

Making career moves golden

Myles Golden coaches top-level executives through career transitions

Francis B. Allgood, Editor

For Myles Golden it's all about passion. Following a 35-year career in the office products industry, Golden found his passion as president of Golden Career Strategies, assisting top-level executives find a new passionate business venture of their own. GSABUSINESS talks with Golden about his own transition from office products to career coaching, and the strategies to landing the right career.

GSABUSINESS: I understand you were in the office furniture market. Let's explore your transition from that field into what you are doing now.

Myles Golden: From my little town in Milledgeville, GA, I had the privilege of growing up with a daughter of a fairly popular politician in those days. I went to him and he said he knew "X" number of people. It was my first experience in using networking to finding a job. He said he wanted me to go this company named Ivan Allen and for me to speak to Mr. Glenn.

When I arrived, the receptionist said, "Do you realize that Mr. Glenn is the president of the company."

"No, I really didn't. I was just told to meet him." After he debriefed me, I talked to the sales manager.

"Myles you've already passed the first test. If Mr. Glenn is interested in you, we're interested in you." So I started from the top.

After about four years, I had an objective to become an owner in the company, which in those days meant you could buy a third of the company. So I had the opportunity to go to Athens, GA in 1968 and become president and CEO of Ivan Allen Athens, GA. We took that company that was in trouble when I arrived and developed it into the third largest subsidiary Ivan Allen had at the time.

GSA: How did you make it to Greenville?

Golden: I always believed in having a mentor, and for the first eight years it was a guy by the name of John Warner who was president of (Ivan Allen) Greenville. By 1976 he was thinking about stepping down and had done very well here financially. I was hand-picked by John to become president in 1976.

To fast forward the future, the office products industry was consolidating. The company was on a course to be sold. We were the largest independently owned office products company in the United States and one of the most successful and profitable. We had a lot of companies interested in buying us.

In 1998 we accepted an offer from Staples, a \$7 billion office products company that wanted to get into the contract offices

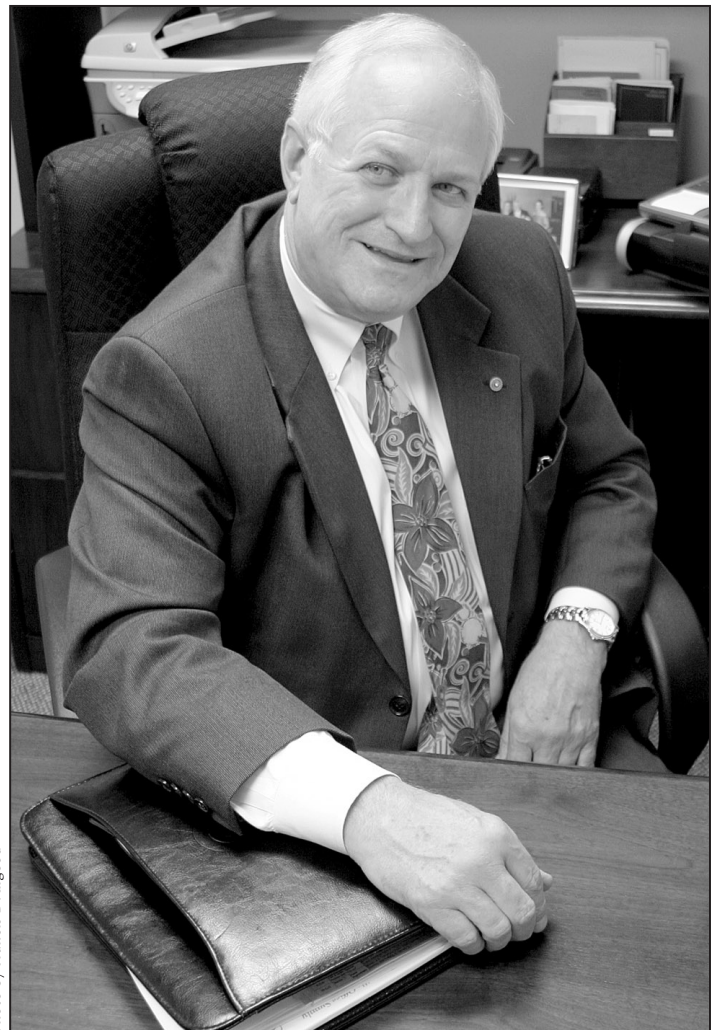


Photo by Francis B. Allgood

supply business. What a better way to get into that business than to buy the premier supplier of those products. That's what we did, we sold out to Staples.

I went through those emotions on how it impacted my people for about a five year period. Then when it finally came down on November 4, 1998, I opted to stay with the company through a retention bonus plan while they reorganized and consolidated operations in Charlotte. So I had a first hand experience to how the mergers and acquisitions and restructuring impacts other people.

About this same time I had a good friend by the name of Louis Freeman who was the facilities director for (a company) that was

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PROFILE: MYLES GOLDEN

FAVORITE RESTAURANT: *Soby's* | **FAVORITE VACATION SPOT:** *Ubatuba, Brazil* | **HOBBIES:** *Flyfishing, woodworking, gardening*
FAVORITE MOVIE: *Saving Private Ryan* | **FAVORITE MAGAZINE:** *Fortune* | **FAVORITE RADIO STATION:** *98.9 WSPA-FM*
FAVORITE BOOK: *Slow, Slow - Quick, Quick — Herb Meyer* | **FAMILY:** *Wife: Ann, Children: Clark, Greg*



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bought out by Dow (Chemical). He was responsible for building the company facilities out on Brookfield — 250 corporate jobs — and then he was responsible for literally shutting it down.

Dow put him through outplacement. He hires on at Siren and Jacobs comes along and buys Siren — same thing happens to him all over again and he survives that. After that he went with Ikon who was interested in developing a new division. Guess what? Third time around Louis gets caught into another restructuring.

I told him, “Why don’t you consider getting on the other side of the desk” and so he did. He looked for a job in sales. He’s currently business manager for Young Office Supply. Career transition played such an instrumental role in helping him find his way, that’s when I realized I had a passion for career transition services.

Following my career with Ivan Allen, I went to Right Management seeking outplacement. I was told they didn’t sell outplacements to individuals. In fact, only 10% of corporate America buys outplacement. We have thousands of executives and they can’t buy outplacement.

To make a long story short, the person I spoke with at Right Management became interested in me and I worked there for about a year and a half.

GSA: *What did you do for Right Management?*

Golden: I had the opportunity to sit with a lot of executives. I worked the “day of notification,” which is where we meet at a plant, they call in the supervisor and tell them their job has been eliminated, and then they introduce them to me. I would have the opportunity to explain to them what outplacement was about. Sometimes it was optional and my challenge was to

convince them this was a good thing.

GSA: *Now you are operating your own practice. How do you serve your clients?*

Golden: I coach them on knowing their strengths and ability — knowing how to verbalize their significant achievements. They need to know why (employers) ask certain questions when they do and how to get the resume in the right hands.

I want my candidates to be on top of their game. That’s what I’m all about, coaching them to win in a competitive market. This is about the most competitive it’s been since Hoover — 3 million jobs lost since 2001.

GSA: *Going back to 9-11, how have things changed through this tough economy?*

Golden: It’s just made the job market so much more competitive. The impact from 9-11 just brought a lot to a standstill.

The economy has made a significant impact. Executives in the textile industry are finding themselves to have to transition into something else. Many of them are doing well at it, and many are choosing to be entrepreneurs.

GSA: *Do you serve businesses or employees searching for a new career?*

Golden: About 90% of my clients are individuals who recognized the need to being coached through this program. I am doing some outplacement, but I’m not seeking it.

GSA: *In a tough economy, are you finding people who are coming to you that don’t really qualify for your services? Are you having to turn anyone away?*

Golden: Every coaching/consulting relationship has to be the right fit. I would say I land about 60% of the prospects that show up and I’m OK

with that. There has to be an amount of confidence.

GSA: *From your perspective, where should we focus our economic development efforts?*

Golden: I don’t believe in reinventing the wheel. We have a launching pad to create a strong high-tech, knowledge-based industry around automotive research and development. That’s where we need to continue to go.

GSA: *What’s the most powerful technique to landing a job?*

Golden: Networking rules. A lot of people blast out resumes. Many get bogged down from “honey do’s” and distractions instead of confronting the fact that they need to network.

I suggest networking accounts for at least 70% to 80% of the jobs that are found. Of the percentage, 50% are not posted anywhere. They are just floating in the mind of somebody who will create that job when they have connected with the right person.

GSA: *Do most of your clients stay in the area or are they mostly going to other parts of the country?*

Golden: When you hear the words merger or acquisition, get ready for an 80% chance something dramatic is going to happen to your employment. Too many of us wait, and we let employers manage our careers and we need to manage it ourselves.

I’m an external coach. I’m looking out for their best interest. Those who start early tend to find the job they want locally. It’s those that take two or three months off to decompress that makes it more difficult. The average search time for today’s market is something short of one month of every \$10,000 of income. If you earned \$100,000 last year, you are talking about an average 10 month search. ⁸⁵