

THE PAT SCHULER KICK BUTT AWARD NOMINATION – MAUREEN FARMER

Nominated by Lotte Struwing

Written by Maureen Farmer

I am honored to be nominated for the Career Directors International *Pat Schuler Kick Butt Award* by my friend and colleague, Lotte Struwing, President of Lasting Solutions HR Consulting & Coaching. Lotte has asked that I write about my experience working with Pat Schuler, and it is my pleasure to do so.

Fearless in creating and innovating within the industry and/or the individual business.

Pat Schuler was (and still is) a significant influence in my life and my business. In the early years, I wanted desperately to work with her. In fact, I contacted her then and asked her if she would consider taking me as a client. I asked her point blank if I would be a good fit. She said yes, and she told me why. It took me nearly two years to get to the point where I could invest in her services.

It was the best investment I have ever made in my life, professionally and personally.

As many business owners do, I struggled with my confidence and in advocating for myself with potentially troublesome clients and corporations that tried to strong-arm me into practices that did not feel right for me. Pat coached me into a direction of strength and sureness by empowering me to negotiate and be confident with my decisions even when they were challenging to make. She helped me to be as fearless as she was.

I believe that if it were not for Pat Schuler, I would not be in business today because of two major events that Pat coached me through. The first was a change in policy for a company I was contracted to and it meant that I would not be paid for an extended period of time. Pat's significant business knowledge and insights were just what I needed to navigate and rectify this difficult situation. That lesson has stayed with me since and assisted with me with negotiating every contract since.

Another invaluable lesson I learned from Pat was—not deny my intuition. While now, most of my clients are a perfect fit, I had one that was far from it. It was a client that I felt was not a good fit, but they insisted on working with me. Going against my intuition, it became a very stressful project from the onset, which if handled improperly, could have had negative implications on my brand image. Pat once again, brilliantly coached me through this and I was able to ensure the intellectual property I produced would be destroyed and not ever used in any form. The lesson I learned from Pat was to trust my intuition every time.

There were other challenges I faced that Pat coached me through. We worked together, as a team, to help my clients negotiate significant job offers which turned out for the best. As many of us know when you are an entrepreneur, it can be lonely and challenging without a team. Pat was an incredible part of my team.

Business Building

Pat Schuler helped me grow the infrastructure of my business. I have worked hard to establish a niche in the executive coaching and résumé writing industry. I have invested deeply in my website and other marketing collateral. I am seeing the benefits of the coaching I invested in with Pat and this is the legacy she has left in my life.

Pat helped with so many other things that were important to my business. She coached me in creating a presentation I delivered to a large power company that won the top-rated presentation of the five-day conference. I received a written letter of recommendation from the conference leader that makes me deeply

grateful. Pat taught me tactics to keep the audience engaged and it was effective. I couldn't have done it without her guidance. This was a significant step for my business and entrepreneurial spirit.

Pat helped me realize that business is everything I could imagine it to be. I learned to play with the corporate heavyweights, and I learned that the only barrier preventing my success was my mindset. She helped me realize that I am capable, and she introduced me to the tools that have enabled the business to succeed.

Executive outplacement and several other executive résumé and coaching packages that Pat help me to design, including some of the copy writing for the website and brochures.

Hidden Job Market program.

Termination support services to CEOs and business owners. Although this is certainly not a sexy product, my clients are grateful when I am able to create a strategy that delivers a respectful exit from the company.

Salary negotiations process for executives. Pat and I did team coaching for clients on a three-way call. The two of us would answer questions and provide insights and negotiation strategies.

Pat helped me understand the art and science of sales and her training enabled the business to grow significantly during our work together.

The website—a labor of love that Pat helped me start, complete with videos that speak directly to my ideal prospect.

A 60-page white paper I wrote (with Pat's non-stop coaching to get me across the finish line) on employee engagement.

All About Me branding process that I created before I knew anything about branding. This is one of the most powerful innovations that I offer my clients today.

Scripting on the spot for my clients is one of the most popular services I offer. Clients will call or email to ask how to respond to a problem, objection, question or offer from an employer. I am able to create the scripts (in that moment) to help them feel powerful. Pat helped me with this skill.

High integrity in communicating with others, customers, peers, colleagues, and on social media.

I have been described as professional and diplomatic in my interactions with others and I always stop and ask myself how I can serve my colleagues, customers and others. When I communicate with my networks, I try to provide as many resources as I can so that I can pay forward the kindness and assistance that I have received in my career and in my business.

Over the years I have been presented with business that I could easily have taken and needed financially. Instead, I chose to refer those potential clients to others who I knew would be better served by another professional. In fact, one of my most recent clients was still struggling after 18 months of working together. I found a solution for him in an executive agent who is representing him internationally. It was the most difficult decision I've made with a client. I desperately wanted to keep him as a client, but knew that I could not deliver what he needed which was direct connections to Fortune 1000 CEOs.

Being in service to clients is the basis of coaching. When it is clear we are unable to serve the client, it is important to refer the client to others, even when we would rather serve the client ourselves. Integrity is critical.

Life-long commitment to learning demonstrated through personal stretch to pursue additional training in new areas.

A friend once told me that I am always looking for a mountain to climb. I love to learn and be challenged. I've stretched myself beyond anything I could imagine when I began my business. Starting as solely a résumé writer, I have taken several courses and credentials and have expanded into executive coaching, executive leadership development and organizational relationship systems coaching (ORSC). I delivered a business development presentation to a financial services firm recently and am beginning to expand into the B2B market. My experience in human resources has helped tremendously.

Since I started my business in 2011, I have earned the following credentials:

- Certified Executive Résumé Master
- Certified Executive Leadership Development Coach (pending assessment)
- Certified Résumé Strategist
- Certified Career Strategist
- Certified Career Management Coach
- Certified Hidden Job Market Coach
- Certified DISCstyles Communications Consultant
- Organizational Systems Relationship Coaching

I am a member of the following professional organizations:

- Career Directors International
- Career Thought Leaders
- Career Professionals of Canada
- Human Resources Nova Scotia
- Institute Corporate Directors
- Be A Résumé Writer
- Institute of Corporate Directors (board of director training and education)
- Zonta International (an international women and children's advocacy group)

I have been honored with the following awards:

- TORI Award 2nd place – Cover Letter
- TORI Nomination – Technology Executive
- CDI President's Award
- CPC Award for Top New Career Services
- CPC Honorable Mention (several)

Pat helped me position myself in this industry from a place of integrity, strength and competence. Continuous learning will help us be in service to our clients.

Focus on giving back through industry contributions such as industry committee participation, mentorship, or article contribution.

I am a member of two industry committees, including the CDI Education Committee, and Invited CDI Guest Blogger. I am a member of the Ambassador team for Career Professionals of Canada. I am a member of Zonta International, an international women's group where I deliver LinkedIn training and volunteer career-related coaching services to our stakeholders.

I am a regular monthly blogger for my website and am a guest lecturer (volunteer) on career management at the local community college where I regularly deliver LinkedIn demonstrations and offer relevant resources to the students.

Approximately 18 months ago, I began working with a university student as a volunteer mentor. The student and his partner have launched a successful digital marketing and videography business and I have just recently hired them to create a video the business. I coached them through the early days of their business, how to close a project with a prospect and how to get the attention of the client when things started to go poorly.

In addition, I offer pro bono career services, and I am currently working with a client with multiple employment barriers. A few weeks ago I hired a coach who specializes in these types of employment barriers so that I could give the client the best advice. The client is getting a lot of attraction, in spite of these challenges, and it has been an honor to work with him. I have coached him through many scenarios, and we have developed a strong bond. I hear a lot of Pat Schuler when I coach sometimes, passing on her gift to others.

I have had work accepted for several publications including:

- Best Canadian Resumes
- Best Canadian Cover Letters
- Résumé for Dummies
- Modernize Your Résumé
- Several Chamber of Commerce articles

Pat taught me to be generous and to seek opportunities to serve the industry through these opportunities.

Active membership in CDI

I've been an active member in good standing of CDI since I joined in 2013 and CDI has had a major positive influence on my business and in my life. I am an ambassador for CDI (informally) and have an insatiable appetite for career and business resources, including teleseminars. I am an active member of the CDI Education Committee and an invited CDI guest blogger.

I have recruited a few members into the organization and have attended all of the CDI conferences after I joined, until they were no longer held. I have earned my CERM which has been excellent marketing for the business. I am particularly proud of the following partial endorsement from the CERM Certification Committee:

“Dear Maureen: CONGRATULATIONS!

You are now a Certified Executive Resume Master! The certification committee unanimously passed your submissions commenting on the innovation exhibited and solid understanding of the industry, and in addition you received an exceptionally high score of 95% on your competency review. Well done!”

I was devastated when I learned of her passing. Pat has helped me through a number of personal health challenges and became a good friend. I cannot believe it is almost one year since she passed. No one has had more influence over in my business than Pat Schuler. She is the reason I am in business today and when the days get hard, she pushes me through it.

Pat taught me to be emotionally neutral in all areas of business so that decisions are evidence-based rather than personal.

I am grateful to have this opportunity to share my Pat Schuler story. Being nominated for CDI's Pat Schuler Kick Butt Aware is the highlight of my year. Thank you.