

# 'High-flyers discuss options and then beat others to jobs'

What does a banker do when he loses his job? He goes to see **Corinne Mills** of Personal Career Management. Here she tells reporter **POLLY MANSER** how to get hired, avoid redundancy, and why networking is so very important

**B**ANKERS and other high-flyers have been hit hard since the collapse of Lehman Brothers led to the deepest recession for generations.

Many of those who have lost their jobs have turned to **Corinne Mills**, who runs Personal Career Management, in Chalfont St Peter, for help.

For a fee of between £2,500 and £4,000, Corinne and her team of coaches help former high-flyers to pick themselves up, work out their options, and then go out and beat other candidates to the job.

Corinne said: "We have a box of tissues in every room. People are often very upset. Even people who hated their jobs can be very angry and disappointed."

Of course, it is not just bankers, but also marketing, IT and finance, which have been hit especially hard. Typically, Corinne's clients are aged 45 to 50.

She said: "In this recession organisations have let very good people go. It's not a case of cutting out the dead wood

at all. At 45 to 50, these people are at their prime, with experience, wisdom, with real maturity and still lots of energy."

Although they have been on large incomes, the financial impact of redundancy is often frightening, even with a large payout. She said: "People think that those on large incomes save, probably have a nice house with a big mortgage, but that's often not the case, so it's very scary."

She said that plenty of very talented, experienced and highly employable people are unable to get interviews because their CVs are terrible: "They may have been headhunted for their previous jobs and so haven't written a CV for 15 years."

In a survey by her company of 500 CVs by CEOs (chief executive officers), professionals, senior managers and graduates, 90 per cent would have been rejected, she said, mostly because of spelling mistakes. But through to the interview stage, very often, it is not the best candidate who gets the job. Instead, the job is offered to the person who has best sold their skills to the panel.

She said: "The ironic thing is that when you are job searching you have to be at your most confident."

Many people make the mistake of applying for roles that are more junior than they held previously. She said: "There are lots of people applying for those roles. The company doesn't think you would stay, and of course they'd be right, you'd be looking for something else after three months."

Corinne and her team help clients to identify which jobs to apply for, to prepare a CV that will get them an interview, and to coach them

in the skills they need to sell themselves to the organisation.

In some cases, such as with some banking jobs, there are simply no similar roles to apply for, because nobody is hiring, and in that case the client is helped to apply for roles in allied businesses.

She said: "Skills are very often transferable."

Several of her banker clients have seized the chance, with a large payout, to change direction. One is retraining as a music therapist, while others have gone into property development.

Key to finding a job and keeping it once you have it is networking. This means getting to grips with technology such as Facebook and Linked In. And if you want to get on, it is not enough to simply do your job to the best of your ability and hope you will be promoted.

She said: "If you look at somebody and wonder why they are so successful when they are not as talented, they will be very focused about what they want next. They don't just think 'I'm going to do a good job,' they think about what they need to get on to their next job. They are being very clear with decision makers and saying 'I'm looking for this.' People who get stuck in roles have never been assertive."

Corinne also has tips on how to avoid being made redundant: "People tend to keep their heads down, but actually you need to make yourselves more visible. Your manager may realise what a great job you're doing, but it may be the manager's manager or human resources who makes the decision."

"You need to start finding excuses to ring people up. Most people are way too modest and it doesn't work for

them. It's worth doing everything you can to hang on in there. Remind people about your contributions, especially any money you've brought in or savings you've helped make. You need to talk about the warm relationship you have with customers."

Corinne started Personal Career Management with her husband Jonathan Mills from the front room of their house in Ninning Road, Chalfont St Peter, where they still live. He had just taken voluntary redundancy from foreign exchange company Travelex and she was on maternity leave with her second child, having run an outplacement centre for job seekers for seven years.

The company now has offices in Reading and London, with a fourth in Birmingham opening soon. ● For more information visit [www.personalcareermanagement.com](http://www.personalcareermanagement.com).



■ **CORINNE MILLS:** Helps high-flyers who have been made redundant

