



GUIDELINES

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From the Chairman



Dear Readers,

The year end must have been hectic for all! The beginning of a new financial year comes with a lot of decision making both on the professional and personal front. It is important that you take up the decision making with thought, insight and the knowledge required to make a wise decision.

Career counseling is an area which parents believe need to be taken up just at the time of a child's major transition – mainly Std. X & XII. Well this is not true. The necessary guidance for students should be taken up at an earlier stage when the child is just about to enter his / her teens.

Career counseling is not just a one-time affair. It has to be picked up time and again at every transition of the child's career. It is important that we try to get the required amount of knowledge on careers, one's abilities, interests and personality before we make a major decision for our child's life.

- **Dr. George Varghese**

Which Career Counselor should my child go to?

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Performance Appraisals – A Sensitive Time?

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April – the beginning of the new financial year – and the time for performance appraisals for many! Lets look into how this process can be made easier for both the employer and the employee.

April is also the time for summer holidays for children, holding more importance for Std. X and Std. XII students. It is a stepping stone for them, and every step they take from this point forward makes a huge difference! Parents that call us have a common question – when should my child undergo career counseling. And they are also grappled with a larger

question – how do I choose the right career counselor for my child. In this myriad of career counselors, selecting the right one is a challenge. In our article, we have listed out qualities that a good career counselor should possess. Read on!!

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Which Career Counselor should my child go to?

Its now the holiday season for most students in school and high school grades. Or should I say for “some of them”. Only students in the 10th and 12th grade would know what I mean; in most cases their parents.

We are all habitual in waking up when the water has reached our neck. We are also habitual in following the “rest of the group”. “My friend took her child to the career counselor, and so must I, otherwise he will fall behind” is the common thought process. We do not do things because we see the value of it, but either because we get alarmed or we should not get left behind in the rat race.

So lets look at the right perspective of consulting a Career Counselor for your child.

Here the student needs a career counselor to identify which are his true areas of interests and which subjects he/she is weak at. The career counselor also guides the students on how to improve study habits. Modules on better adjustment at school & home become an integral part of the counseling.



By the time the student turns 15 years old, he / she is in a better platform to choose the right course of study and have an understanding of his / her career interests. Through career assessments a counselor can help the child identify his natural areas of interest and aptitudes. Based on this the child would be able to understand which are the best careers for him / her, and then select the right course of study.

The next brink comes after completion of Std 12th. Again students are at a loss, as to what is the next step. This is also a cornerstone where the student can decide their career and select the right graduation / post-graduation courses. After this stage, it is too late to visit a career counselor, since the individual could lose vital time from his / her education and career. But, as the saying goes – “better late than never”.

Hence career counseling should ideally begin at the age of 12 years. This helps build a strong foundation for the child for all the vital subjects. Better study habits take him a long way and help him throughout his education. It also helps the child to develop a positive self-image, and adjust better to his / her school / home.

When to take the right career guidance depends on the development of the child’s brain at a particular age. For eg, when a child is in the 7th grade he / she tends to dislike certain subjects. These are usually subjects that they are weak at and where they need to focus to get better grades. They also start building a self-concept and this turns out to be the stepping-stone towards their career.

So let's ask the next question – How do you find the right career counselor for your child?

There is a myriad of career counselors available, right from someone in your building to your society or in a professional office close to your home or far off. Some have relatives who are career counselors and claim to give best guidance to students. Which one is qualified and skilled enough to provide authentic career counseling? Follow these steps and they will lead you to the right counselor:



1. Education

A bachelor's degree in any discipline is a must. Further specialized courses or education in disciplines related to counseling is important.

2. Experience

A career counselor must have at least 5 years of experience in counseling, training, and instructional design for groups and individuals. Experience in industry is a must and exposure to individuals from varied careers & backgrounds is a plus.

3. Having the right Knowledge

Career counseling is a stream, which requires multiple skills.

- A career counselor must have knowledge on human behavior and performance, abilities, personalities and interests of individuals and psychological research skills.
- The counselor must have / should be able to produce in-depth knowledge on various career options and courses available.
- Ability to administer and interpret career tests and guide the individual to select the right career is important.
- Further knowledge on career trends, job markets, growth opportunities and compensation & benefits of particular careers is a must.
- To train an individual to acquire skills required for career success is important.

4. Not attached to a coaching class / education institute

- A career counselor should not be attached to a coaching class and should not endorse / favor any particular educational institute. In such cases there will always be a vested interest to convince the student to enroll.

- The career counselor should have a neutral stand regarding all courses and institutes and only recommend courses based on the pure requirements of the client, and in the best interests of the client.

5. Having strong referrals / recommendations

It is important to know what clients have said about the career counselor. If a lot of people are recommending a particular career counselor in all probability he / she will be good. You can find online ratings for career counselors before making a decision. Look out for fake ratings too!

6. Following the right career counseling process

The right approach towards career counseling is as important as all other factors. What kind of information is the career counselor asking for, what are the methods used for identifying the right career for the child and how the career counselor guides the student to make the right decisions at an early stage. These are all questions to be asked before you select the career counselor.

7. Educational Counseling Vs. Career Counseling

Most career counselors focus on education, courses, and marks attained by the student, and base their decisions on these factors. They are actually counseling for education, and not for career.

Career counseling involves job related factors, management principles and the ability of an individual to perform. The student's educational decisions are based on occupational interests and inclinations, rather than on grades.

8. Using sound career assessment tools

Various career counselors use varied tools for career assessments. It is important to find out whether certified tools and techniques are being used.



You are now well on your way to select the right career counselor for your child!!! Wish you the very best!

- V SOLVE Research Team



Performance Appraisals - A Sensitive Time?

Performance appraisals are usually conducted annually, and performance reviews are conducted half-yearly. In most cases it is a necessary evil for the employer as well as the employee. But it does not have to be that way.

Why is an appraisal important?

Every organization has its goals and plans. These plans are typically broken down into departmental, team and individual goals. Each entity must perform in order to reach the ultimate goal of the organization. If there is no growth, the organization will find it tough to survive because there are always shark competitors to eat away at the market share. If there are no profits, there is no sustenance. And if there are no revenues, the organization cannot exist and so can't you.

The purpose of your presence in the organization is to achieve individual, team, departmental and organizational goals that have been allotted to you, and to resolve all challenges that prevent you from achieving your goals. At the end of the year when you have worked hard and achieved your goals, an appraisal is a way of acknowledging your hard work, and appreciating the contribution.

The discrepancy occurs when both parties (employer and employee) have different views on the appraisal. One believes that goals have not been met, and the other believes that they have. So how do we resolve this issue?

As an employee, it is important for you to understand and implement performance-tracking tools that your organization uses. Hence documentation of your work done becomes extremely relevant. Let's face it – neither you nor your boss is genius enough to remember every contribution made by you during the year and every failure that took place.

As an employer you should set up performance management systems so that it is easier to measure and maintain the performance of your organization. This does not mean that you have to invest in expensive IT infrastructure. You could use simple word and excel sheets to develop the documents required to record and measure performance.

So the key to an effective performance appraisal is to have sound documentation methods, which will record every aspect of an individual's performance, and track it to check if the ultimate organizational goals have been achieved.

- V SOLVE Research Team Member

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

We encourage you to send us your contributions in the form of articles, quotes or comments & thoughts on the discussions in this newsletter. Please write to us at news@vsolvegroup.com.

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