

Up is not  
the only way



***Rethinking  
Career Mobility***

**Beverly Kaye | Lindy Williams | Lynn Cowart**

**CAREER SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL**

## **Praise for *Up Is Not the Only Way***

"This book is a refreshing take on a topic of interest to nearly everyone. Like a multifaceted diamond, it gives light in many directions."

—**Jack Zenger, CEO, Zenger Folkman, and bestselling coauthor of *The Extraordinary Leader and Speed***

"One responsibility of all leaders is to grow the talent on their team. This book suggests an array of mobility conversations and will help any leader feel more comfortable with that conversation."

—**Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Professor, Harvard Business School, and Chair and Director, Harvard University Advanced Leadership Initiative**

"Helping people grow should be in the job description of every leader at every level. This book makes it easier for both managers and direct reports to talk about career development."

—**Ken Blanchard, coauthor of *The New One Minute Manager®* and *One Minute Mentoring***

"Filled with one 'aha!' moment after another, this book inspires and educates. It teaches us that career success is not one-size-fits-all. You'll never think of your career in the same way again."

—**Marshall Goldsmith, international bestselling author of *What Got You Here Won't Get You There* and *Triggers***

"A lively, compelling read that voices work/life considerations. It hits the mark with powerful examples of career mobility options that can drive tremendous personal as well as professional satisfaction."

—**Ed Tetrault, Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, Apex Tool Group**

"The authors provide valuable insights and practical approaches for meaningful career discussions."

—**Tamar Elkeles, PhD, Chief Talent Executive, Atlantic Bridge Capital, LLC**

"We have leveraged the concepts from this book to create a strategic talent development approach for our organization that works!"

—**Joel Tobin, Vice President, Talent Acquisition and Development, Catalent Pharma Solutions**

"This book will open your eyes to the landscape of possibilities beyond what lies ahead—for yourself, your employees, and your organization."

—**Sue Padernacht, Chief Learning Officer and Vice President, Talent and Organization Development, Tribune Online Content**

"No talent strategy can be complete without the proper attention on how employees can grow within their current organizations. Written in a practical manner, this book offers great ideas."

—**Jayne Johnson, Vice President, Global Organization and Leadership Development, Vertex Pharmaceuticals**

"This book speaks to both the employee and the manager, recognizing that a career conversation is a two-way dialogue."

—**Meribeth Germino, Principal Executive Development Consultant, Genentech**

"Today, lateral moves, stretch assignments, and career resets are all part of the lifelong journey toward professional success and personal fulfillment. This book is an invaluable tool in helping people navigate this complex new landscape."

—**Sekhar Ramaswamy, Chief Talent Officer, Prudential**

"I've found that individuals join organizations that they believe will grow their careers. This book will help everyone prepare for the development conversation and understand what it takes to own your own learning."

—**Kimo Kippen, Vice President, Global Workforce Initiatives, Hilton**

"This book helps readers understand the many ways they can grow their careers, how to evaluate their options, and what steps to take to achieve their goals."

—**Lauren Starkand, Senior Vice President, Talent and Diversity, Global Consumer Banking, Citi**

"This book provides those contemplating 'what's next?' and 'what's best for me?' with a contemporary game plan firmly grounded in the wisdom of experience."

—**Kevin D. Wilde, Executive Leadership Fellow, Carlson School of Management, and former Chief Learning Officer, General Mills**

"By enlisting individuals, their leaders, and organizations in a mindful 'think about, talk about' approach, the authors inspire positive accountability for managing careers in an uncertain world."

—**Tim Richmond, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, AbbVie**

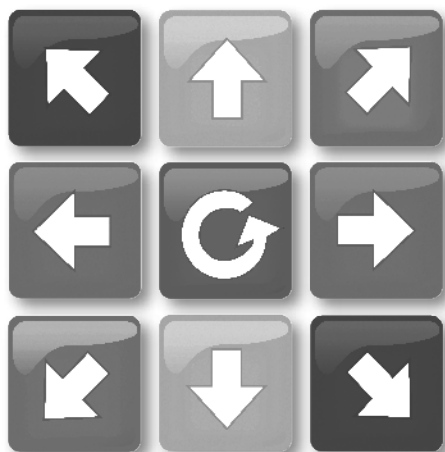
"This is a classic 'teach them to fish' tool for thinking broadly about professional growth and building personally fulfilling, custom careers."

—**Fran Lawler, Vice President of Human Resources, Engineered Fastening, Stanley Black & Decker**

"Knowing yourself is the key to personal success, and this book has many practical ways to accomplish that."

—**Amy Meeuwenberg, Lead Performance and Engagement Specialist, Enterprise Talent Development, Amway**

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**BK**

Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.  
a BK Business book

**Other titles by the author:**

*Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* (with Sharon Jordan-Evans)

*Love It, Don't Leave It* (with Sharon Jordan-Evans)

*Hello Stay Interviews, Goodbye Talent Loss*  
(with Sharon Jordan-Evans)

*Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go*  
(with Julie Winkle Giulioni)

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## ***Note from the Authors***

What does career advancement mean to you? What does it mean to support the career of someone who works with you? Did the image of a ladder just appear in your mind? If so, we'd like to offer some other images to reflect the workplace we all have now.

*Up is not the only way.* Promotions still happen. Up is still an option. But careers consist of a range of experiences—large and small—that ultimately come together to shape a career journey. Continuing to move up the ladder was never the only way or the best way or even the most satisfying way to navigate a career. For many years, though, continuous upward progression was the accepted image of a career. We offer a different image. In place of a ladder of promotions, think of career as a rich, flexible mix of experiences.

Our subtitle reads *Rethinking Career Mobility*. So what are we asking you to rethink? Careers today are mobile. That's not new. Sometimes the mobility is the traditional kind. Individuals move from function to function or take an assignment in another location. Other times, career mobility takes the form of identifying skills that are transferable from one role or profession to another.

Here's what's new. We have learned, in decades of studying careers around the globe, that career mobility can also mean growing, stretching, learning, and transforming, without ever changing the job title or even the chair you are sitting in! Career mobility is up to each individual to examine and define. I own just how mobile I will be in terms of how much, when, and how I will grow. I can create my own career patterns.

We  
challenge  
you to watch  
for your  
***"I never  
thought of it  
that way before!"***  
moments.

We will offer six experiences, six ways to grow, develop, and learn, that can be pieces of unique career patterns. How those experiences fit together over time is up to each one of us to decide.

One more thing. *Up Is Not the Only Way* is also about building a dialogue. It's about creating ongoing, two-way, formal and informal communication between individuals and their managers, coaches, mentors, and others to ensure that career experiences reach maximum potential and possibilities. We will offer ways to initiate, enrich, and engage in that dialogue. Whether the conversations are about your career; a direct report's career; or the career of a colleague or friend, you can use the questions you find in each chapter to drive your conversations deeper.

So, there you have it. The book is about building career patterns from all types of experiences, understanding what mobility means at the individual level, and engaging in dialogue that brings it all to life.



*Up Is Not the Only Way* is for anyone who knows, in your heart of hearts, that there are multiple ways to grow. The book is for individuals who want to learn more about how to plan and manage a career in a world of work that is in a constant state of change. The book is for managers, coaches, and mentors who are looking for ways to make career conversations more productive and focused on options. In other words, this book is for anyone who has an interest in influencing career growth—their own or that of someone else.

How you read the book is up to you. You could:

- read it and be ready for conversations with people you lead, manage, coach, counsel, or mentor.
- read it and be ready for conversations with your manager, coach, counselor, or mentor about *your* career.
- ask someone who is helping you with your career to read it so the two of you can talk about which chapters grabbed your attention and made you think.
- read it straight through, or scan the table of contents and jump in where a chapter title catches your eye.
- bring together a group of your peers to talk about the experiences the chapters describe.
- read the mobility moments scattered throughout the book then share *your* career story with others.
- pick it up whenever you have a few minutes to read a page or a chapter.
- drill down deeper at [www.UpIsNot.com](http://www.UpIsNot.com) [password: upisnot] to access Kickstart Mobility.

Whatever approach you take, we challenge you to watch for your *I never thought of it that way before!* moments. Jot them down. Mark the page. Mind-sets change when thinking shifts.

Some estimates say we spend more than 100,000 hours working during a lifetime. We believe those hours will be more satisfying and meaningful if we feel like we are progressing in whatever way we each define progress. So, whether you are focused on your own career, helping someone else, or both, you are building a future! We welcome the opportunity to help you do it!

Bev, Lindy, and Lynn

CHAPTER

I

UP

**was never for everyone**

**Careers** used to be **PREDICTABLE**.

There were **paths**  
and **ladders**.

The hierarchy worked

—**FOR SOME.**



As downsizing, restructuring, and delayering took hold in the late 1980s, old ladders became largely inaccessible. Some rungs disappeared, and the space between others shifted from steps to leaps. At the same time, individual aspirations and company needs were evolving. Terms like *work-life balance* were overheard in break rooms. Organizations began to examine how breadth of experience weighed against depth of expertise during talent reviews. The world of work was changing.

Careers today happen in that world—a world that continues to change. The environment is more global, more multigenerational, more dispersed, diverse, and complex than ever before. Hierarchies continue to flatten. Organizational structures are flexing. Even the value people place on work is changing.

Employees play multiple roles—from individual contributor to peer to leader and back, sometimes in the same day or within the same assignment. Roles emerge and evolve based on tasks and needs. Carefully written descriptions no longer define the boundaries of a job. Teams form and disperse based on projects. Feedback comes from multiple sources. The ladder, if it's still there, may be harder to see and tougher to climb.

## ***Is This the End of the Career as We Know It?***

Every industry is changing. As a result, internal workplace structures are changing as well. Up—the promotion path and perhaps even a ladder or two—may still exist, and could still be

a goal—for some. However, as levels of the hierarchy have disappeared, promotional opportunities have become less available, so the route to a promotion may take new turns. Someone who wants to manage others can still get there and, with the right mix of experiences, will likely arrive better prepared to take on the role.

Flattened organizations and limited career ladders don't spell the end of growth or careers. Opportunities are there—different and varied, but very much still there, and even more plentiful. The next change frontier, then, is people's mind-sets, and that means changing the conversation, especially about careers.

### ***Let's Be Honest***

Up was never for everyone. It still isn't. Managing someone else is not on everyone's radar. Neither is taking on increasing levels of responsibility (really!). Not everyone wants to move up. That doesn't mean a rewarding career is out of reach.

The message has been out there for a while now that individuals *own* their careers. What does that really mean? We think it means that the definition of career success is up to each one of us. Every time circumstances shuffle the deck, you can deal yourself a new hand. That's good news . . . actually that's *great* news! We are the only ones who can envision and imagine what success will look

**Flattened  
organizations  
and  
limited career ladders  
don't spell the end of  
growth or careers.**

like. And, to add to that great news, as the creators of our career success pictures, we are free to alter them when and how we choose to! *That* is what it means to own a career.

But, if we own it and we can create it, how do we do it?

First it's about being *mobile*.

## **Career Mobility . . .**

. . . is essential for individuals at all levels. Each one of us needs to exercise agility and resilience that stable workplaces did not require. No longer is mobility just about physically moving to another building or town. It's more than getting promoted. It's sometimes just being willing to continue to learn and grow and stretch.

. . . is about flexibility and agility. Like the navigation systems we rely on to reroute our travels based on traffic patterns, career mobility means flexing, adapting, and anticipating what's next.

. . . involves a rich mix of experiences, roles, assignments, and options. Careers today require us to be open to exploring multiple opportunities and possibilities. Great careers will be the payoff for employees who watch for and recognize emerging growth opportunities and are ready with alternatives when options fade or change.

Second, it's about *ownership*!

## **Ownership: Who Does What?**

We've all heard that employees *own* their careers. The organization needs to provide tools and resources, and managers need to support employees' career development. It's a partnership. Nothing new there!

What *is* new is talking less about the *ownership* and more about the *ownership*—the need to fine-tune who owns what—and about what each player needs to do to demonstrate commitment to the partnership.

**Individuals** must define what success means to them personally. This means testing assumptions and exploring options. It means learning and applying the insights gained from exploration. It means building plans and following through on them. It requires being a little introspective and taking time to figure things out—like what skills they have or need, what interests them, and what they value most about their work. It means asking for feedback and listening, even when it's not all good news. And, most importantly, it means being willing to take responsibility for your future. Careers belong to individuals. A career evolves within a network of partners and support, but, bottom line, it's up to the owner to shape it and live it.

## The definition of **career success** is up to each one of us.

**Managers, coaches, and mentors** provide support through conversations; sharing stories; listening to individuals describe their interests, skills, and values; reacting to plans; offering feedback and connections. That support is vital to ownership! When managers offer on-the-job learning, let's call it what it is—development. Stretch assignments are growing-in-place opportunities, not just “extra work.” When someone completes a stretch assignment, taking the time to debrief it will make learning stick. *What did you learn? What skill did you acquire or sharpen? How will you apply what you learned?* The support role includes preparing individuals to learn, helping them focus on what they learned, and then guiding them to apply the new skill or capability. It's a big role, sure. And it might mean shifting what you presently think it involves, but that's



# Career Mobility . . .

. . . is **ESSENTIAL**.

. . . is about *flexibility*  
and *agility*.

. . . involves a **rich mix**  
of experiences.

what we mean by ownership. Each partner needs to understand the expectations and deliver on them.

**Organizations** have a role to play as well. The systems, processes, and tools the organization provides deliver on promises of a development culture. However, the organization's role doesn't end there. Through senior leadership, human resources, and related groups, the organization must ensure that employees have *access* to the tools—that employees know where to find them, what they offer, and how to use them. The organization must thread the message of development through existing communications vehicles and devise new ways to promote growth in all its shapes, sizes, and forms. Some employees tell us that their companies still celebrate only promotions—people who are moving *up*. Ownership requires a change in that mind-set. This book can help accomplish that shift.

## ***When the Shift Hits the Fan***

We know that not everything happens as smoothly as we might like. Every organization has its own culture and unique environment. So what do you do if

... ownership is just words without action?

... individuals are not ready?

... the organization isn't fully on board?

... some managers are just not good at this development thing?

Do you simply sit back and wait for the others to catch up?

Certainly not! Whether development and growth are tracked and measured or left to chance, they are fundamental to building the future—for individuals and for organizations! Don't wait! Start now. You can start small, with a few conversations. When career conversations are happening, when individuals begin to talk about ideas and aspirations, when feedback is candid and insights emerge, everyone involved will know—you will know—you have completed your ownership!

**Ownership**  
**is ownership**  
**in action.**

**THINK ABOUT IT . . .**

At the end of each chapter we will share some questions to use as conversation starters. The questions will help you explore and build deeper dialogue about careers—yours and others! The questions and topics will challenge you to think more broadly, whether in preparation for a conversation with your peers, with your own manager or coach, or perhaps with the leaders of your organization.

For this first chapter, here are some things for you to ponder:

- \* What does career success mean to you?
- \* How do you feel about up not being the only way?
- \* Considering the information in this chapter, how mobility-minded are you? What gets in your way?
- \* How prepared are you for an “ownershift”?
- \* What does growth look like for you right now?

**. . . TALK ABOUT IT**

## 2



to

# Kaleidoscope

# Kaleidoscope

Changing  
landscapes  
offer unique

**PATTERNS.**



Turn in your telescope. Pick up your kaleidoscope. A telescope offers you one linear point of view—one straight line focused on something that may be pretty far away. A kaleidoscope gives you a fascinating array of views. Rather than having a clear, static career path, the workplace's changing landscape offers us unique patterns to view and evaluate. Like the design change even one small turn of the kaleidoscope gives you, the experiences that make up a career shift offer a wide variety of development options and a pretty amazing array of growth possibilities, including some you can reach for now—if, and *only* if, you learn to appreciate the emerging displays.

Did you know that the inside of the typical, basic kaleidoscope contains just three mirrors? Yes! All those intricate patterns can result from just three mirrors and a handful of beads or pieces of glass. Positioned at angles to one another, the mirrors combine to reflect one another as well as the items captured in the base of the tube. As beads shift and move with each twist of the kaleidoscope tube, the three mirrors produce unique patterns—patterns waiting for you to consider and act on them.

## ***Mirror, Mirror***

Like the three-mirrored kaleidoscope, there are three components that guide a satisfying career. Those three components are skills, interests, and values.

**Skills** include all the tools you have collected in your tool kit: those capabilities you developed in that very first job, what you



learned as you started your career journey, as well as the abilities you are polishing right now. Some of those skills might be things you hope to never have to use again. That knowledge points you to the second mirror: **interests**. Your inventory of interests includes those work tasks you like to do. You may not yet be expert in the things that interest you, but the interests mirror holds items that intrigue you enough to make the work of learning or polishing them worth it. Most people really want a chance to do what they do best.

And that third mirror? It's the one that's probably closest to your heart. The third mirror holds your **values**—those things you hold dear, things that are important to you. When you examine the values mirror, you are looking at what keeps you committed to accomplishing a task that's tough or challenging. The values mirror contains factors like “serving others,” “being creative,” and “spending time with family and friends”—fundamental aspects of a role or assignment that can make or break your job satisfaction.

All three mirrors matter. Understanding what's inside each one is a start. Examine your skills list: What's in your tool kit? Review your inventory of interests: What's energizing and enticing? Explore your values: What's so important that it simply must

be a part of the next role or job? When you clarify what you're good at (your skills and abilities), what you enjoy (your interests), and what's important to you (your values), you've created your personal three mirrors, your *kaleidoscope*.

In combination, the three mirrors can reveal which opportunities and experiences will be the most rewarding and satisfying. Even small turns of the kaleidoscope tube can change the image and reposition which emerging opportunities will best match your mirrors. When you know what your mirrors are made of, you can make better choices about what's next in your career journey.

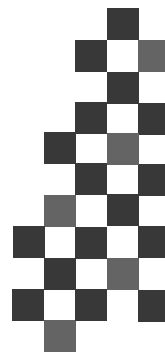
## ***A Kaleidoscope View: The Basics***

Here are some basics to adopting a *kaleidoscope view*.

### APPRECIATE PATTERNS

As the view of careers shifts from telescope-type paths (aiming for one distant point in space) to kaleidoscope-type patterns, opportunities and options multiply. Where a path offers a singular next step, a pattern offers multiple ways to proceed, depending upon individual needs and desires, in the context of the immediate environment—ways we may never have imagined. A twist or change will produce new and sometimes different choices rather than simply shutting down a path.

A new pattern can  
be just as **exciting**  
as a former one,  
to the **flexible**  
and *agile* viewer.





With each twist of the tube, whether self-initiated or the result of external forces, you will have new patterns and new opportunities to consider.

For example, if the leadership team splits an existing department into two, options multiply. You may have had a telescope view of someday directing the old department. Now you can think about directing one of the new ones, moving laterally to direct the other, carving a new role as liaison between them. . . . When you appreciate the new pattern, you see choices.

### ENCOURAGE OPTIONALITY

During an interview for this book, a client shared the term *optionality*. When asked to describe the riskiest career choice she had made in her career journey, she hesitated. She then explained that she didn't feel she had made *risky* choices—something we found surprising, considering that her choices included joining the army at eighteen, moving around between distinctly different industries, and taking two years off to go back to school! She explained that the reason she felt choices others might view as risky were not so concerning was that she always made sure she had *optionality*. She

**Resilience**  
is built on  
multiple options—  
on **optionality!**

# Good choices balance **money** & **meaning**



always had a plan A, a plan B, and a few others in her back pocket. She built resilience into her every decision.

With optionality, if plan A becomes less attractive, plans B, C, D, and more are ready and available. Eyeing career goals through a telescopic lens, zeroing in on just that dream job with the cool title and swanky office, may lead to disappointment when the title disappears or the office gets downsized. Optionality means being ready to implement any one of multiple plans when the kaleidoscope twists to produce a new landscape.

Try this idea on for size: *I don't have to leave. I could add more skills.* Could it fit you? Could it fit someone who reports to you? Turn the kaleidoscope to imagine what else is possible, right where you are.

## BALANCE MONEY AND MEANING

As millennials joined the workforce they made this point crystal clear: *it's about more than just money.* Meaning has taken on an even more important role in the equation.

Hierarchies encouraged a telescope view, and the focus was often more money. Yet how many people do you know who made it to the job in their telescope and felt empty after a while, when the money couldn't keep the job shiny and exciting?

We're not suggesting that money isn't important. What we *are* suggesting is that, now more than ever, it is time to balance the scales of *money* and *meaning*.

Rather than all-or-nothing trade-offs where individuals must decide to take the money and leave meaning behind or choose to eat ramen noodles for three meals a day to have a meaningful career, we believe that finding the right balance is the key to success. We have met hundreds of people who, every day, throw their energy into work that is not paying big bucks. They probably earn enough to cover the rent or mortgage and a dinner out every now and then. But these individuals would not give up their roles of helping, serving, teaching, and learning. They know they are making contributions that are important to them, every day.

Career mobility allows you to define your own measures for balancing money and meaning, rather than accepting something prescribed by external criteria. It results in a wider range of possibilities and honors the individual. Terms like *fulfillment* and *sense of purpose* can move conversations beyond just salary and wages when examining career choices. Conversations that open all three mirrors of a personal kaleidoscope—skills, interests, and values—will result in more informed and fulfilling career options.

## LOSE THE ORG CHART; BUILD AN ORB CHART

Many organizations have moved away from purely hierarchical structures to designs that accommodate a more project-based approach to work and allow for greater cross-functional relationships. The information technology industry led the way with the introduction of the “agile” approach, where individuals move quickly between or within teams, switching assignments, exchanging roles, and interfacing with multiple colleagues to tackle an array of challenges. Talent orbits one team or assignment, then moves to another, and another, as needs change and projects

# Orbiting

builds **flexibility**  
and moves **expertise**  
to where it's needed most.

end. Employees take with them an ever-expanding inventory of knowledge, experience, and connections. The insights they gain will help them make even more valuable contributions in the future. Imagine how orbiting can enhance the ability to manage others, if and when the time comes.

These agile experiments have shown us that traditional organizational structures beg for a new view: careers that play out in new, flexible structures and offer rich career experiences. Perhaps the organization charts of the future will be flexible orbiting images that depict a workplace where individuals move about, orbit around colleagues depending upon the task at hand, and then move on.

Not long ago, the Career Systems International leadership team took on the task of updating our organization chart. It seemed like a straightforward, get-it-done kind of chore—until we got started. We quickly realized that the tidy hierarchical set of boxes connected by straight and right-angled lines simply wouldn't work. CSI teams don't fit nicely into that model. We move around from project to project, some short term, some longer; we orbit into projects as needed and then move on. We are not alone in working this way.

Nimble organizations and agile individuals are already embracing this model. Orbiting models of work will result in even more career mobility patterns.

These new views of career development have everything to do with the way we see and navigate growth opportunities.

Instead of a telescopic perspective that presents a linear path, shifting workplace structures require us to widen our view, to align career development with the changing environment, to look around us to see what possibilities exist. A kaleidoscope view of career mobility provides many scenarios and multiple opportunities, based on whether the tube twists left or right, the time before a new pattern emerges, and our willingness to peek into a pattern to see what it offers. The outcomes are beautiful patterns, with rarely the same view twice.

## THINK ABOUT IT . . .

Here's your next set of questions. These, like the ones in the first chapter, ask you to think about your attitude toward a number of career mobility ideas. Find an opportunity to talk about one or more of these questions. What effect would your answers have on your attitude toward career mobility?

- \* Which basics of a kaleidoscope view will be easiest for you to put into play? Which will be most difficult?
  - Appreciate patterns
  - Encourage optionality
  - Balance money and meaning
  - Lose the org chart; build an orb chart
- \* Which of the basics is countercultural for you? For your organization?
- \* Which do you hope *your* manager will use?
- \* What opportunities are presenting themselves right now?
- \* Money aside, what else motivates you?

## . . . TALK ABOUT IT

CHAPTER

3

Leave  
the  
LADDER  
behind

Opportunities still exist . . .

they may even be

**MORE PLENTIFUL.**





We've said that opportunities still exist . . . they may even be more plentiful. They may just look a little different.

An old management saying goes "You need the right *person*, in the right *place*, at the right *time*."

We are suggesting a change to that saying. What if there were more *right places*? More right places mean more opportunities to grow and develop. It's happening now in organizations where career mobility is taking hold. So our update of the phrase would be "When more *right places* are named and visible, more *right times* will be available to accommodate, engage, and retain *all* the talented *right people* throughout the organization." An inclusive environment, where everyone has growth opportunities, can take hold and flourish in your workplace, too.

Career mobility patterns are flexible. Like the small, colorful beads in a kaleidoscope, which tumble and reshuffle, development experiences can happen in different sequences tailored to individual preferences, abilities, timing, and tastes. When a slight change—a twist of the kaleidoscope—happens, new patterns and possibilities surface. When you want to know your options, you can twist the tube to see what emerges. Or, let's face it, sometimes that kaleidoscope may be shaken by external forces. A merger or reorganization can produce a whole new landscape of possibilities. We need to adjust our vision to see not just the ladder but also the adjacent possibilities.

Regardless of how the patterns come to be, they will be combinations of the six experiences—enrichment, exploratory, lateral, realignment, vertical, and relocation experiences—that we introduce in the following chapters.

## ***Grow Here***

You can make a current job more interesting and challenging through **enrichment**. You can grow in place right where you are. All it takes is a very small twist of the kaleidoscope. Shift some tasks. Take on others. A small shift can transform the current job into a learning lab. Specialists build entire careers from patterns of enrichment experiences. They get better and better at what they do and deepen their contributions along the way. **Ask yourself what you learned this week or this month. You might be surprised.**

## ***Try before You Buy***

You can think of the **exploratory** experience as a chance to investigate possibilities. It may involve short-term work assignments or shadowing someone who's in a position you may be considering. The exploratory experience could be as simple as having a conversation about the requirements of a role that seems attractive to you. It's a chance to check things out to see what will work—and what might *not* work. Exploring is a very smart step to take before investing time and energy in pursuing other experiences. Exploratory can be a bridge from enrichment to any of the other experiences. **Think about an assignment that intrigues you. How could you learn more about it?**

## ***Sideways to Highways***

**Lateral** experiences usually mean pay doesn't change. Status and scope of responsibility are typically the same or similar. New perspective is the payoff from a lateral experience. When you take on a role in another function or department, you get to view your

responsibilities and the organization through a new lens. Lateral experiences can help you to fine-tune skills, build new relationships, learn a new or different approach, acquire deeper hands-on expertise, see the organizational operations from a different angle, and add to your knowledge base. **What sideways options could offer you a new view?**

### ***Step Back for a Reason or a Season***

People sometimes choose to **realign** or step back to refocus. Maybe the current job was just not a fit and you're brave enough to admit it. Maybe this step opens a whole new vista that seems exciting, in a part of the organization that's new or growing. It

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to engage and retain

all the talented  
***right people.***

can also be about finding a role that is less demanding, more enjoyable, and better aligned with personal priorities. With the ever-increasing focus on work–life balance, a realignment move is sometimes based on a personal need that, if ignored, might result in a resignation and exit. Realignment usually means letting go of certain responsibilities, time commitments, and, potentially, salary. Whatever the reasons, it is a valid, important option. **Have you ever had to take a step off the treadmill for some reason?**

## ***When Up Is the Way***

As we've said, the ladder hasn't completely disappeared. The rungs aren't *all* gone. For some people, a **vertical** move absolutely makes sense. When it works for the organization and for the individual, a vertical experience should definitely be included in the pattern. Vertical moves can bring with them many of the traditional symbols of success, such as titles and monetary compensation. A vertical experience could mean leading a team or project and taking on a more visible role. In reality, it can also come with headaches, so careful thought about when, if, and how a vertical experience would fit into your career pattern is essential. **How will you know when or if a move up is right for you?**

## ***Is That Grass Really Greener?***

There's always a way out. The exit door is always there.

**Relocation** means leaving for an entirely new organization or industry. It's awkward and sometimes really tough to acknowledge this one. But, alas, it is real. And every person knows the option to step out the door is there. In the past, however, once the door closed, it locked. Today, it's exciting to see how many who leave are welcomed back when they decide to return. And they bring a wealth of new knowledge with them. Some of our clients use the label "boomerang employee" with pride. **What are some signs that it might be time to look outside your current organization for your next growth opportunity?**

## ***Go for It!***

The chapters that follow define each of these six experiences. You will find ideas about how to think and talk about them—how each experience might fit into a current or future career pattern.

Before we dive into each of the six experiences, we have a few suggestions for getting started.

First, examine how to grow through **enrichment** experiences. What can you learn right where you are?

Next, use **exploratory** experiences to test other roles and examine other functions or areas.

**Enrichment** and **exploratory** experiences carry low risk and can be great ways to learn and grow without physically moving to a new area or a new job. They open up multiple alternatives and often can be done while still committed to the demands of the current job. Both can lead to any of the other experiences.

Sometimes that  
**kaleidoscope**  
may be  
**shaken**  
by  
external forces.

When you are ready to create your pattern, examine **lateral**, **realignment**, **vertical**, and, yes, even **relocation** experiences to build unique and flexible career mobility patterns. What possibilities are adjacent to what you are doing right now? Should the next experience be **lateral**? Does it make sense to plan a **realignment** in another function in order to switch disciplines? Should a **vertical** experience appear in the pattern? If so, when? And where? Is it time to consider **relocation**? It's your pattern. It's your career.

Remember that this approach is what we suggest, but ultimately the selection and placement of the six types of experiences is up to each individual. Careers are made up of multiple experiences creating a unique pattern that belongs solely to the individual.

Is this description of options just putting rose-colored glasses on a nonpromotion? No, it's not. We have met countless people who shifted their gaze from the job in their telescopic view to consider an option they had never even noticed before, and it changed the course of their careers for the better. Many of them report that they're glad they abandoned the single-minded quest for the job in the telescope. They found a job—a career—that they loved, thanks to appreciating the kaleidoscope.

## ***Those Right Places for More Right People***

So, there *can* be many more times and places for all the talented people in any organization. Taking a broad and flexible approach to career growth is key. Adopting a career mobility mind-set that views change as opportunity can open entirely new landscapes for development. Inclusive and widespread talent development results from supporting career patterns that include interfacing with new colleagues, reporting to new leaders, moving from team to team,

and learning how differently we all operate. Imagine how much more plentiful growth opportunities could be if individuals appreciated and planned these experiences.

### THINK ABOUT IT . . .

Think about *your* career journey so far and the career pattern you are creating for yourself.

- \* Which of the six career experiences have been a part of your journey so far?
  - **Grow Here** Enrichment
  - **Try before You Buy** Exploratory
  - **Sideways to Highways** Lateral
  - **Step Back for a Reason or a Season** Realignment
  - **When Up Is the Way** Vertical
  - **Is That Grass Really Greener?** Relocation
- \* What experiences best prepared you for your current position?
- \* Which experiences do you hope to include in your pattern, going forward?
- \* Which experiences are within reach? Which ones seem like a stretch for you?
- \* Which experiences might match your three mirrors?
- \* Which experiences do you want to include in upcoming career conversations?

. . . TALK ABOUT IT

## About the Authors



### BEV

If anyone had told me that I would probably go down in history for just the six words that headline this book, I would never, ever have smiled. Now, I'm smiling. For those of you for whom the title sounds familiar (I know how old you are!), that book (1982, 1997) was based on my doctoral dissertation (UCLA) and presented a systems approach to career development. There was only one chapter that actually talked about this subject.

*This is a totally different book.* I've learned that my real skill is not in the academics of career development (though all of our work is research based) but in making the complex simple for managers and individuals. In this fast-moving world, the easier we can make our teaching, the more effective we can be.



If luck is where planning meets opportunity, then I've had some great luck. I realized, early on, that I do my best work in collaboration with others—and I found some wonderful and amazing “others” to work with me. I love learning and love finding ways to make that learning easy to remember. I've had the good fortune to build a nourishing network as founder of Career Systems International. Together we turn ideas into practical and engaging learning solutions that have stood the test of time.

I was honored (and tickled) to be awarded the 2010 Distinguished Contribution for Workplace Learning and Performance Award by the Association for Talent Development. (And I was glad to be alive to receive it!) The designation is given to pioneers and prophets who have had enduring impact and influence, originality of ideas, a substantive body of published work, and a contribution that raises the visibility, credibility, and stature of the field.

I do my best writing on airplanes. (My husband offered to buy me a seat belt for my office chair, but that wouldn't be the same!) *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em; Love It, Don't Leave It; Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go; and Hello Stay Interviews, Goodbye Talent Loss* were all done with brilliant and creative coauthors who partnered in every step. I gain my inspiration thanks to decades of work in organizations. In the beginning, I taught workshops in our specialty areas of engagement, development, and retention. Lately, my main work is delivering keynote speeches to client organizations and large conferences around the globe. Every presentation makes me nervous, but every experience provides opportunities for new creative outlets.

The book you hold in your hands builds on thirty-five years of the work of hundreds who have stood before classrooms, and now computer screens. We look forward to adding your insights to this ongoing work.

## LINDY

“Never stop learning,” a mentor told me, quite a few years ago. I listened. And I am still learning every single day. My career pattern has included all six of the experiences we write about in *Up*. I stepped up and back and over and, at times, chose to grow right where I was. Some experiences surprised me with how amazing they turned out to be. Others that I expected to learn little from—*What on earth could I learn from being a management intern for a finance company, anyway?*—became turning points that led me to twist that kaleidoscope again and again.

I believe that careers don't stop and start. For me, a career is a lifelong journey that may include wildly different types of roles but, in the end, becomes a unique and individual mark on the organizations and people you work with along the way. My journey has taken me inside corporate walls as manager, trainer, human resources professional, and director. From operations roles, I added financial forecasting and budgeting to my skills list, along with change leadership and performance management. When my teaching credentials and deep interest in the learning process led me to the world of employee development, I dived eagerly into instructional design and training delivery. My time as Director of Worldwide Career Development for the American Express Company confirmed my passion for the topic of careers. That role also led me to Bev Kaye—an introduction that evolved into a decades-long friendship and amazing professional adventures. When Bev asked me one of her favorite questions—“What's the one thing you *can't not* do?”—I discovered that my answer was “Career development.”

As a Senior Consultant for Career Systems International, I've worked with government agencies committed to their missions and nonprofits devoted to their purposes. I've partnered with leaders to design and implement award-winning programs and initiatives focused on career development and employee

engagement. My work has taken me to boardrooms filled with senior teams committed to designing powerful engagement strategies, hospital kitchens to meet with employees whose development and engagement is essential to patients as well as the organizations they work for, and to roundtables with military officers focused on coaching and professional growth. I've learned that people around the globe, whether on the manufacturing floor, in an IT think tank, on an aircraft carrier, or at a desk in a corner office, share the desire to have rewarding and meaningful careers. Each experience presented perspectives I may not have considered before and resulted in insights that I could carry to my next assignment.

The opportunity to write this book with colleagues I respect and enjoy was one of those pattern pieces that sparkled when it appeared. Yes, it was work. Yes, it stretched my thinking and sometimes made me wish for more hours in the day. But it has been a labor of love. In the introduction to his book *Your Signature Path*, Geoff Bellman wrote, "Thousands of people have walked this same ground before us, but we each walk it in our own way." My hope is that readers of *Up* will discover ways to make their walks as rewarding and meaningful as possible.

Best wishes for a wonderful career journey!

## LYNN

Little did I realize that I would find myself at this place. After many years in the corporate world (GE Capital, GE Aerospace, Martin Marietta, and Lockheed Martin), I have lived the very same career mobility experiences that we talk about in *Up*, without the benefit of the titles or the descriptors that we expand upon here. Although my career began at Capital as a financial analyst for planes, trains, and ships, my passion was always around the human capital side of the equation. My interests, values, and maybe even skills seemed to shine a little brighter around those experiences. At the time, I did not know what to attribute it to; the moves just

happened, and they “felt right.” Random, or so I thought. Later in my career, my work with Career Systems International as a Senior Consultant took me across the globe, consulting on those similar career development and engagement strategies. Maybe that career pattern was not so random after all. Fast-forward nine years: I loved this work so much that I was honored when asked to come on full time as the Vice President of Quality Delivery, coaching our thirty-plus consultants across the globe, working with their own passions in our space. (The truth is that I learn more from these talented, gifted, inspiring individuals every day than I can ever give back. Thank you!)

Now, as a result of my experiences, I am living that authentic calling: helping others to realize their full potential through our work in coaching and consulting around career development and employee engagement. To write a book on these same subjects, with colleagues whom I admire and respect more than they will ever know, was beyond my wildest dreams. Thank you!

I have been fortunate to work with many great leaders throughout my journey—some who called me a zealot at times (meant as a compliment, I am sure) but, all in all, leaders who were not afraid to tell me the straight truth in the interest of consistently raising my own standard bar: “For that which does not destroy us, makes us stronger” (even if it stings a little). Okay. . . . If they said so, I believed them, and I am grateful—now that I look back.

While traveling through the experiences and patterns we write about in the book, I thought it was just plain luck. However, now that we reflect, it was much more than that. . . . It was willingness to take risks and be flexible, coupled with the safety net of those around me who saw a much bigger picture than I ever could have imagined at the time. The encouragement of one leader to “get that MBA and I will see to it that you get your coveted human resources role” was all that I needed to follow my heart. That one conversation led to a twenty-year “experience” in the

HR field, allowing me to partner with some of the best leaders in the business world, seeing them through mergers, acquisitions, business closings, and many human capital transitions that literally changed lives. Now *that* is the beauty of support, mentorship, and true career advocacy: lifting others up as a result of our own experiences, and paying it forward for the benefit of someone, or something, else. Now I realize that it was a combination of things—diverse opportunities, supportive leaders, well-placed conversations (and feedback), and the willingness to “step out of the box” in order to grow. Now that the descriptors exist in this book, I hope many readers will realize their own potential and passion and give themselves permission to live their wildest dreams.

My best in your kaleidoscope efforts.

# CAREER SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL

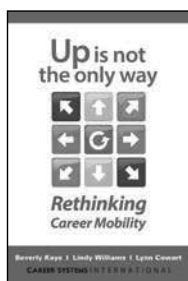
## ***Start Talking: Conversations to Develop, Engage, and Retain***

Organizations worldwide have achieved powerful and measurable outcomes by delivering Career Systems International's learning solutions. Given our forty-year history of addressing complex issues and applying a practical approach, your leaders/managers and employees will walk away from these experiences and say, "I can do that." Their learning time will be spent on the how-to.

A simple, yet powerful learning element—conversation—is core to all of our areas of practice. Although the act of talking seems simple, the "art" often demands more than a book to bridge the knowing-doing gap. And because we know that discussions take two, both your managers and your employees learn their role in conversations to develop, engage, and retain talent.

### CONVERSATIONS TO DEVELOP

Career development consistently ranks as a top driver in employee engagement, not only impacting retention and engagement but also fueling an organization with innovative, productive, and committed employees.



The book you hold in your hands (or are reading on the screen) is based on the belief that opportunities in organizations are plentiful if you are open to all possibilities. The *Up Is Not the Only Way* microlearning solution will help your leaders and employees prepare for and engage in conversations to mobilize action around career choices. Go to [www.UplIsNot.com](http://www.UplIsNot.com) to access Kickstart Mobility; password: upisnot.

With CSI's **CareerPower®** suite, your managers and employees gain the confidence and competence to hold meaningful development conversations, aligned to business strategies. Together they create a culture in which learning and growth are ongoing and organizational talent is optimized.



With *Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go*, you can introduce managers at all levels to a practical approach for this critical dialogue. Embedded in this microlearning solution is the theme that development happens one conversation at a time, over time.

## CONVERSATIONS TO ENGAGE

When managers and employees are comfortable with their roles in the conversations, engagement becomes a two-way street. Business results are maximized when both players not only know what to do but also are empowered with the strategies to actually do it.

Your managers gain the experience and knowledge needed to engage their talent. *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* brings twenty-six low- to no-cost strategies to life as managers learn the principals of engagement, how to converse with all direct reports, and how to create individualized engagement plans.



With *SatisfACTION Power®*, your employees are empowered to create the conditions they need to improve job satisfaction, as supported in the *Love It, Don't Leave It* book. Your employees can take charge of their own engagement by making opportunities to have their job of choice, without leaving for greener pastures.

## CONVERSATIONS TO RETAIN

Your managers learn not to wait until the exit interview to understand what employees want, in *Hello Stay Interviews, Goodbye Talent Loss*. The stay interview process is detailed in this micro-learning solution, which is designed to build trust and deepen the connection with employees. Stay interviews are one of the most powerful strategies in a successful manager's playbook.



### It's more than learning solutions . . .

You also can access a variety of CSI resources to reinforce and sustain the focus on development, engagement, and retention for the long term. Whether it's building a strategy, fostering impactful communications, training, forming coaching relationships, or simply using part of our library of tools, we have a variety of ways to keep the conversations flowing.

### So . . . let's talk!

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