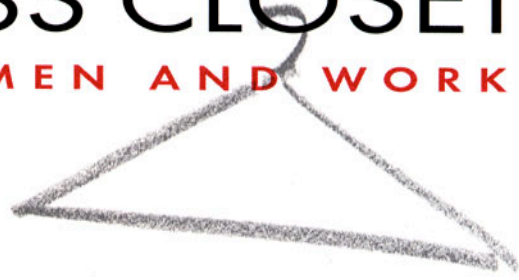


BOTTOMLESS CLOSET

CONNECTING WOMEN AND WORK



Tough Times Shrink Post-Labor Day Workforce

NYC's Bottomless Closet Goes the Extra Mile to Help Women Gain Jobs With New, Fortified Coaching Plus Program

New York, NY Sept. 2, 2008—As people nationwide are returning to work today, following the Labor Day holiday, the U.S. workforce is decidedly diminished. Layoffs, retrenchments, closings and outsourcing have sent national unemployment to a four-year high; last month, claims for unemployment benefits reached a six-year peak.

Unemployed individuals and family breadwinners are struggling to find a niche in today's troubled and changing economy. Tough times like these call for extraordinary energy and highly polished skills. That's why **Bottomless Closet**, a New York City organization dedicated to helping disadvantaged women gain a foothold in the world of work, is redoubling its decade-long efforts and building on proven methods for success.

Bottomless Closet (www.bottomlessclosetnyc.org) first meets clients when they're referred by some 70 social service organizations that train people for job readiness. With interviews pending, the women come to be outfitted with mostly pre-owned business clothing and accessories to create a professional look. But that's just the start: the nonprofit also teaches them essential strategies for securing the job. They learn to prepare a strong resume and cover letter, and craft a plan for positive interviews. Afterwards, they often turn to **Bottomless Closet** volunteers—current or retired professionals—for post-interview feedback. Once employed, clients may sign on for workshops offered throughout the year, including Workplace Skills, Computer Literacy and Career and Personal Development.

Former client Magdalene Martinez, 31, a mother of five, used these resources to great advantage. “**Bottomless Closet's** coaching gave me so much confidence that I decided to apply for a job at the agency that referred me to them,” she said. “I was hired there as a workshop facilitator. That confidence stayed with me. After four months, I applied for a promotion and am now a career counselor, referring women to **Bottomless Closet**. They really go the extra mile.”

Recognizing the need for increased support in a difficult economy, **Bottomless Closet** is launching a new initiative this fall for individuals with potential who are having a harder time securing employment. The **Coaching Plus** program will draw on the organization's

volunteers as mentors to provide advanced coaching on interview skills through mock interviews, and constructive feedback on how candidates can improve. “We also encourage women to call mentors after their interviews,” said Diane Kenney, vice president of the **Bottomless Closet** board of directors, who created the Coaching Plus program. Kenney was formerly senior vice president, human resources at both Random House Publishing and earlier, Warner Music.

“Lack of experience and understanding of expectations is the hang-up,” Kenney continued. “We give them confidence by showing what the interview is trying to achieve from the interviewer’s point of view. Many job candidates lack the most basic interview skills—a firm handshake, eye contact, a pleasant smile. And inappropriate questions, such as ‘how do raises work around here?’ are killers.” As Kenney and other HR professionals on the Coaching Plus team work more intensively with clients to build positive interview skills, **Bottomless Closet** anticipates an increase in the number who succeed in landing the job.

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Bottomless Closet promotes economic self-sufficiency by providing interview skills, business clothing and ongoing career development and support programs to economically disadvantaged women. By enhancing their self-confidence and self-esteem, we enable them to enter and succeed in the workforce and transform the vision for their lives.

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