

**Up is not
the only way**



***Rethinking
Career Mobility***

Beverly Kaye | Lindy Williams | Lynn Cowart

CAREER SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL

If you enjoy this excerpt...

consider becoming a member of the reader community on our website!

[Click here for sign-up form.](#) Members automatically get 10% off print, 30% off digital books.

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**

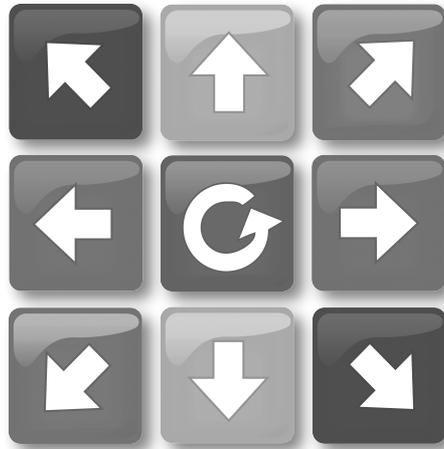
“This is a classic ‘teach them to fish’ tool for thinking broadly about professional growth and building personally fulfilling, custom careers.”

—**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**

Up is not the only way



Rethinking Career Mobility

Beverly Kaye | Lindy Williams | Lynn Cowart

CAREER SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL



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)

Contents

	Note from the Authors	ix
1	Up Was Never for Everyone	1
2	Telescope to Kaleidoscope	11
3	Leave the Ladder behind	23
4	Grow Here Enrichment	33
5	Try before You Buy Exploratory	45
6	Sideways to Highways Lateral	55
7	Step Back for a Reason or a Season Realignment	69
8	When Up Is the Way Vertical	81
9	Is That Grass Really Greener? Relocation	95
10	Go for It!	109
	Acknowledgments	117
	Index	121
	About the Authors	126

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.UplsNot.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

If you enjoy this excerpt...

consider becoming a member of the reader community on our website!

[Click here for sign-up form.](#) Members automatically get 10% off print, 30% off digital books.