought of as fair-minded where all people had the opportunity to move on with respect.
- It is inevitable that people move on and you need to be sure that they have every opportunity to find another job. You want your exiting employees to say positive things about how they were treated. You don't want disgruntled ex-employees roaming the streets.
- I think your pitch to the public sector needs to be around “duty” as opposed to “risk management” Private sector language can tend to alienate government workers. Need to work more with unions and get them on side.
- Often redundancies are not handled well and it helps people to leave without hard feelings about the company.

“You want your exiting employees to say positive things about how they were treated.”

“A company should not burn any bridges, the person they are kicking out could end up as a customer.”

### **18. Do you think organisations have a corporate responsibility for providing Career Transition to exiting employees?**

- Yes
- Yes. It should be part of the overall relationship and contract you have with an employee from start to finish.
- The companies that I want to work for, yes. It adds value.
- It is a good thing to do.
- Only if it was no fault of the individual – I wouldn't consider it for poor performance.
- It was very important. I bounced a lot of ideas off Don and he helped to clarify my thoughts and decisions.

### **19. If you were advising another Executive to encourage their company to give a Career Transition program, what advice would you give?**

- It's smart. You don't want your brand being tarnished by disgruntled employees. You help them, they'll help you.
- Go to Donington – they have an excellent process and very professional coaches.
- A company should not burn any bridges, the person they are kicking out could end up as a customer. It shows the company has respect for an individual.

“Ensure that the program is one on one and that it is with the same consultant throughout the program.”

### **20. What are the factors which would be important in selecting the Career Transition firm to use?**

- Interview the consultant – get a feel for their experience, knowledge and networks and their ability to relate with you. All firms would have the same technical material, it is the consultant who makes the difference and sets Donington apart.
- Look at the people. Do they give you a road map of the process and the likely outcomes. Advice on when you should take holidays during the process. List of what the program does and does not do. What is expected of you and what you can expect from the consultant.
- The sense of respect they have for an individual and their needs. Consistency and trust.
- Personality of the consultants. Resources provided. Structure of the program. Providing value for money. 1:1 service essential.
- Ensure that the program is one on one and that it is with the same consultant throughout the program. Look at the overall program including the structure and what is offered.
- Facilities – how often are they available and what do they provide. i.e. unlimited use of technology, admin assistance, location – in town where the action is.

**The Donington Group**

Corporate Office

56 Pitt Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

**T** 02 8226 6999

**F** 02 8226 6911

**E** [admin@donington.com.au](mailto:admin@donington.com.au)

**Freecall** 1300 667 144

[www.donington.com.au](http://www.donington.com.au)

**DONINGTON**  
CAREER TRANSITION & OUTPLACEMENT SPECIALISTS

SYDNEY • MELBOURNE • BRISBANE • ADELAIDE • PERTH • CANBERRA • HOBART • LAUNCESTON  
NEWCASTLE • GOLD COAST • TOWNSVILLE • AUCKLAND • CHRISTCHURCH • WELLINGTON