

HELP
THEM
GROW
OR WATCH
THEM
GO

**THIRD
EDITION**

Updated
and
Expanded

Career Conversations
Organizations Need
and Employees *Still* Want

Beverly Kaye and Julie Winkle Giulioni

Praise for *Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go*

“Deceptively simple. Absolutely relevant. Bev and Julie demystify career development and give managers the key to unlocking the potential around them.”

—**Heidi Brandow, Director, Global Learning and Development, Tesla, Inc.**

“Life and business are all about where you pay attention. Pay attention to the growth of your people . . . and they will grow your business. The authors do a great job in spelling out the how-tos!”

—**Chip Conley, author of *Wisdom@Work* and Strategic Advisor for Hospitality and Leadership, Airbnb**

“This edition takes us into the realities of today’s business landscape and shows that if we want to grow our business, we have to grow our people. It walks the reader through career conversations in a way that isn’t overwhelming and rather focuses on leaders being genuine and having meaningful conversations.”

—**Robin Cerrati, Vice President, Human Resources, Compass Group**

“Should be the career conversation bible for busy leaders!”

—**Marshall Goldsmith, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Triggers* and coauthor of *How Women Rise***

“Organizations in Asia need to take career development initiatives seriously, and managers need to be supported with simple skills and tools to build trust and overcome cultural barriers. This book offers an approach to career development that works cross-culturally and enables companies in Asia to deal more effectively with this talent management challenge.”

—**Tan Siew Inn, Founding Partner, The Flame Centre, Singapore, and author of *Wholeness in a Disruptive World***

“*Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go* is an important contribution to leading organizations where people and talent growth matters to success.”

—**Kevin Wilde, Executive Leadership Fellow, Carlson School of Management**

“In all my years coaching executives on career development, this is the best and most comprehensive resource available. It takes the complex issue of career development and simplifies it with real, action-oriented tips, tools, and insights. It’s relevant for new supervisors, senior executives, and HR professionals at any level in any industry.”

—**Sharon Silverman, Senior Vice President, Talent Acquisition, Gingerfinds**

“At last, a hands-on book that’s smart, practical, and honest. Everyone knows that people make all the difference; this book will teach you how to make a difference with your people.”

—**Alan Webber, cofounder of *Fast Company*, author of *Rules of Thumb*, and Mayor of Santa Fe, New Mexico**

“Improving the skills of our workforce is one of the country’s most important economic challenges. It has to start with employers, and *Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go* tells you how to do it painlessly.”

—**Peter Cappelli, Director, Center for Human Resources, The Wharton School, and Professor of Management, University of Pennsylvania**

“Great read for those who want to help individuals develop. It is full of useful materials that are easy to access. Ideal for a manager who wants to learn about coaching others.”

—**Edward E. Lawler III, Distinguished Professor of Business, Marshall School of Business, University of Southern California, and coauthor of *Management Reset***

“Improving retention and building engagement are the driving factors for the talent development strategy of the Hearst Capital Management group. We’re implementing *Help Them Grow* concepts because they provide managers and employees with an easy-to-follow yet impactful framework for career conversations. Through career conversations, we’re increasing engagement and, more importantly, supporting our employees’ careers.”

—**Heather Ragone, Senior Director, Talent Development, Hearst**

“Ingersoll Rand’s focus on development is improving year over year. Our leaders don’t just coach for performance, they coach for development. How does best-in-class engagement and employee retention sound to you? Does an organization filled with career coaches sound interesting? Read this book!”

—**Craig Mundy, Vice President, Human Resources, Strategic Business Units, Ingersoll Rand**

“*Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go* provides a practical road map for managers who know that they want to help their teams but may not know the clear, specific steps they can take. Managers, employees, and the organizations they serve will benefit from the wisdom in this book.”

—**Rebecca L. Ray, PhD, Executive Vice President, Human Capital, The Conference Board**

“I loved this book. Draw from the abundant list of simple yet powerful questions and become the best talent manager in your organization.”

—**Tina Sung, Vice President, Government Transformation and Agency Partnerships, Partnership for Public Service**

“A great guidebook for those whose job it is to help other people grow, with all the right questions we need to be asking!”

—**Frances Hesselbein, President and CEO, The Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute**

INTRODUCTION

YOU CAN'T SAY WE DIDN'T WARN YOU

Since publishing the first edition of *Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go* in 2012, we've been preaching the career development gospel. Through our writing, speaking, and training, we've connected with hundreds of thousands of leaders who want to give their employees a better experience of growth—and give their organizations the benefits that come along with it. Yet it was the perfect storm created by the global pandemic and the ensuing economic crisis that has delivered our message to the world more powerfully than our words ever could.

The past several years have served as a compelling case study of the nonnegotiable nature of career development, yielding a cautionary (and pithy) message for organizations and leaders:

Help them grow or watch them go!

Recent events have been a wake-up call. Discussions of attrition on the nightly news and at the kitchen table. Wide-scale business closures. The profound effects we've felt as consumers. Countless studies linking lack of growth and opportunity to talent migration—some of you may have changed jobs yourselves for this reason. This all adds up to a visceral experience and understanding of workforce dynamics and the key role that development plays.

But let's face it. While the disruptions may be more dramatic this time around, it's not the first time we've seen economic and labor mar-

ket dynamics conspire to amplify the importance of development. The pendulum is always in flux. Too frequently, though, we've responded to tough times with a recommitment to employees and their growth in the moment. Then our short attention spans and memories are turned to something else... until the next employment-related crisis.

What IF . . .

- ▶ **we learned the lesson this time?**
- ▶ **organizations and leaders found a sustainable way to maintain a focus on and commitment to development—during good times and bad?**
- ▶ **career development was the reason people stayed rather than left an organization?**

We can. They can. And it can be. That's why we've updated this book... again.

HELP THEM **GROW**

As a result of our contemporary appreciation for the value of growth and its outsized effect on retention, career development has only taken on greater importance since we first wrote this book. In today's business environment, talent is still the major differentiator and is increasingly viewed as a competitive advantage. As artificial intelligence and other advances take hold, we're coming to terms with the reality that there's no substitute for what human beings are uniquely suited to contribute to the workplace. As a result, developing people to optimize their capacity has become a compelling and strategic priority across organizations.

Beyond its retention implications, developing talent continues to be recognized as one of the most significant drivers of employee engagement, which in turn is the key to the business outcomes you seek:

revenue, profitability, innovation, productivity, customer loyalty, quality, cycle time reduction, and more—everything organizations need to survive and thrive.

In another perfect storm, employees are expressing a desire for development at exactly the time that organizations need that growth most. The predictions related to workforce readiness in the years to come are dire. Today's skills fall woefully short of meeting tomorrow's needs. Without significant upskilling and reskilling, a frightening percentage of employees will find themselves and their ability to contribute irrelevant.

At the same time, the reality of career development continues to morph in response to the evolving business landscape. Boomers are living longer—and in some sectors working longer. Belt-tightening efforts that led to delayering and downsizing show no signs of loosening and may even accelerate. There are fewer and fewer levels of leadership to which to aspire. Work gets organized and done more organically these days. More jobs are being filled with contingent and contract workers. All of this can breed a sense of scarcity and leave the impression that there aren't as many opportunities as there once were.

Career development can no longer be treated as a “nice to do” or “when you get around to it” perk. Today helping others grow has become a mission-critical priority.

OR WATCH THEM *GO*

“Ignore the development imperative at your own peril.” Who would have guessed that this line from our last edition would have foreshadowed events to come? The dynamics driving the Great Resignation, responsible for wreaking havoc on so many organizations, are still with us today, albeit on a lesser scale. Everyday employees who believe that their careers are not getting the attention they deserve make the decision to leave. Some resign to pursue employment in organizations that offer greater opportunity for growth and learning. Others decide

the flexibility of freelance life fits them better, and they cobble together a variety of projects that become their career.

But an equally dangerous group is made up of those who stay but withdraw their engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm for the work. Remember quiet quitting? It remains alive and well—perhaps not-so-quietly undermining team dynamics, effectiveness, and results.

A word to the wise: This dynamic is not reserved for tight labor market cycles. The pendulum is going to swing back and forth. And whether it favors the employer or employee, you'll always have competition for top talent—the performers your organization needs. Career development is still your greatest weapon—whether it's a war or just a tiff for talent that you're facing.

THE “THEM” IN HELP THEM GROW: WHO ARE THEY?

When we wrote the first edition of this book in 2012, we loosely used the word *employee* to refer to the bulk of the people who work for you. Fast-forward to today, and you're managing a complex talent ecosystem of resources. Sure, you have your full-time workforce, but you likely also lead part-time employees, project team members, contractors, consultants, interns, and more. Gig workers are also a significant economic and employment factor.

As the number of these nontraditional contributors grows, organizations and leaders are grappling with hard questions around effectiveness, access to development, resource allocation, and equity issues. Let us offer a simple and proactive solution: Help them all grow! It's time to take a more generous and democratic approach to growth. We know what you're thinking:

- ▶ Yes, gig workers may not be with you for long.
- ▶ Yes, the contingent workforce will build skills that they may pack up and take elsewhere.
- ▶ Yes, the same is true of your full-timers.

No longer are there lifetime employment guarantees or gold watches. You know it and so does your workforce. Today they're looking for other sources of security—skills, knowledge, and experiences. Offer these and—although there's no guarantee that people will stay longer—they'll be able to contribute more while they're with you. And you'll build an attractive employment brand in a competitive marketplace.

We'll still use the word *employee* throughout this book, but we strongly suggest that you read it as *everybody* and apply these ideas to the full range of people—regardless of employment status—with whom you work.

CAREER CONVERSATIONS ORGANIZATIONS NEED AND EMPLOYEES *STILL* WANT

So what's a leader to do? Plenty. And it might be easier than you expect.

Quality career development boils down to quality conversations.

Quality career development still boils down to quality conversations.

Throughout this book, we'll challenge you to reframe career development in such a way that responsibility rests squarely with the employee, allowing your role to be more about prompting, guiding, reflecting, exploring ideas, activating enthusiasm, and driving action. This means talking about rather than actually doing the heavy lifting of development.

We'll offer a framework for thinking about conversations that help others grow. It involves three distinct types of conversations: hindsight, foresight, and insight.

► Hindsight conversations help others look backward and inward to

determine who they are, where they've been, what they love, and where they excel. Chapters 3 and 4 provide questions and ideas for helping others look back as a basis for moving forward.

- ▶ Foresight conversations are designed to keep employees looking forward and outward toward changes, trends, and the ever-evolving big picture. Chapter 5 offers easy-to-use, straightforward tools that are long on value and short on your time investment.
- ▶ Leveraging the insights that surface from the convergence of hindsight and foresight is the focus of Chapters 6, 7, and 8. Where are there opportunities to carve out a space to grow and perform? How can we help others update their definitions of career success? Of the work that needs to be done, which activities will give people unique experiences and fodder for development? These are just some of the questions we'll take on in these chapters.
- ▶ But how can you make all of this happen at the speed of business? Chapter 9 outlines how to grow with the flow or embed development into everyday life through heightened awareness and fluid conversation strategies.
- ▶ In Chapter 10 we'll explore how to make all of this happen within the more challenging context of remote and hybrid working arrangements.

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

You're probably doing a pretty good job so far. Here are a few thoughts to get the most from the experience.

This book was written for anyone who has a role in developing others. The titles vary from organization to organization: supervisor, manager, director, team lead, project leader, vice president, CEO. Seasoned executives to first-time frontline leaders. Line and staff personnel. For-profit and nonprofit leaders. Small business owners. Readers have told us that the ideas we share apply equally well at home to the very human domain of parenting and even life in general.

We've chosen to use the term *leader* generically. Whenever you see it, *leader* means you.

This book is all about the career conversations employees still want. So we'll draw heavily upon the employee's voice. These are real individuals in the workplace whose eloquent insights make the point far better than we could. They aren't entitled whiners with unrealistic expectations. They're your solid citizens. The ones you count on to produce. The ones you're hoping will stick around.

► TRY THIS

Throughout the book, you'll find lots of questions and activities you can use with your employees. We'll call them out like this. Have an upcoming career conversation? Scan the pages for an exercise, tuck the book under your arm, and you're ready to go.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

You're somebody's employee too, right? And if you're like many managers, you get caught in the middle, doing the right thing for your employees but not necessarily having it done for you. As you read this book, you may find yourself thinking, *This sounds pretty good, but what about me?* Answer: do it yourself—do it for yourself! At least one time in each chapter, we'll turn the table and ask, "What about you?"

And keep in mind that the tools and questions throughout this book are highly flexible. Change *you* to *I*, and you're ready for some self-discovery. You might find it helpful to review the answers with someone at work or at home. Fresh eyes may pick up clues and offer a different perspective and new insights. Bottom line: as you invest in building skills to support your employees' development, don't be afraid to be selfish and apply what you're learning to yourself and your own career as well. You'll become a better career coach if you do.

We'll close each chapter with some what-ifs. We know that as a leader who's responsible for delivering business results, you must keep your feet planted firmly on the ground. So from that grounded position, take a moment to consider what just might be possible.

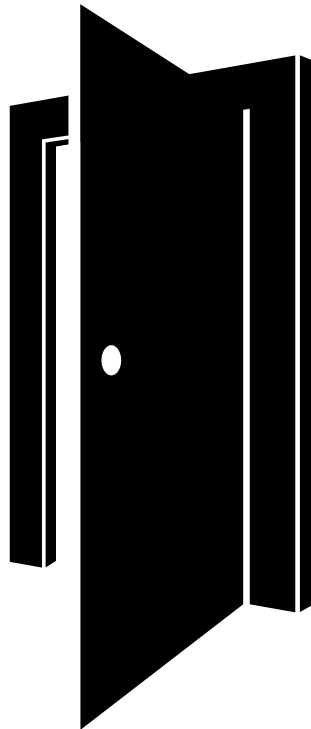
What IF...

- ▶ **you kept reading and tried out even one or two ideas from each chapter with your employees?**
-

They would grow.

— 1 —

Develop
Me or I'm
HISTORY!



Spending forty-sixty-eighty hours somewhere each week...I want it to mean something. I want to feel like I'm moving forward somehow. If I can't grow here, I've gotta look elsewhere.

—An employee (perhaps yours)

The decision to assume a leadership role in today's workplace comes with a front-row seat to some of the greatest business challenges of our time. Day in and day out, you must:

Do exponentially more with infinitely less. It's become cliché, but this reality permeates life at work as the vise continues to tighten—including around talent in many sectors. You've likely become a master at elevating quality while at the same time finding ways to reduce costs, time, and other resources below levels you ever imagined were possible. And the reward? Do even more with even less.

Navigate extraordinary levels of change, uncertainty, and complexity. The unknowns outnumber the knowns today. Yet others look to you for clarity and direction in an increasingly unpredictable environment. But it's not just business matters that are challenging. People matters are as well. Recent events have left many employees feeling uneasy and insecure. Add to that unprecedented levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout, and leaders are now in the complicated position of managing a mental health crisis.

Meet ever-expanding expectations. Every quarter, you're asked to do a little (or a lot) more. Bigger sales. Greater numbers of service interactions. More projects. Higher scores. Beyond stakeholders and executives, employees are expressing greater expectations as well. Today's employees are not shy about sharing their desire for a different relationship with work—one that offers more meaning, flexibility, balance, and learning. And they're holding their employers to new standards around social responsibility, justice, and other matters formerly not the domain of the workplace.

Deliver the next big thing. Most organizations believe that if they're not moving forward, they're sliding backward. Innovation gets its picture on business magazine covers because it represents the promise of greater success. Disruption (especially in the form of digital transformation and AI) is the name of the game, altering the job landscape—eliminating some roles, adding others, and promising to change the complexion of work for most of us in the years to come.

Engage the most diverse workforce in history. Never have we had more richness at work. But with that richness has come challenges with inclusion, equity, and belonging. When you add “hybrid” and “remote” to the list of demographic factors that define (and too often divide) us, then leaders must also grapple with creating authentic connection among and with workers who no longer operate in shared space and time.

Future-proof the workforce. In the face of today's accelerated change, the half-life of skills is quickly shrinking, threatening to render a significant portion of the workforce ill prepared (at best) or totally irrelevant (at worst) when it comes to meeting the challenges of future work. As a result, you're charged with upskilling, reskilling, and pre-skilling employees at a pace and on a scale never imagined.

And, no matter how long, hard, or smart you work, you can't do all of this alone. Success depends upon tapping the talents, strengths, and skills that everyone has to offer. (By *everyone*, remember, we're not just talking about full-time employees—the workforce has dramatically grown to include gig workers, contingent support, contractors and consultants, interns, and even externs.) So today, your success rests upon finding ways to continually expand everyone's capacity, engagement, and ability to contribute to the organization.

Our decades of experience working with hundreds of best-in-class leaders—those who consistently develop the most capable, flexible, and engaged teams able to drive exceptional business results—reveals that they all share one quality: they make career development a priority and a regular habit.

Career
development
is among the
most frequently
forgotten tool for
driving business
results...

yet

it's completely
within a leader's
sphere of **influence.**

A “HISTORY” LESSON

Even during challenging economic times, your best and brightest have options. Failing to help employees grow can lead them to resign and take their talents elsewhere. They become “history.” But what can be equally damaging as this talent drain are the employees who stay, quietly quitting and becoming increasingly disengaged. Their bodies show up for work every day, but their commitment has moved on.

So, if career development is a tool that can deliver what organizations need most—productivity gains, expense reduction, retention, quality improvements, innovation, and bottom-line results—why isn’t everyone using it?

DEFINING TERMS

Perhaps it’s frequently forgotten because the term *career development* strikes fear into many leaders’ hearts.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Take a moment to think about what career development means to you. What’s involved? What’s your role?

Whatever your answer, we’ll bet that ours is simpler. You see, many leaders are intimidated by or steer clear of career development because they have a mistaken, outdated, or overwhelming definition of the term. So try this definition on for size:

Career development is nothing more than helping others grow. And nothing less.

Helping others grow can take a nearly unlimited number of forms. On one end of the continuum, you help employees prepare for and move to new or expanded roles in obvious and visible ways. But far more frequently, growth shows up on the other end of the continuum, in small, subtle ways that quietly create greater challenge, interest, and satisfaction in a job.

The problem is that too often career development evokes images of forms, checklists, and deadlines. And let's be honest—the organization needs you to comply with these processes and systems to support important human resources, manpower, and succession planning work. But administrative compliance with paperwork and processes is *not* career development. Unfortunately, these artifacts too frequently overshadow the true art of development.

Genuine, meaningful, and sustainable career development occurs through the human act of conversation.

Whether it's a formal individual development planning (IDP) meeting or an on-the-fly connection, it's the quality of the conversation that matters most to employees. That's how they judge *your* performance and *their* development. And if they decide you're not helping them grow, they'll make the decision to go—physically, emotionally, or both.

AI VERSUS HI

Love it or hate it, artificial intelligence is here to stay—and changing the way work gets done in both subtle and profound ways. It's a powerful tool that has the potential to further democratize and personalize the experience of learning and development for employees. Greater access to opportunities across the entire organization versus the narrow selection of what might be available within one's department or silo. Targeted interventions that really deliver on the promise of “just-for-me” and “just-in-time” versus generic “come one, come all” programming. On-demand coaching for addressing tough career development challenges versus waiting for the next scheduled conversation.

Future generations will look back on this period as a renaissance of growth. But this golden age is not the exclusive domain of technology. Leaders will continue to play a vital role because

AI (artificial intelligence) is no match for HI (human interaction).

The digital recommendations, options, and guidance that are currently available—and that will only become more sophisticated, nuanced, and helpful over time—are important but incomplete inputs to the process of growth. Human interaction is required for people to make the most of these rich resources and use them to develop and grow. After all, it's humans rather than bots who are uniquely suited to help someone

- ▶ See themselves, their talents, and their potential as others see them
- ▶ Build contextual understanding so they can navigate the political and cultural landscape
- ▶ Feel safe enough to take risks and try something new
- ▶ Facilitate relationship building that will support success
- ▶ Enhance visibility through advocacy efforts
- ▶ Process experiences and translate them into learning
- ▶ Feel heard, seen, and genuinely valued by the leader and the organization

So take advantage of every digital tool available to support the growth of your employees. But know that genuine development is prompted less through AI queries and more through the HI that you, as a human, are uniquely suited to offer.

Careers
are
developed
one
conversation
at a time...

over time.

IMMOBILIZING MYTHS

So, if it really is as simple as just talking to people, why isn't career development a more common feature of the organizational landscape?

Over the years, leaders—by sharing oral history and spinning lore—have created and continue to propagate several myths. And these myths or beliefs keep them from having the very career conversations their employees want. Which are familiar to you?

Myth 1—There isn't enough time.

No one will argue that time is among the scarcest resources available to leaders today. But let's get real. You're having conversations already—probably all day long. What if you could redirect some of that time and redeploy some of those conversations to focus on careers and development?

Myth 2—I can't give them what they want.

This myth is based upon the assumption that everyone wants more, bigger, or better—things like promotions, raises, prestige, power. If you believe this, you likely view career development as a confounding no-win situation. Since these things you imagine others want are in woefully short supply, it's understandable that many leaders might avoid a potentially disappointing and demoralizing conversation. But based on our research, the fundamental assumption behind this response is patently inaccurate. Today's employees are looking for a different relationship with work—one that depends less upon the traditional trappings of career development and more on the experience of meaning, purpose, flexibility, challenge, balance, and more—all things a leader can help facilitate.

Myth 3—Why rock the boat?

If I don't talk about it, they may not think about it. Developing people increases the likelihood that they'll leave and upset the balance

of your well-running department, right? Wrong. Employees have growth on their minds—whether you address it or not. Withholding these conversations is a greater danger to the status quo than engaging in them.

Myth 4—Employees are responsible for their careers.

Employees must own the development of their careers. Full stop. If they're not in the driver's seat, the vehicle isn't going anywhere. But that doesn't mean that leaders are off the hook. You have an essential role as navigational support, helping others steer their career development toward success. And that role plays out in large part through conversation.

Myth 5—The learning and development professionals will take care of that.

Organization-sponsored training is a rich and valuable resource. And considering the urgent skills shortages facing many organizations, assigning an employee to a workshop or webinar could be an essential next step. But formal programs are just the tip of the iceberg. Informal opportunities and growth experiences within the workflow abound. Whether formal or informal, though, don't be lulled into thinking that your obligation is satisfied once the activity is assigned. Your partnership throughout the process will help employees turn learning into actionable career development.

If you're like most leaders, a few of these myths likely resonate with you. Dog-ear or bookmark this page and come back to it after you've completed the book. We predict that when you are introduced to a different way of looking at your role, you may also look at career development and these myths a little differently.

But, until then, remember this: growing the business means growing people. Forget that—and the rest is history.

What IF...

- ▶ you reframed and expanded how you think about career development?
 - ▶ the business challenges leaders face could actually provide opportunities for growth?
 - ▶ leaders could break through the myths that undermine their success and their employees' growth?
-