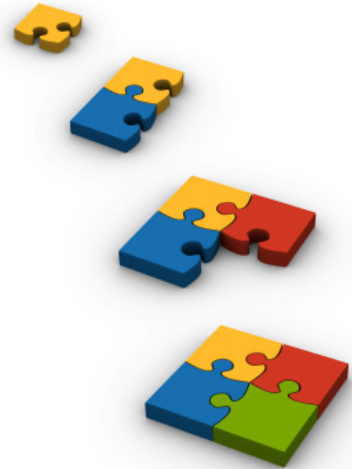


# SOLOMON'S

INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ADVICE

**Nicola has been a client of Solomon's since 2001. She is an Executive Career Counsellor and we spoke to her this week to find out exactly what she does and how she might be able to help other Solomon's clients.**



## **Tell me about your work:**

I provide career coaching for individuals of all levels and backgrounds who have been made redundant from blue chip organisations. This involves meeting with them on a one to one basis to provide strategic and practical support as they seek to determine the next steps in their lives and careers. In addition I facilitate small group seminars on careers and the principles of job search related topics, as well as gaining job market information and expanding networking contacts.

## **What do you particularly enjoy about your role?**

It is always very rewarding to be able to come alongside and assist someone as they work through their thoughts and ideas for the future in whatever way is appropriate as well as providing guidance on the preparation of the CV and interview skills. I consider that I help people improve the presentation of themselves – on paper via the CV and in person via the interview. Most individuals have a sense of what they are good at and what they enjoy, but are often not confident in articulating this to others.

## **Could you describe a typical person that you see and how you help him/her?**

There isn't really anyone who is 'typical' as everyone is so unique in their requirements, personalities, strengths and career paths to date. I firstly listen to them describe what they do to gain an idea of where their interests, motivations and values lie – this gives me a sense of what is important to them as they think about their future direction. Together we agree a plan of some of the structured approaches that will be appropriate, for example, preparing the CV, brushing up on interview skills and developing a proactive job search plan. Where they are in their life stage and career cycle also affects what they want to do next: for example, perhaps seeking a career change or preparing for active retirement or even setting up their own business.

## **Are you finding an increased demand for your services?**

The current economic climate is having a significant impact on what organisations are doing to survive and meet the uncertainties that are present. It is well recorded that this involves job losses and good organisations provide 'outplacement' (careers support) as part of the exit package that they offer their employees. So yes, I am seeing a marked increase in demand and yet most of the individuals I am working with are optimistic and realistic about their futures.

## **How would you encourage someone to live with passion and do their thing?**

When you are enjoying what you do, there is energy, focus, absorption in the task and a sense of achievement. I encourage individuals to take notice of when this occurs and what they can do to keep it

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alive as well noticing when they lose this sense or what got in the way. Many folk instinctively know what gives them a sense of energy and vitality but often circumstances have prevented them from being able to follow this as a money-making venture. For example, I have a number of clients who are proactively moving from banking into interior design. This has been a dormant interest – maybe undertaken as a hobby within their own homes – but now they want to formalise it by re-training. Their external circumstances have provided an opportunity to follow an inner area of passion and they want to tap into a more artistically creative side of themselves.

### **What would be your best tip for to someone considering seeking advice about their vocation?**

Start to notice things, such as: what gives you energy? What makes you forget yourself? What is happening when your mind is alive with lots of creative thoughts? Where do your values lie? The answers to these questions will begin to point to a direction – when this becomes clearer, seek it and persevere!

### **From your experience, what is the most common “thing” that prevents someone from facing personal challenges head on?**

There are a number of “things” that can get in the way. A couple come to mind: first, what I call negative “self-talk”, i.e. self-defeating thoughts and beliefs and, second, anxiety about the future and dealing with the uncertainty of change.

### **Do you have a best money-saving idea?**

Don't spend it!!

### **How have you found Solomon's helpful in fulfilling your ambition/goals?**

The advice I have received from Solomon's has been practical and communicated in laymen's terms to someone who is not very interested in financial planning but knows she needs to do it! They have given me a sense of some control and awareness of how to prepare for the future – very helpful.

*Nicola is a Senior Consultant working for a global Human Resources and Transitions Consultancy.*