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How I Help Companies Develop Talent

Inc. 5000 Applicant of the Week: Careers In Transition, founded by Indigo Johnson to help organizations get the most out of their workers



Screenshot of the Careers In Transition website



Indigo Johnson, CEO of Careers In Transition

As applications for the **2012 Inc. 500|5000** arrive, we thought it would be worthwhile to shine a spotlight on some of the companies that are vying to appear on our ranking of the fastest-growing private companies in the U.S. One that caught our eye was Tucker, Georgia-based Careers In Transition.

When Indigo Johnson was completing her senior year of high school, she told her school's guidance counselor that she wanted to go to college. "You're not college material," the counselor told her.

Years later, Johnson is still driven by that upsetting memory. Those words have been the driving force behind the growth of her company Careers In Transition, an HR consulting firm that offers talent and job performance solutions for both employees and companies.

“That really motivated me to help people get into college, or at least find their passion to do whatever they want to do,” says Johnson.

Now, Careers in Transition does far more than help individuals choose a suitable career. The talent management firm, which has expanded to offer performance consulting, talent optimization, executive search, and customized training solutions, grew 1502 percent from 2008 to 2011, earning more than \$5.2 million in revenue for 2011. Johnson projects that the company will earn \$7 million in revenue for 2012.

Her path to entrepreneurial success was not a direct one, however. In fact, her collegiate dream was to be on television. Johnson pitched hosting a show that would deal with psychology issues in 1988. But her idea proved to be ahead of its time, and she was once again told that she was pursuing something impossible. “They laughed me out of the school, saying, ‘No one will ever watch that,’” she said. “Now look. Everyone has their own television show.”

She founded Careers In Transition in 1995 after years of teaching psychology and career development at the Keller Graduate School of Management, running the business as a one-person act until 1999. “Every good entrepreneur—at least a successful entrepreneur—is able to identify a gap,” she says. “And I saw the gap was people do not have career management.”

Careers In Transitions had a major breakthrough in 2008 when it began conducting long-term project management rather than just HR consulting. Since then, the number of full-time employees has increased from three to 25, with an additional 50 sub-contracted employees that work on-site with clients on a project-by-project basis. A majority of Career In Transition’s clients are government agencies, and their work includes having launched a mentoring program for the CIA and teaching community college courses to TSA workers.

Despite the recent success, Johnson is slowly phasing herself out of the day-to-day management of the company. “I’m moving from being a CEO to CIO, a Chief Inspirational Officer,” Johnson says. She has plans to become a public figure for Careers In Transition and bring her career development expertise to radio and television.