THE NATURAL John Hadley parlayed his passion for helping people into a profession as a career counselor.

ment program when his company went through a merger. The lessons being taught in the workshops came naturally to him, so he began volunteering to help friends and peers market themselves for career searches.

The workshops also enabled him to recognize that he enjoyed translating business needs into systems more than he enjoyed actuarial work, so he became a consultant and built a very successful practice.

"When a longtime contract came to an end, I had to decide whether to build my practice or focus on my real passion, says Hadley. The final catalyst was a workshop on resume preparation that I gave for the New York Actuaries Club. I met business

sales coach Dave Miller, and by the end of lunch, after we developed a half-day seminar to co-facilitate, I knew it was time."

He continued his self-designed educational program by attending seminars, doing extensive reading and research and engaging Miller as his own sales coach while he built his career consulting practice.

Hadley believes that whether professionals need advanced education depends on their goals and career field. "Go back to school only if you have a clear idea of what the training will do for you. People assume an MBA makes you more marketable, and it does tap you into a new set of contacts at the higher end of the mar-

ket, which can be valuable. But a lot of MBAs struggle because they don't know how to market themselves. The advanced degree hurts them if employers assume they are overqualified, too costly or too academic," says Hadley.

Hadley helps clients present their academic and professional history in the best light. He also helps them market their accomplishments to show the value they can bring to a company. "I teach them how to have an influential conversation with people and gain awareness of where they really want to go," he says. "They may have their mind set on one career track without really thinking what that might mean later on." ◼