

# TRUE NORTH

In today's workplace climate, career advisory has gone beyond the simple act of placing clients into job roles. 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

Fostering a work culture of career conversation and understanding employees' needs

### A LOOK BACK @ 2024

Strengthening Knowledge Through Professional Development

## In person training with Mr. Tan Weixi and Mr. CP Tham



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## IN THE PIPELINE

### [Career Advisory Programme \(CAP\)](#)

Mar Intake: 11 Mar 2025

(Application closes: 4 Feb 2025)

### [Career Advisory Programme Assessment Pathway \(CAP AOP\)](#)

Jun Intake: 24 Jun 2025

(Application closes: 16 May 2025)

### [Career Facilitation Programme Assessment Pathway \(CFP AOP\)](#)

Aug intake: 19 Aug 2025

(Application closes: 11 Jul 2025)

### [Career Supervision Programme \(CSP\)](#)

Sep Intake: 15 – 17 Sep 2025

(Application closes: 24 Jul 2025)

### [Career Supervision Programme Assessment Pathway \(CSP AOP\)](#)

Jul Intake: 5 Jul 2025

(Application closes: 28 May 2025)



## FROM THE CASE CHEST

# NAVIGATING A MID-CAREER JOURNEY



Career planning is a transformative process, yet for many clients, it remains unfamiliar territory. One such case is Ms. E. Tan, a mid-career professional grappling with career uncertainties.

### Unique Challenges

Ms. Tan's coaching journey was shaped by several challenges:

- 1. Unfamiliarity with Career Planning:** Like many clients new to career development, Ms. Tan entered the process unsure of what to expect. Her expectations ranged from anticipating directive advice to assuming solutions would be provided.
- 2. Lack of Focus:** During sessions, Ms. Tan occasionally veered off track, making it difficult to address the core objectives effectively.
- 3. Solution-Seeking Mindset:** She sought solutions to her career dilemmas, relying on the coach to define her next steps rather than engaging in self-exploration.
- 4. Exploring Multiple Options:** Ms. Tan expressed interest in a wide range of career paths, making it challenging to prioritise and narrow her focus.
- 5. Fixation on Past and Present Challenges:** Discussions often revolved around unresolved workplace issues, creating emotional barriers that hindered progress.

### Innovative Coaching Approaches

To address these challenges, under Polaris by AKG, a combination of structured and flexible strategies was employed:

- 1. Clarifying the Coaching Process:** A comprehensive explanation of the coaching journey helped set expectations, enabling Ms. Tan to understand that the process was collaborative and centered on self-discovery.
- 2. The "Parking Lot" Method:** By paraphrasing and summarising key points while identifying off-topic discussions for later review, sessions were kept focused, ensuring progress on primary goals.
- 3. Probing and Visualisation:** Asking probing questions encouraged Ms. Tan to envision hypothetical career scenarios, helping her evaluate options more objectively and consider "what if" possibilities.
- 4. Ranking Career Options:** Ms. Tan was asked to force-rank her career preferences and articulate the rationale behind her choices. This exercise provided clarity and helped narrow down her options effectively.

**5. Exploring Emotional Triggers:** Ms. Tan was encouraged to reflect on her emotional reactions to workplace challenges. By examining these triggers, she gained awareness of her patterns and strategies to mitigate similar issues in the future.

### Key Takeaways for Career Practitioners

- 1. Demystify the Coaching Process:** Many clients are unfamiliar with career coaching. Clear communication about the process, objectives, and activities fosters trust and empowers clients to engage meaningfully.
- 2. Adapt to the Client:** Tailoring coaching styles to align with the client's background creates a safe space for sharing and participation, enhancing the effectiveness of the sessions.
- 3. Practice Patience and Active Listening:** Listening attentively and asking probing questions to evoke self-awareness are essential to lead clients to valuable insights.
- 4. Balance Structure and Flexibility:** While maintaining a structured approach to achieve session objectives, allowing space for emotional exploration and detours builds trust and fosters deeper understanding.
- 5. Encourage Reflective Exercises:** Activities like ranking options or visualising hypothetical scenarios provide clarity, helping clients prioritise and make informed decisions.

### Conclusion

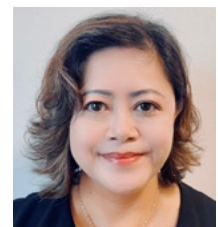
Ms. Tan's journey illustrates the importance of flexibility, patience, and innovation in career coaching. By meeting clients where they are and guiding them toward self-discovery, career practitioners can facilitate transformative outcomes. Her case serves as a reminder that the journey to career clarity is as much about the process as it is about the destination.

#### About Polaris

*Polaris is a suite of personalised career guidance programmes by Workforce Singapore (WSG) and its appointed providers, Ingeus Pte Ltd (Ingeus) and AngusKnight Singapore Pte Ltd (AKG). The suite of programmes available under Polaris are designed for employed individuals who are looking to elevate their careers through career planning. These career guidance programmes aim to empower participants to make informed career decisions and guide them in shaping a tailored Career Development Plan to fuel their professional growth, aligning with their strengths, values, and aspirations.*

Contributed by:  
**Evelyn Chua**

Project Lead  
Polaris, AKG Singapore





## MAIN ARTICLE

*This article is the second instalment in a four-part series, exploring the topic of career conversations. This series aims to provide guidance on initiating and effectively managing these important conversations.*

Issue 23	Issue 24	Issue 25	Issue 26
Creating a safe environment to have career conversations	<b>Fostering a work culture of career conversation and understanding employers' needs</b>	Engaging in quiet quitters and reigniting their motivation	Self Care – Caring for yourself before caring for others

# FOSTERING A WORK CULTURE OF CAREER CONVERSATIONS AND UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEES' NEEDS



## 1) Fostering a Work Culture of having career conversations

Building a work culture that prioritises career conversations is essential for employees' engagement, retention, and professional growth. Employees who are engaged generally feel valued, supported and motivated to grow in tandem with the organisation as there is a collective alignment in goals and purpose.



Here's how you can cultivate such a culture:

### 1. Steadfast and unwavering leadership commitment to lead by example to champion career conversations

- Career conversations can happen at any time and may be initiated by either employer or employee. Leaders can step up to be first in line to kickstart in career conversations. When leaders openly give personal testimonials on how these conversations positively impacted them in their career growth, it sets a powerful precedent and motivate staff to engage in career conversations.
- In time to come, leaders can even celebrate staff who have benefited from career conversations with their supervisors to enhance one's employability, leading to promotions or mastery of skills.

### 2. Set up a structure for career conversation to take place

- Normalise career conversations as a part of regular check-in sessions with staff throughout the year. The conversations could be done every quarter and a process set in place where useful information can be captured and monitored for progress tracking.
- Leaders can monitor the efficacy of these career conversations and conduct regular feedback every year to gather useful information that can enhance this process further.

### 3. Training for all managers to engage staff in career conversations

- The hard truth is that even when line managers have buy-in on how career conversations impact their organisation positively, not all managers are able to hold a career conversation effectively. A session when not conducted well, even with the best of intent, may make the staff feel uncomfortable and become unwilling to take part in a meaningful discussion on their career.
- Some hands-on training to enhance the supervisors' engagement skills will help them be more effective in their engagement with their subordinates. The result will be a setting where a career conversation takes place in a safe setting where staff will feel at ease sharing one's career aspirations.

#### 4. Encourage a culture of exploring and learning within the organisation for staff to proactively engage their supervisors to plan and to advance in their careers.

- Set up inter-department job rotation and encourage employees to explore different roles within the organisation through job shadowing. This provides broader career perspectives and keeps employees engaged in learning.
- Organise regular internal events where employees from different departments can interact and share their personal experiences, challenges, and learnings. Such interaction provides good insights for employees to assess possible career paths.
- Leaders should strive for transparency in job opportunities and career pathways. Employees will then have visibility into potential career pathways within the organisation, including how they can move up or pivot to different roles.

#### 5. Empower staff to own and chart their path in their career journey

- Provide resources to guide staff in applying assessment or career development tools, which can provide insights into their VIPS (Values, Interests, Passion, Strength) or provide them with a better appreciation of their SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threats) situation about their career situation. This valuable information can be discussed in career conversations with their supervisors and informed decisions can then be made regarding their career progression in the company.
- Likewise, complimentary or easy access to a career coach to plan and navigate the career hurdles will also enable the staff to appreciate and be open to career conversations.

### II) Ways you can gain insights into your employee's needs

Having set in place a culture for career conversation, we now like to ensure that these sessions are insightful, personalised and goal driven to employees involved. On this note, it's pertinent to know what your employees' needs are. When employees feel they are understood and supported by supervisors and company leadership, they will naturally be more engaged, productive and loyal, which would then lead to a more satisfied and resilient workforce.



In this article, we like to recommend a key approach to gaining insights into employee needs which is to follow through on their needs and wants that evolve throughout the employee life cycle.



The employee lifecycle is essentially the stages that a typical employee will pass through during their time with your organisation. There are 3 key stages – onboarding, development and retention which are relevant.

**Onboarding** - Employees seek to understand their job function, and responsibilities and adapt to the new work environment. Supervisors can make use of career conversations to give assurance, and build trust and rapport with the employee, demonstrating that they value the employee. Topics to talk about in the career conversation can touch on the clarification of job responsibilities, expectations and identifying short-term goals and milestones.

**Development** - Having acquired some experience in their role, employees will seek to take on opportunities for growth, learning and advancement within the organisation. A career conversation can open up meaningful conversations that directly address these aspirations with a concrete action plan developed to reach these goals. The discussion may also be centred on addressing gaps and skills training that one can take on.

**Retention** - Employees are usually more senior at work and may have acquired skill mastery in their domain expertise. These employees seek to remain engaged and motivated by taking on leadership roles. Supervisors can engage such staff via career conversations to identify and address potential career plateaus to overcome. This can be done through opportunities for lateral moves, new projects or additional responsibilities that seek to rekindle the passion and motivation.

To create a workplace environment that encourages open conversations about career development, it is vital to delve into the aspirations, challenges, and expectations of your employees. This understanding forms the foundation for meaningful career conversations. By gaining insights into your employees' professional goals, skills gaps and personal motivations, it allows you to provide relevant guidance, identify appropriate growth opportunities and align individual career paths with organisational objectives. Ultimately, this deeper understanding fosters a culture of continuous learning and professional growth, benefiting both the employees and the organisation.'

Contributed by Curriculum Development & Training Team, Career Guidance Division (Workforce Singapore)

# STRENGTHENING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Jan to Dec 2024		
<b>Career Advisory Programme (CAP)</b>	8 runs with 131 learners	
<b>Career Facilitation Programme (CFP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 runs with 40 learners</li> <li>• AOP with 29 learners</li> </ul>	
<b>Career Professional Development Programme (CPDP)</b>	7 CPDP with 160 participants	
Masterclass titles	Trainers	Dates
Certificate in Hope-Action Theory and Practice	Dr Norm Amundson Dr Spencer Niles Ms Andrea Fruhling	22 Jan to 15 Mar
WorkPlace Big Five Profile™ Certification Program	Mr Tan Weixi Mr CP Tham	26 to 27 Feb 1 & 2 Jul
Career Construction Masterclass Advanced (CCMA)	Dr Kevin Glavin	19 Feb to 27 Mar
Level 1 Introduction to Motivational Interviewing (MI) Training (Career edition)	Ms Roxanne Sawatzky	21 to 29 Feb
The Career Development Imperative: Practical Strategies to Deliver What Employee webinar	Ms Julie Winkle Giulioni	18 Mar 2024
Setting Up Impactful and Sustainable Career Coaching and Mentoring Programs In Organisations" masterclass	Prof David Clutterbuck	19 to 20 Mar

## Credentialing Awarded:

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Certified Career Advisor (CCA)

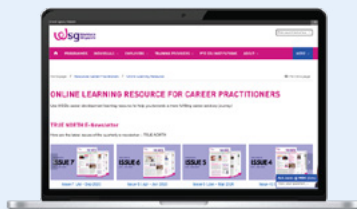
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Certified Career Practitioner (CCP)

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Certified Career Clinical Supervisor (CCCS)

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[go.gov.sg/olr](https://go.gov.sg/olr)



SCAN HERE

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

## TELL US YOUR STORY



If you have cases to share and would like them to be featured on this newsletter, feel free to write to [PCD@wsg.gov.sg](mailto:PCD@wsg.gov.sg)