



Part I, Chapter 2

Why We Have a Guild

of Career Coaches

Well, I really can't believe that," the senior human resources officer said to Kate Wendleton and David Madison. Kate and David were in his office to make the case for Five O'Clock Club outplacement, whose primary focus is intense coaching. They had just pointed out that the average professional, manager and executive who attends the Five O'Clock Club regularly—who studies the books, listens to the CDs, *and* follows the advice of the weekly small group—receives job offers within 10 to 12 weekly sessions. The HR officer was baffled; he seemed fully in the grip of the common urban myth that, for every \$10,000 earned, it will take to a month to find a new job. He could not believe that high-level job searches could commonly be successful within 10 to 12 sessions.

It turns out that he had recently been in his own job search for almost a year, and—upon the advice of his outplacement coach—had relied primarily on headhunters to generate interviews. So, how could someone at his level *possibly* come up with offers within 10 to 12 sessions?

Kate and David went more deeply into a description of the Club's methodology. They drew the target map representing 200 positions, and pointed out how direct contact is a far more powerful method for getting interviews than relying on headhunters. They also talked about the vital role of influencing decision-makers after the interview. The key elements of a brainy, sophisticated search became evident as his tutorial with Kate and David continued. He became aware that he had not followed good advice—he had not followed a methodology—during his protracted search. He had relied on bad advice from an outplacement counselor. His *exact* words, as the meeting ended, were, "Thank you for opening my eyes."

Such stories don't surprise us, but sometimes we are truly startled by what we hear. A job hunter in Chicago, who had been sent by his company to one of the well-known outplacement firms, called the Club to inquire about our services. During his second session with his counselor at the firm, she had suggested that he call the Five O'Clock Club in New York to get the coaching he needed! Another very senior job hunter, supposedly under the care of a pricey boutique outplacement firm in Boston, called the Club at the suggestion of his advisor there to get proper coaching from us!

The Need for a Guild of Coaches

"Thank you for opening my eyes": indeed, our methodology is an eye-opener, and we want as many people as possible to know about it. As Kate Wendleton was plodding through the years of research to forge the methodology, it dawned on her that there had to be a way to get the word out; just writing a book about it wouldn't be enough. Of course, writing a book was a necessary first step, but going on the lecture circuit for years to promote a book would not be the most effective way to enable job hunters around the country to benefit from the Club's research.

The *far better* approach would be to train as many coaches as possible to communicate the methodology, and an appropriate term for such an association—created to maintain research-based coaching standards—would be 'guild'. The Club could be a change agent on the employment scene in America, and the Guild would be the custodian of the methodology. The Guild could also play a vital role in growing the Club to keep spreading the word. Hence the Guild was created, and, as it has evolved, exists for four primary reasons:

- To promote and market the Five O'Clock Club to the retail market
- To embody and teach the methodology
- To enable the coaches and help them prosper
- To maintain ethical standards

Marketing and Promoting the Five O'Clock Club

The vitality of the Club depends heavily on the steady inflow of new *self-referred* job hunters: without our dynamic weekly groups we are nothing. For the crucial role of bringing these people to the Club, we have always relied on the Guild. Accordingly, Guild members should be coaches who are committed to building their own private practices through marketing—especially through public speaking. Our mantra has been: market yourself, market the Club.

Hence our refrain for the last couple of decades has been: give speeches in your community. In fact, be *obsessive* about giving speeches. Work hard to line up and deliver speeches to professional and alumni associations, and a great variety of other venues as well. There are two chapters in this manual about how to do this

(Part III, Chapters 3 and 4) in such a way that your audiences receive valuable career advice and walk away with an awareness of both the Five O’Clock Club *and* your private practice.

This marketing obligation of the Guild has become even more urgent in the last few years as the Five O’Clock Club has greatly expanded its outplacement services. In fact, we have seen a massive inflow of outplacement job hunters as more and more organizations have selected the Club as their outplacement provider. Of course, the cash inflow has been welcome (and all the coaching assignments we pass on to our coaches are welcome too), but we are entering dangerous territory if most of our job hunters come to us through outplacement. We always want to maintain a healthy balance of retail (self-referred) and outplacement-referred job hunters. Indeed, one of our selling points (one of our promises, actually) to corporations is that their downsized employees will be ‘at the Club, where they won’t be surrounded just by a lot of depressed unemployed people.’ Self-referred job hunters tend to be in an eager, proactive frame of mind since they have paid their own money to attend—they have signed up for this ‘graduate course in job search’—and many of them are still employed. The Club makes little money on the self-referred job hunters (we have not raised our retail rates since the 1990s), but their presence is essential for maintaining the quality, character and spirit of the Club.

Hence, the unwritten contract that we have with our Guild members is:

**You will give speeches; we will give you clients.
You will build the Five O’Clock Club brand name;
we will enhance your cash flow.**

When we refer retail clients to our coaches, we don’t ask for a percentage of your fee: we don’t want your money! We want your proactive intensive efforts to build the brand name **while you are marketing your private practice**. We rely on Guild members to be the dynamic agents for bringing retail clients into the weekly small groups at the Club—for which we offer the incentive of client referrals and enhanced cash flow.

What could be better than this? And it’s all built on goodwill, trust and fair play.

We Rely on the Honor System: “You’re a Fair Person, I’m a Fair Person”

When new Guild members finish certification, we don’t ask for a contract. There are no quotas, i.e., a minimum number of speeches that a coach must give every month, quarter or year. **But we do have a Points System**—in an effort to maintain equity and keep everybody honest (see Part III, Chapter 2). We understand it as a simple ‘lady’s and gentleman’s agreement’ that the coach will give lots of speeches to earn the client referrals that we direct his/her way. The referrals-for-speeches arrangement is an enticement: we are actually offering coaches an incentive to do the speech marketing that they should be doing *anyway* to build a private practice.

When it becomes obvious that a coach has received more referrals than speeches given—obvious to the coach and the Club—the coach should redouble efforts to line up and deliver speeches. One of the sentences that we recommend job hunters to use during salary negotiations is ‘you’re a fair person, I’m a fair person.’ This mindset should govern the business relationship we have with our coaches: we all want to be fair. In fact, we bend over backwards to be fair. We award points (for earning client referrals) not only for giving speeches, but for lining up speeches as well.

It bears repeating: the Guild is the marketing arm of the Five O’Clock Club to bring self-referred job hunters to our weekly meetings. **It was conceived and designed to get the word out to this market.**

It is sometimes suggested that there surely are other ways. For example, why not advertise? The Club doesn’t advertise because advertising is costly and ineffective; we’ve tried it and got no response. The cost of advertising would force us to raise our prices, which is not in the best interest of job hunters.

Or why not hand out flyers at the train station or at the corner of 42nd and Madison? This may be a fine technique for a barbershop or fast food chains, but is it really appropriate for the kind of service that we offer and the caliber of clients we’ve targeted? But we *have* tried handing out flyers—and it didn’t work.

The Club does try to get a lot of media coverage, both print and broadcast—in fact, we have been very successful in getting great media hits, e.g., in *Fortune* magazine, *The New York Times*, on the *Today Show*. But, believe it or not, even when Kate Wendleton was

interviewed by Katie Couric on *The Today Show*, our phone did not ring off the hook: media hits are not lead generators. Media hits help build brand name awareness, but they rarely prompt people to sign up for the Club.

When people hear a Five O’Clock Club coach **in person at a speech**—provided the coach has followed all of our suggestions for describing the Club at the speech—they are much more likely to have a good feeling about approaching the coach or the Club to inquire about signing up for sessions. And when they attend, they tend to stick with the process if their initial exposure to the Club had been through a speech given by one of our coaches.

Embodying and Teaching the Methodology

“Well, just what *is* the Five O’Clock Club methodology?” we are often asked. “How is it so different from what any other career coaches teach?” This is truly a 10-second question with a 30-minute answer...at least. We are the first to admit that the Club methodology is not rocket science. But there is a *lot* to learn, and some of it is not immediately obvious or easy (such as Stages 1, 2 and 3). There is a lot to *unlearn*, in terms of the common urban mythology and conventional wisdom about job search.

So much of what passes for job search coaching in the wider world is based on individual coach preferences, instincts and intuition (not necessarily research-based), and on fads that have enormous appeal, e.g., the advice that job hunters should go for ‘personal branding.’ This sounds appealing, but betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of what ‘branding’ is and means. Rather than getting bogged down in such nonsense, we push job hunters, working with their small groups, to master their Two-Minute Pitches.

When we set out to explain what the Five O’Clock Club method is, we commonly say that we are a ‘research-based organization’: in our books, CDs and lectures we are reporting to job hunters about techniques that Club research has shown to be effective. Kate Wendleton spent a lot of years in the 1970s and 1980s doing research, and, of course, the breakthrough book embodying the research was published in 1992: *Through the Brick Wall: How to Job Hunt in a Tight Market*.

Today we can recommend our four basic books for

understanding the Five O’Clock Club methodology. And it does come as an eye-opener to many job hunters, as it did to the HR officer mentioned earlier. But a very handy tool that we distribute as widely as possible is the four-page color flyer entitled *The Five O’Clock Club Way*. Here the methodology is summarized brilliantly.

What makes our methodology different and better is that no components of a successful search are omitted.

Everything from assessment through salary negotiations flows seamlessly from one step to the next, and the tools needed at crucial points in any search are provided, e.g., the concept of the targeting map (covering 200 positions) and Stages 1, 2 & 3—the tool invented by the Five O’Clock Club for assessing the effectiveness of a search. Countless job hunters have arrived at the Club—after months of frustrating search or at the conclusion of a three-month stint at an outplacement firm—with no awareness at all of what **we** mean by a targeted search, nor any understanding of how to gauge the effectiveness of their job search efforts (Stage 1, 2 & 3). They commonly end up raving about the Five O’Clock Club way.

Our Guild coaches are expected to master the methodology, to carry the expertise and tradition forward.

No Easy Entry to the Guild—for a Reason

Over the years quite a few seasoned coaches have backed off from our certification program when they learned what was involved. Reactions have varied from an arrogant ‘I don’t need this—I know all I need to know’ to a weary ‘I’m too far along in my career to put myself through that.’ Clearly there was great appeal to the prospect of identifying themselves as the Five O’Clock Club coaches, but there was little understanding that one of the reasons that the Guild exists is to **maintain the integrity of the researched-based methodology**. It must be mastered. The Guild was founded to make sure that as many job hunters as possible could hear about *the Five O’Clock Club way* of doing things. Thus coaches who *do* sign on for certification have committed themselves to learning what we have to tell job hunters in our books, CDs and weekly strategy groups.

There are, of course, other associations for coaches to join. All they need to do is pay the annual membership fee; they are not required to meet or strive for specific coaching standards.

The primary focus of our training program is the

methodology—although we’ll put a lot of emphasis too on how to grow your private practice. We need coaches in whom we can have total confidence when we refer job hunters for our brand name coaching. From the moment that they arrive at the Club, we make a point of raising their expectations about the caliber of coaching they should receive. They study the books and listen to the CDs. They review the extensive Beginners Kit, and thus know what to expect. They want to have efficient, effective and speedy searches, and they want to have a coach who is grounded solidly in the methodology.

Accordingly, when you are working with Five O’Clock Club referrals, our brand name coaching must remain paramount. The way you coach *other* job hunters—those who come to you through other sources—is beyond our control, of course; in fact, it is none of our business. However, most coaches who master the Five O’Clock Club approach usually adopt it in their work with all of their clients because of its power and effectiveness.

It’s helpful to think of the Guild as the custodian of the methodology: you have a great privilege and responsibility. There’s nothing at all to prevent any coach anywhere from adopting the methodology in his or her private practice—and never become part of the Guild. That’s just fine, as long as they give credit to the Club. And it’s too bad that they remain outside the Guild, from the very practical standpoint of receiving referrals.

But those of you who make the effort to become part of the Guild are the accredited *custodians and protectors of the Five O’Clock Club way*.

Enabling Coaches and Helping Them Prosper

In one of his routines, comedian George Carlin observed that “it’s very scary to know that, out there *somewhere*, is the world’s worst doctor. And it’s even scarier to think that someone has an appointment with him *today*.” Well, in the real world, how could it be otherwise? There are the best and the worst in every profession. In this situation it is a good idea to compare yourself to others: who are the best in my field? What can I do to emulate them? Self-improvement should be a passion. The Guild is designed to be an environment in which you can learn continually and develop professionally. We want to be able to point to all of our Guild members and say, “These are the best in the business!”

We genuinely want to help you get there—and to become the best that you can be. There are several ways that we offer support and on-going learning:

- **There is the initial certification program itself.**

As was stated at the very beginning of this manual, whether you are a beginner coach or a seasoned veteran, you will be a better coach after completing the training program, because you will have undergone a few months of immersion in the Five O’Clock Club methodology.

- **The books and CDs**

These are always available as a resource. One coach knows the CDs so well that, he says, he can “almost recite them along with Kate.” The books and CDs, at the very least, should be treated as reference materials. Don’t forget that there are other books beyond the main four, e.g., *Achieving the Good Life After Fifty* (for job hunters who may be spooked by the age issue), *For Executives Only* (for those who earn more than \$100,000), *Your Great Business Idea: The Truth About Making it Happen* (for your clients who are thinking about starting their own businesses), and *Report from the Front Lines* (chock full of more than 125 job hunter success stories—a great fund of examples to talk about during speeches).

- **Our monthly magazine, *The Five O’Clock News***

This is a handy tool for fresh insights and information. There are articles about job search and career management; reports about successful job hunters (again, lots of examples to use in speeches); and summaries of the six HR Network Breakfast panel topics, covering a wide range of issues that impact the employment and labor scene. The Club sponsors six of these events every year for the HR community in the New York area, with the average attendance being over 200.

- **The website and its archive**

Not too long ago our website was named near the top of a *Forbes* list of the ‘ten best’ job hunt websites. The look and feel of the website reflect our consumer-friendly approach, and coaches can find a wealth of information there to use in their coaching practices. For starters, there is the huge archive of back issues of *The Five O’Clock News*. There is also the free mini-course (“Is Your Job Search a Good One?”) that you can recom-

mend to job hunters who want to get a better grasp of the Club's approach to job search. You can find the link to the mini-course right below the 'living room' picture after clicking 'Individuals Enter Here'.

In the Members Only section of the website, an Internet Resource Guild is available; this guide includes links to help with research on industries, companies and associations.

Your bio and photo appear in the list of Coaches and Speakers.

- **The option of observing and auditing our groups on an ongoing basis**

As you know, ten audits/observations are required for certification. This unparalleled opportunity to actually sit in on real-time, real life coaching sessions doesn't end when you complete certification. We encourage you to audit/observe as many times as you want. What better learning opportunity can there be? You are welcome to sit in the presence of a coach who is helping a half dozen or so job hunters work out their weekly strategies.

- **The six Guild meeting held in New York annually.**

These training sessions for our coaches cover a wide range of topics of interest to private practice coaches; the recordings are accessible to all coaches everywhere.

- **The six teleclasses every quarter for Guild trainees**

Anyone in the Guild is welcome to participate in these sessions; the classes can be treated as refresher courses. They cover the methodology basics, the fundamentals for growing a private practice, how to lead the small weekly strategy groups, how to market speeches and how to be effective at speeches.

- **The Point System**

This is our incentive program to encourage coaches to give speeches, and promote the Club in other ways as well. Is there any other association **that rewards you** for doing your marketing? The more public speaking you do, the more customers you will attract and the better you will become as a coach. You will hone your skills as a public speaker and—depending on how well you have targeted and selected your speaking venues—you will deepen your understanding of various industries. You will

become a better coach by putting yourself on the front lines with a variety of audiences and bringing a variety of professionals to your private practice. The Point System is the Club's way of enticing you to become a better self-promoter!

- **The contents and outlines for many different speech topics**

Any coach who wants to launch an ambitious public speaking campaign never lacks content, ideas and even outlines for speech topics. This manual includes the outlines for more than a dozen standard methodology talks given at the Club; there are also the recorded lectures on CDs—and our books can be mined for ideas and examples.

- **We foster the client-for-life mentality.** When we refer job hunters to you for coaching—whether they are self-referred or outplacement clients—it is our hope that they will become your clients for life. Of course, when they are in an active job-hunt mode—either now or a few years hence—we expect that you will encourage them to participate in our weekly job-search groups. But we will help train you in the ways to keep the client returning to you for years for private coaching.

Maintaining Ethical Standards

Private practice career coaches can commonly be pulled in two directions: always do what is in the best interest of job hunters **or** always do what is in the best interest of his/her business as a coach. These forces need not be in conflict, but it's easy to slip into the mode of scheming to enhance cash flow. The pressure to enhance cash flow—especially if private practice is one's main source of revenue—can lead coaches to cross ethical lines, often without realizing it. In the next chapter you will find a full statement and explanation of the Guild code of ethics, heavily weighted to doing what is in the best interest of job hunters, because, that, in the long run, **is** the best way to strengthen your business.

We will do our best, on an on-going basis, to remind you of what it really means to 'do what is in the best interest of the job hunter.' Sometimes it is not so easy to spot violations of coach ethics—let's look at three examples.

· **Getting Through Assessment Quickly:** We urge our coaches to help clients through assessment as quickly as possible—but haste that is consistent with thoroughness. Hence we have recommended that assessment be wrapped up within two or three sessions: get the client moving forward with activity in the real live job market as soon as possible. A few years ago one coach balked: “Is this really what the Club recommends? I like to take eight hours with a client to complete assessment.” Of course, at \$125/session, this is a neat way to extract \$1,000 from a client. If the 8-hour rule for assessment is what the coach expects clients to agree to, the best (financial) interest of the coach has become the primary motivation. Such a policy becomes a matter of coaching ethics.

· **Communicate Billing Policy—and Bill for Wisdom!** A job-hunter reported, with considerable resentment, that her coach had billed her for the two hours (at \$175/hour) that they sat together at the computer screen tweaking résumé format. It would have been far better for the coach to have made suggestions (taking maybe 15 minutes of billable time) to get the client started on format revision, with the offer to review it later. Or to have made it very clear to the client that the meter was running as they tweaked for two hours. A coach who can bill at \$175/hour should have a lot of job-search *wisdom* to impart in the course of sixty minutes—instead of suggestions about indentations and margins. The coach was pleased to bank \$350—but had *lost* the client for life. An ethical line had been crossed in not letting the client know what was happening—and suggesting a better way to tackle the résumé revision.

· **Remember: This is a Helping Profession!** Two non-Five O’Clock Club career coaches offered a teleclass for other coaches: “The Secrets of Selling Four and Five-Figure Career Coaching Consulting Packages.” They offered advice on how to get retail customers to cough up many thousands of dollars (even five figures!) to get job-search help. For these coaches, the primary goal seemed to be to reduce the need for self-marketing: if you can find just two people a month to pay you \$5,000 or \$10,000, you can make a good living as a coach. Said one of coaches, “I only want what’s fair.” And of course, she offered to do a lot for her clients. She loaded on the bells and whistles, providing far more than any job hunter needs; she was also selling the illusion that job

hunters can get out of doing the hard work themselves. One of the main suggestions of this teleclass was to aim only for the wealthy folks who are immune to sticker shock. One of the expert coaches leading the class said that one of her techniques is never to answer her phone; her outgoing message gives questions that the inquirer must answer. She qualifies job-hunters before she returns call: she only wants to work with people who have deep pockets.

Yes, we all want to make a decent living. But we are also in a helping profession, and a major ethical line is crossed when coaches scheme at ways to get the most money from the fewest people. With every passing year we are learning in America that greed is not good after all, and it is especially unbecoming in the ranks of career coaches. Charging obscene money for job search help—under the guise of ‘I only want what’s fair’—is likewise obscene.

We have a Guild to keep coaches mindful of the ethical ways to treat clients and manage their private practices honorably, fully convinced that ‘always doing what is in the best interest of the job hunter’—no matter how rich or poor—will be in the best interest of the coach in the long run.