

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**.

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Career Health Summit

10 & 11 July 2025

The inaugural Workforce Summit proved to be a landmark gathering of industry pioneers and thought leaders, who came together to address the evolving landscape of workforce development. The summit, centered on the theme "Driving Business Success: The Indispensable Role of Career Health", sparked dynamic discussions that highlighted the fundamental connection between employee well-being and organisational excellence.

Attendees were introduced to a three-step framework - **ACE** to enhance talent strategy:

- Assess the gaps between your employees' skills and what your business needs are
- Chart your workforce development strategy to close those gaps. Consider strategies like upskilling or reskilling, job redesign and meaningful career progression pathways and opportunities for your employees.
- Execute your hiring and talent management plans. Tap on the suite of workforce transformation initiatives to help you attract more talent and improve your talent retention.

This approach will help organisations compete more effectively in the tight labour market while supporting sustainable business growth.

Additionally, emphasis was placed on skills-first approach, which recognises individuals for their capabilities and potential rather than relying on traditional academic qualifications or previous job experience. Organisations set out how skills are identified, prioritised, assessed, and recognised. Afterwhich, the process of recruitment, onboarding and ongoing development processes will be aligned to achieve optimal talent acquisition and retention.

"We are operating at a time of growing global uncertainty. If we want our people, our businesses to continue to thrive, we need to be very proactive about career health."

Dr Tan See Leng, Minister of Manpower
Minister-in-charge of Energy and Science & Technology in the Ministry of Trade and Industry

Whether you are an individual or employer, find out more about [Career Health SG!](#)

IN THE PIPELINE

Career Advisory Programme (CAP)

Oct Intake: 7 Oct 2025

(Application closes: 31 Aug 2025)

Nov Intake: 4 Nov 2025

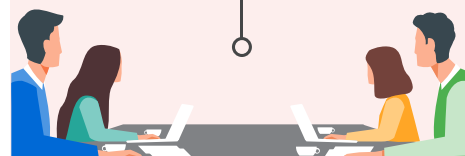
(Application closes: 14 Sep 2025)

Career Facilitation Programme (CFP)

Oct Intake: 7 Oct to 10 Dec 2025

(Application closes: 31 Aug 2025)

For full details, please refer to
www.wsg.gov.sg/home/career-practitioners/foundational-programmes



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



FROM THE CASE CHEST

THE JOURNEY TO CLARITY

John is a 37-year-old married man, who had been working as a commercial real estate broker for over a decade. He brought home a comfortable average monthly income of around \$10,000 but was beginning to feel dissatisfied and frustrated with his career. He approached WSG for help in gaining greater clarity in his career direction.

JOHN'S MID-LIFE CRISIS

John shared that he felt his work was meaningless. Being commission-based meant that his pay rose and fell with the economy, and he found the irregularity of pay incredibly stressful. Comparing himself with his peers made him feel worse, and their success made him increasingly anxious that he would not be able to keep up. It was extremely important for John to be able to maintain his quality of life. Although he craved change and desired a more regular and stable income, he did not want to give up the flexibility that his current role offered him.



CONFLICT LEADS TO CONFUSION

Schlossberg's Transition Theory was used to better understand the factors that precipitated John's response, the resources he had to help him cope, and the strategies that would best help resolve his challenges. It appeared that the conflict between simultaneously wanting and fearing change, was making John appear doubtful and lacking in self-confidence. This also explained his strong tendency to want the CC to provide him with direct answers and solutions. It was also noted that John had plenty of strengths and skills – for instance, a good knowledge of trading – that he was unaware of.

FOCUSING ON UNDERSTANDING ONESELF

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Strong Interest Inventory (SII) were selected to help John better understand his strengths, weaknesses and interests. Having a better understanding of himself would assist him in creating goals and a plan for his future. The CC also noted that given John's self-doubt, it was crucial to build and maintain a strong rapport to keep him motivated and cooperative.

SURFACING ISSUES FROM THE PAST

John agreed with the interventions and was eager to obtain greater clarity about his life goals and the professions he could explore. The CC guided him through the MBTI and SII, and used Holland's Theory of Career Choice (RIASEC) to explain the importance of finding a career that fit with his personality. However, this did not appear to be sufficient for John to find clarity. As such, he was referred for a one-off photo therapy session that utilised the tool, Points of You (POY). POY comprises a stack of coaching cards that guide individuals to dive deep into their past experiences, surfacing issues, challenges and fears that stand in the way of them moving forward.

The first stage of this intervention saw John identify areas from his childhood, and the second stage focused on the present. At each of these stages, John reflected on the issues that surfaced, and was encouraged to confront the patterns in his behaviour that led to him being stuck in his current situation. The final stage of POY focused on the future, illuminating a mix of challenges and motivations, and revealing how John saw the future to be a combination of struggle and success. With the main mental obstacles out in the open, the CC guided John to create a realistic and workable timeline for his goals. This started with setting milestones at intervals of 24 hours, one week and one month, ensuring John could easily track progress and build confidence from small achievements, before developing plans for longer term goals.

SET-UP FOR THE FUTURE

The CC followed up with John a week after the POY session. By then, John had decided that his short to middle-term plan was to remain in his existing job, while taking up courses that would equip him with the skills to venture into his own business and gain financial freedom before retirement. He also had devised a method to track his progress for the next three to five years. John's attainment of career clarity was the principal takeaway from his journey with us. The CC kept in constant touch with him following the end of formal coaching sessions, keeping him abreast of WSG's programmes as part of larger lifelong career planning.

Contributed by:
Amanda Kong and Allen Tan

Career Coaches
Careers Connect, Workforce Singapore





MAIN ARTICLE

THE MANY LANGUAGES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT



We've all heard of the 5 Love Languages... right? But how many career development languages do you know? If you're like many, the answer is just one: Promotions!

But in most organisations—especially in Singapore's evolving job landscape—the time-honored tradition of defining career development in terms of promotions, moves, and/or title changes is giving way to something more dynamic. Hierarchies are flattening. Job bands are broadening. Work is increasingly organic, organised around evolving needs versus entrenched structures. And as flexible and remote work arrangements take hold, competition for internal opportunities now stretches well beyond the borders of the traditional office.

Logically we all know that the opportunity to grow by moving to a new role is inherently limited. Yet we can't help but continue to measure success against the artificial (and elusive) yardstick of the promotion.

It's time to finally recognise that the language of climbing the corporate ladder is just one of the dialects of career development—and like Latin, for many it's becoming a dying language. Leaders who are willing to expand their

vocabulary become more fluent around ways to grow and will be able to have richer conversations that drive greater employee satisfaction, engagement, retention, and the results organisations in Singapore are looking to achieve through the Career Health SG initiative.

Want to migrate from a monolingual to multilingual approach to helping others grow? Put promotions aside for a moment and consider these alternative languages that facilitate deep and doable development in today's workplace.



Contribution

While not a language of development that comes to mind immediately for many, contribution taps our deeply human need to add value, make a difference, be of service, and live on purpose. This mindset that emphasised meaningful, purpose-driven work is a core strategy of Career Health SG. And when it's used for development, it's a win-win for the organisation and the individual. What might be surprising is that the research I conducted for my book *Promotions Are So Yesterday* found that, in aggregate, employees are more interested in growing this dimension than any others—including promotions.



Competence

This is a more familiar language of development. It boils down to working with employees to intentionally develop the skills, knowledge and capabilities that are needed to enjoy greater effectiveness and satisfaction today—and to future-proof their careers for tomorrow. National initiatives such as Career Conversion Programmes reflect Singapore's national commitment to developing competence in high-demand areas, like digital, green and care sectors.



Connection

There's that expression, "it's not what you know but who you know"; and that certainly applies when it comes to career development. Connection is fundamentally about the growth that can come from expanding and deepening social networks, building productive, meaningful relationships, enhancing visibility, and creating a sense of community.



Confidence

Frequently overlooked, confidence is a profound development dimension. Anyone who has ever experienced imposter syndrome (and that would be about 70% of us over the course of our careers) knows that lack of confidence can impose an invisible ceiling on success. Leaders who are fluent in this language can help people grow by building that sense of trust and assurance in their ability to perform predictably and with ease.



Challenge

This is a development language that many leaders and employees already speak well. When you help people step up, step out, and step into new situations that stretch them beyond what they know and can do today, you usher them into the discomfort zone where learning and growth accelerate. In fact, Singapore's Forward SG conversations identify this kind of adaptive learning and stretch as key to national upskilling priorities.



Contentment

The idea of contentment might seem like a foreign language to leaders looking to develop others; but it's being spoken by more employees today than ever before. Local research shows that 41% of Singapore employees prioritise work-life balance over pay, and many would switch jobs for better flexibility. Amplified during and after the pandemic, people are re-evaluating their priorities and their relationship to work. They're looking for greater meaning, satisfaction, ease, and balance. And when they can work with leaders to find these things, there are tremendous possibilities for development as well as retention.



Choice

One of the three fundamental psychological needs we bring to the workplace, autonomy has become a pressing issue. People crave greater control and independence. They want to make meaningful choices about their jobs—the how, when, and where of it. In fact, over 70% of employees in Singapore say they want flexible work arrangements according to a Ministry of Manpower report.

These languages of development have two important things in common. First, unlike promotions, positions and moves, these are completely within the control of managers and employees who can choose to take action and enable growth right within one's current role—in the here and now. And second, my research found that in aggregate, employees find each of these languages more interesting than climbing the corporate ladder.



Any new language opens new doors and opportunities. And mastering these languages of development accomplishes the same thing for leaders as they translate the old definition of career development and introduce a whole new vocabulary around growth.

So, it's time to cultivate greater fluency with career development by leveraging all the available languages—and the results, in Singapore and beyond, will speak for themselves.

Julie Winkle Giulioni is an author, consultant, trainer, and speaker who helps organisations tap their only sustainable competitive advantage: talent. One of Inc. Magazine's Top 100 speakers, she's the author of *Promotions Are SO Yesterday: Redefine Career Development. Help Employees Thrive.* and the international bestseller, *Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go* in its 3rd edition. Learn more at juliewinklegiulioni.com



Join us for an in-person **workshop** with Ms Julie Winkle on multidimensional career development approaches, tentatively scheduled on 3 September 2025. To indicate your interest, please click or scan the QR code provided.





BOOK REVIEW

CHAPTERS AND CHOICES: NAVIGATE YOUR NEXT READ



A Quality of Life Approach to Career Development

Geoffrey Peruniak

This book explores how career choices and development should be viewed through the broader lens of overall life satisfaction and wellbeing, rather than just professional advancement.

Key themes include:

- The integration of work-life balance considerations into career planning, examining how career choices impact various life domains including family relationships, personal health, leisure time, and community involvement
- A holistic framework for career decision-making that considers multiple factors beyond just salary and job title, including personal values, lifestyle preferences, and long-term life goals
- The importance of aligning career choices with one's personal definition of quality of life, recognising that this definition varies significantly between individuals
- Practical strategies for evaluating career options based on their potential impact on overall life satisfaction, including assessment tools and reflection exercises

The approach presented in the book represents a shift from traditional career development models that focus primarily on professional achievement to a more comprehensive view that prioritises overall wellbeing and life satisfaction.

This e-book can be found in the resource library exclusively available for CDF credential holders. Find out more about the credentials and the application process [here](#).

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TELL US YOUR STORY



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