

## *Introduction*

This book is written for you... and the thousands of other executives across America who are age fifty and older and are either out of work or concerned that they soon may lose their jobs.

Like most, you probably were or could be terminated through no fault of your own. Your company was acquired or downsized, or your boss was replaced by someone who brought in his own management team. Or, it could have been for other reasons that had little or nothing to do with your own performance. Proud of a successful career, you were confident that with a strong record and the support of business colleagues, friends, and recruiters with whom you had established solid relationships over the years, you would find a great new job in a few months.

But it hasn't happened.

After many months with no job offers, your severance has run out (if you were fortunate enough to get it), recruiters are no longer calling, and your network is drying up. You have been told many times by recruiters and companies that you have a great background but are either overqualified or "have a lot of maturity." You are surprised to find that having reached your fifties, the market considers you over the hill. For the first time in your life, you wake up

worrying if you will ever get the job you want or will need to exhaust your savings to get it.

Like many other executives your age, you may never have been in an executive level job search before. You were fortunate to be promoted up through the ranks or recruited to better positions. Now in a challenging job search, you are surprised to find that traditional job search methods aren't working for you. You have given it your best, but are now in a stalled search. Confused and concerned, you don't know to whom to turn and are unsure what to do next. That is why we wrote this book.

After successful careers as leaders in diverse large, small and midsize companies, we both found ourselves in job search during the massive restructuring of the 90's. During the process, we became founding members of an executive networking group dedicated to assisting senior level executives in transition. There, we discovered that we had a lot in common, confirmed our age was being held against us, and agreed to work together to find new ways to overcome the unique job search challenges we faced in middle age. It worked, and we each found great jobs in record time.

Meanwhile, we continued to apply our learning to developing innovative mentoring programs to guide members of the executive networking group who were stalled in their job search efforts. During this time, we also gained valuable insights as to why few job seeking executives over 50 move through the process quickly, while most take considerably longer - not having a clear job

objective, managing their time poorly, and lacking critical networking, interviewing and negotiating skills.

Many executives in transition asked us how we did it, and when we told them, urged us to start a business to help others like themselves. They told us that they were unaware of any outplacement firms or coaching services that knew as much as we did about how to overcome the age barrier and other special challenges executives over 50 faced. We thought about it, researched the market, and found out they were right. We decided to leave our corporate careers and start a coaching business dedicated exclusively to helping executives over 50 find their next job faster with the same new tools we had tested and used. After having successfully coached scores of executives since 1995 in a broad range of functions and industries all over the country, we decided to write this book.

Throughout this book we provide many of the tips we have given our clients, and a series of cases that illustrate how executives have successfully applied our advice and principles. These case examples are based on the experiences of executives with whom we have worked as clients as well as members of numerous networking groups with which we have been actively involved.

The purpose of our book is to explain how to overcome the age bias in the job market, and to describe the proven techniques we recommend to help you find your next job far faster than you would on your own.