

TRUE NORTH

In today's workplace climate, career advisory has gone beyond the simple act of helping clients in their job search. It has become an intricate art of helping clients navigate workplace complexities and interweaving that closely with an individual's beliefs, values and principles. As a career practitioner, you are tasked with the all-important role of helping one find meaning and fulfilment in their career. You are instrumental in their search for a purpose-driven life; for their **TRUE NORTH**.

WHAT'S INSIDE

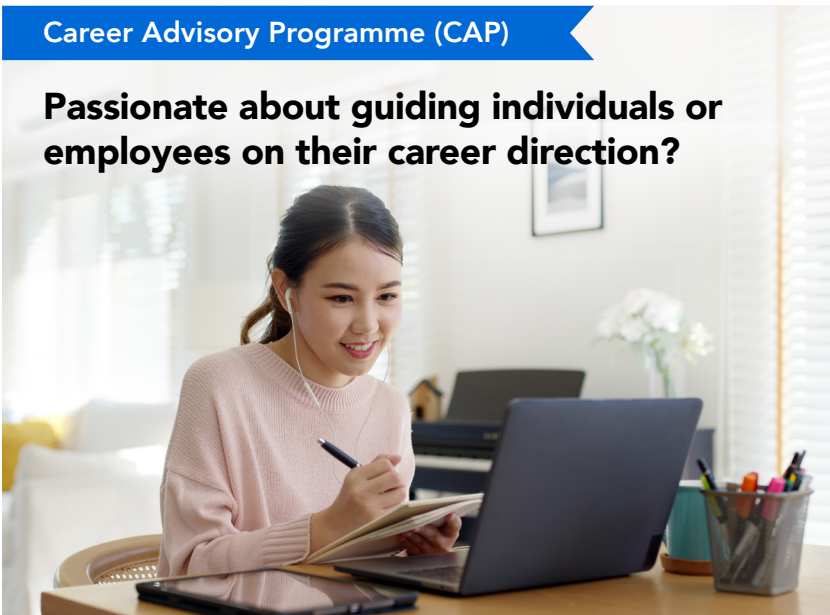


MAIN ARTICLE

Creating a Safe
Environment to have
Career Conversations

Career Advisory Programme (CAP)

Passionate about guiding individuals or employees on their career direction?



This self-paced e-learning programme combines hands-on role-play with interactive learning. Practitioners lead this course and focus on holistic development, equipping you with essential skills for effective career guidance.

CAP offers:

- Comprehensive guidance on local training and employment trends
- Mastery of the helping process in career development
- Advanced problem-solving and decision-making techniques
- Strategies for adapting resources to diverse client needs
- Effective marketing of career development services

Join CAP and transform yourself into a skilled career advisor, equipped to navigate today's dynamic career development landscape and make a lasting impact on individuals' careers.

Register or
find out more:
go.gov.sg/tn23-cap



SCAN HERE

Passionate about uplifting Singapore's Career Practitioners?

Apply for WSG's Sponsorship Programme today!

WSG invites partners interested in delivering masterclasses. As a sponsor, WSG provides support and resources for successful collaborations. If you're eager to collaborate and share your expertise, contact us here: <https://go.gov.sg/contact-wsg>.



IN THE PIPELINE

Career Advisory Programme (CAP)

Jan Intake: 13 Jan 2025

(Application closes: 6 Dec 2024)

Feb Intake: 11 Feb 2025

(Application closes: 3 Jan 2025)

Mar Intake: 11 Mar 2025

(Application closes: 4 Feb 2025)

Career Facilitation Programme (CFP)

Nov Intake: 18 Nov 2024 – 28 Jan 2025

(Application closes: 4 Nov 2024)

Dec Intake: 17 Dec 2024 – 25 Feb 2025

(Application closes: 8 Nov 2024)

Career Facilitation Programme Assessment Pathway (CFP AOP)

Mar Intake: 3 – 4 Mar 2025

(Application closes: 20 Dec 2024)

Career Supervision Programme (CSP)

Jan Intake: 20 – 22 Jan 2025

(Application closes: 6 Dec 2024)

Career Supervision Programme Assessment Pathway (CSP)

Mar Intake: 17 – 18 Mar 2025

(Application closes: 27 Dec 2024)



FROM THE CASE CHEST

UNCOVERING YOUR CAREER PURPOSE



Alicia (not her real name), in her early 30s is currently working as a Finance & HR Manager in the social services sector. Desiring to find her work purpose and uncover her talents and skills gaps, she signed up for Polaris by Workforce Singapore (WSG). Married with young children, she was always juggling between work and family commitments, Alicia looks forward to finding career clarity and direction.

Self-discovery process

To help Alicia in understanding the reason behind her constant mental and physical fatigue from work, her career coach Dennis introduced the concept of motivated and burnout skills. Through Motivated Card Sorts tool, Alicia uncovered her burnout skills were writing and dealing with feelings. With intentional conversations, Alicia realised that she was struggling with interpersonal skills and was insufficiently equipped with the writing skills needed for her work, causing much anxieties. With this, her first area of development was identified.

The concept of "flow"

The 'flow', introduced in positive psychology by Mihaly Robert Csikszentmihalyi (a Hungarian-American psychologist), is the mental state where one is fully immersed in an activity with energised focus.

Through the Career Flow Map tool, Dennis was able to uncover the challenges of Alicia's past, present and desired jobs. Through visualisation of her ideal work state, Alicia was able to see herself in a desired role where there is career progression and development opportunities. These attributes created the 'flow' for her at the workplace.

Workplace Personality

As part of the Polaris programme, clients would complete a profiling tool - Workplace Big 5, a tool that reveals an individual's 5 personality supertraits and 23 subtraits, explaining work-related behaviours.

The profiling results reinforced Alicia's self-understanding: too accommodative to others' needs, and uncomfortable with speaking up. To lead a team, taking on an assertive stance would value-add her work.

Reflective exercises also enabled Alicia to reconcile her internal dilemma. In her younger days, Alicia shared how she was often left to fend for herself. Her transition from a finance role to a HR role aligned with her ingrained values and experiences, allowing her to channel her protective instincts into a professional role focused on supporting others.

Career Development Plan

Earlier sessions in the program prepared Alicia to develop her Career Development Plan, outlining both short and long-term goals. Her short-term goals included improving communication and presentation skills, increasing visibility within her current company, developing leadership abilities, and fostering meaningful relationships. Her longer-term goal was to be promoted within the company.

Outcome

As a result of the Polaris program, Alicia rediscovered her purpose at work, identified her skills development gaps, and took action to address them. Upon reflection, Alicia also reaffirmed her decision of moving to the HR arena by revisiting her childhood passion of advocating for the underprivileged. Working in the social services sector allows her to find congruence in her passion to be a 'voice' for others. Renewing her motivation for work, she was able to better appreciate her boss and team-spirited colleagues. Feeling positively energised at work, it became less emotionally draining and more enjoyable.

Presently, Alicia has completed a leadership course. At work, she has increased her professional visibility by being more vocal at management meetings. Alicia has courageously discussed her career goals with her boss, who has shown incredible support.

Click [HERE](#) to find out more about Polaris by WSG

Contributed by:
Dennis Chan

Principal Career Coach, Workforce Singapore
WSG CDF Certified Career Clinical Supervisor





MAIN ARTICLE

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO HAVE CAREER CONVERSATIONS



What is a Career Conversation

A career conversation is a focused dialogue between an employee and their manager or HR representative to discuss the employee's career development, aspirations, and goals.

Overall, career conversations aim to create a supportive environment where employees feel motivated, valued and understand how they can grow within the organisation, leading to better retention and development outcomes for both the employee and the employer.

What are the benefits of engaging employees in career conversations?

✓ **Better talent retention**

- **Open Communication:**

Regular career conversations foster transparent communication between employees and supervisors, showing the organisation's commitment to employee growth and contributing to a supportive work environment.

- **Enhanced Understanding:**

HR professionals and managers gain insights into employees' career aspirations, allowing for tailored development and growth opportunities.

- **Identify Development Needs:**

The skills and experiences required for the employee to achieve their career goals are identified, while areas for development are highlighted and systematically addressed.

- **Informed Development Pathways:**

Employees become more aware of the organisation's direction and available career paths, facilitating their professional development within the company.

- **Talent Retention:**

Motivated employees are more likely to stay with the organisation, reducing turnover and improving retention rates.

- **Succession Planning:**

Organisations can identify and prepare future leaders by understanding employees' career goals and capabilities, ensuring a robust talent pipeline.

✓ **Enhance talent acquisition**

- **Informed Human Capital Decisions:**

Over time, these conversations enable HR professionals and managers to make more strategic decisions about human capital planning and development and talent management.

- **Positive Employer Brand:**

Organisations focusing on employee development are often viewed favourably in the job market, attracting top talent and enhancing the employer brand.

✓ **Improve career resilience**

- **Increased Motivation and Productivity:**

They help align employees' goals, skills, and interests with the organisation's needs, leading to higher motivation, increased productivity, and improved performance.

Consistent career conversations will better retain talent, enhance talent acquisition and improve career resilience, ultimately fostering a more engaged workforce and driving long-term organisational success.

Consider these 8 steps in creating a conducive environment for career conversation

1. Preparing yourself whole-heartedly



You will need to dedicate yourself to listening to the conversation. This means being physically and mentally present for the employee. Make an effort to remove all distractions! Put aside your mobile devices and laptop to focus on the employees who will likely passionately share their aspirations or pour out deep-seated concerns about their careers.

Stay disciplined and mentally focused. Clear your mind and ensure you are there for the employee in the session. Doing so sends the strong message that you respect the employees and take the conversation seriously. An employee can readily sense and detect if you are mentally distracted and unable to focus on the conversation.

2. Be informed – Preparatory work before the conversation



If there is prior information about the employees' career concerns, it will be ideal, before the conversation, to revisit any significant highlights or areas of concern. Employees will appreciate your dedication in making the extra effort to follow through with past areas of concern, and it is likely that they, too, will take the ongoing conversations more seriously.

3. Preparing a safe location



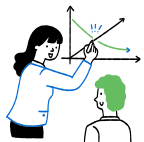
Find a Safe Space. It can be a room that ensures privacy or a secluded spot in the office setting where neither of you won't be interrupted, reducing any unnecessary distractions. Creating an environment where employees are comfortable having an honest and open conversation about their concerns, challenges, and struggles they might be facing in their careers is vital. Knowing that this is a safe space to share their experiences provides peace of mind for the employees. It also works to ease any pent-up anxiety and stress that may impede them from sharing deeper concerns.

4. Pace and Not Rush into a conversation



There is no need to rush the process and be too fixated on ensuring all areas of concern that surfaced are effectively addressed within the stipulated timeframe. Ease into the conversation with light-hearted content and strike a positive note from the onset. Be patient and allow the employees the space and time to consider areas of concern they would like to address. Let the conversation develop further by taking on an angle of earnest curiosity. Be inquisitive - ask questions to understand further and clarify the concerns and challenges.

5. Set Clear expectations from the start



State clearly from the onset of the expectations and desired outcomes in having a career conversation. At this juncture, clarify any doubts and answer all the employees' questions. Having laid down clear expectations from the start, employees know what is expected of them and will be able to participate more meaningfully in the subsequent conversation.

6. Being aware of your non-verbal communication (Body language, eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice)



Leverage non-verbal communication to enhance the quality of the conversation with the employees. For example, employees will likely ascertain that a strong, confident posture with firm eye contact

conveys genuineness and sincerity. When engaging the employees, adopt a warm, positive and affirming disposition. This creates a 'mirroring' effect where the whole mood of the conversation is uplifted.

7. Being Open, Ensure Respect and Inclusivity



Respect must be accorded and demonstrated to employees at all times. Ensure that all views are heard and make a concerted effort to hold back any preconceived notions that may lead to biasedness. As much as we like for conversation discussions to be pleasant, we should also acknowledge complex conversation topics that may be touched upon but actively worked on.

8. Effective Virtual conversation online



Due to work requirements or physical constraints, there may be times when career conversations are conducted online with employees. The parameters for an online discussion largely remain the same in ensuring a safe and conducive environment where there can be meaningful, constructive conversation on one's career.

Silence is a common challenge or barrier in 1-1 virtual conversation. There are two kinds of silence: reflective and detached. Look out for detached silence when people are too afraid to speak out or have lost interest. Take time to engage the employee and uncover underlying concerns or tension that needs to be looked into and resolved first.

What one can do to overcome silence and move the conversation forward is to embrace silence and practice patience. Avoid the temptation to fill the silence by coming in with a conversation. Employees might be reflective, weighing the concerns and challenges of one's careers. Instead, appreciate and embrace silence as something valuable and a prelude to something more.

As the modern workplace continues to evolve, the importance of open, honest communication about career progression cannot be overstated. Embracing career conversations as an integral part of organisational strategy will undoubtedly yield improvement in employee performance, job satisfaction, and overall business success.

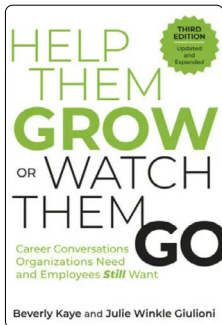
Contributed by:
Noel Ang

Principal Manager, Workforce Singapore
WSG CDF Certified Career Practitioner



BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

UNLOCK CAREER POTENTIAL AND EMPOWER GROWTH WITH THESE CURATED BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



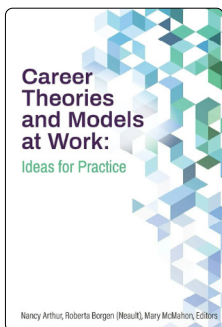
Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go: Career Conversations Employees Want

Beverly Kaye and Julie Winkle Giulioni

The book emphasises the role of line managers and leaders in engaging employees in discussions about their career aspirations, development, and growth.

Key themes in the book:

- The value of career conversations: Highlight the impact of regular, quality career conversations on employee engagement, motivation, and retention.
- Practical guidance for managers: Asking the right questions and providing meaningful feedback.
- Empowering employees: Importance of taking ownership of their career development and providing them with the support and resources they need to grow.



Career Theories and Models at Work: Ideas for Practice

Nancy Arthur, Roberta Borgen (Neault), Mary McMahon

This book, aiming to bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and real-world practice, is a comprehensive resource, rich with examples and references that underscores the importance of applying career theories in practice while focusing on clients' needs. A valuable tool for both new and seasoned practitioners for career development.

Join WSG as Adjunct Trainers/Assessors

Workforce Singapore (WSG) is seeking dynamic professionals to join our team of Adjunct Trainers/Assessors.

Candidates Will Possess:

- Tertiary qualified in career development, human resources, psychology, counselling, or related fields
- ACTA/ACLP certification, with proven track record with minimum 5 years' experience in these areas:
 - o Adult learning facilitation
 - o Curriculum and courseware development
 - o Assessment design and implementation
- Completed the WSG ACCDF/Career Facilitation Programme (CFP)
- At least 3 years of relevant industry experience

What We Offer:

- Platform to share your expertise and industry insights
- Flexible adjunct role with competitive remuneration
- Continuous professional development opportunities

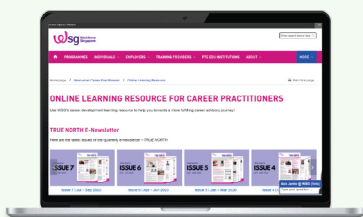
➔ How to Apply:

Submit your CV to pcd@wsg.gov.sg by 18 Nov 2024.

Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted for further discussion.



LOVING OUR NEWSLETTER?



You can find all issues of TRUE NORTH and other career development resources on our Online Learning Resource (OLR) for Career Practitioners.

Check it out here:
go.gov.sg/olr



SCAN HERE