

# TRUE NORTH

In today's workplace climate, career advisory has gone beyond the simple act of placing clients into job roles. It has become an intricate art of helping clients navigate workplace complexities and interweaving that closely with an individual's beliefs, values and principles. As a career practitioner, you are tasked with the all-important role of helping one find meaning and fulfilment in their career. You are instrumental in their search for a purpose-driven life; for their **TRUE NORTH**.

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## WSG CAREER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (CDF) CREDENTIAL



**W** Career  
Development  
Framework

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Career  
Advisor

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Career  
Practitioner

Certified  
Career Clinical  
Supervisor

Certified  
Career Services  
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WSG is happy to share that application to the credentials under the WSG Career Development Framework (CDF) is now open.

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- ✓ Gives clients assurance that you abide by the Code of Ethics for Career Professionals
- ✓ Lists you as a certified career professional on WSG's website
- ✓ Priority enrolment to WSG's continuing professional development (CPD) programmes
- ✓ Further 20% subsidy off the application fee to attend WSG's CPD programmes
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## IN THE PIPELINE

### **Career Advisory Programme (CAP)**

**Jun Intake:** 13 Jun 2022  
(Application closes: 3 May 2022)

**Jul Intake:** 25 Jul 2022  
(Application closes: 14 Jun 2022)

### **Career Facilitation Programme (CFP)**

**Jun Intake:** 13 Jun–12 Aug 2022  
(Application closes: 2 May 2022)

**Jul Intake:** 6 Jul–30 Aug 2022  
(Application closes: 23 May 2022)

### **Career Supervision Programme (CSP)**

**Jul Intake:** 4–6 Jul 2022  
(Application closes: 16 May 2022)

### **Career Advisory Programme Assessment Pathway (CAP AOP)**

**Jul Intake:** 18 Jul 2022  
(Application closes: 30 May 2022)

## HAVE A MOMENT?

We're always looking for ideas and ways to improve *TRUE NORTH*. We would love to hear from you!

This short survey will take about 6 mins to complete. Your input will help shape future *TRUE NORTH* issues.

Take the survey here:  
[go.gov.sg/  
true-north-survey](https://go.gov.sg/true-north-survey)



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## FROM THE CASE CHEST

# Back-To-Work Mum



Having left the workforce 5 years ago to take care of her new-born, Jane (not her real name) was set to return to the workforce now that her son is older and entering preschool. However, the former stay-at-home mom had trepidations as to where she will fit in the corporate hierarchy in today's world.

Jane, in her late 40s, was clear about her career goals to return to similar level of work and was only open to jobs that she deems matches her previous professional status. However, her confidence to return to the workforce quickly dissipated when she experienced low success rate in securing interviews.

Jane reached out to Workforce Singapore (WSG) for help and was assigned to Ingeus Singapore, a career matching provider of WSG. Mei Ling, her Coaching & Development Specialist was on hand to help her identify the challenges and provide the necessary interventions.

**Firstly**, Jane has the belief that with her age and employment gap, the next job must be of a lower position and salary. Coupled with her low success rate, her confidence lowered drastically, and she became deeply discouraged.

**Secondly**, Mei Ling also noticed that Jane was experiencing a certain degree of emotional conflict where she felt guilty for abandoning her son to return to the workforce.

**Thirdly**, Jane was having difficulties branding herself and felt uncomfortable articulating her competencies as she felt it would be boastful and conflicted with her self-identify.

Together, Jane and Mei Ling started by discussing and working through Jane's reflections on her decision, desires, and goals to return to the workforce. This helped Jane gained career clarity on the purpose of returning to work.

To help boost Jane's confidence, Mei Ling taught and practiced with Jane the various techniques to answer interview questions, and other job search and networking skills. Mei Ling also shared similar success stories of other back-to-work women who had successfully returned to the workforce and stayed happily employed.

## OUTCOMES

About four months into the job search journey, Jane disappeared on Mei Ling due to the discouragement caused by the lack of interview results and a growing self-doubt. However, Mei Ling did not give up and reconnected with Jane; encouraged her to refocus on her job search and secured Jane's commitment to the process.

Mei Ling also guided Jane on how to tackle challenging interview questions and arranged multiple practice sessions, injecting a boost to Jane's confidence in answering them during job interview. Shortly thereafter, Jane successfully secured a job equivalent to the mid-managerial level when she left the workforce 5 years ago, with a higher pay!



Contributed by  
**Wong Mei Ling**  
Coaching & Development  
Specialist  
Ingeus Pte Ltd  
WSG CDF Certified Career  
Practitioner (CCP)

## FURTHER READINGS:

>> [How To Beat Age Bias In Your Job Search: 3 Techniques](#)

>> [Working Mums: 3 Mothers Share How and Why They Return to Work](#)

>> [4 Ways to Overcome That Gap on Your Resume](#)

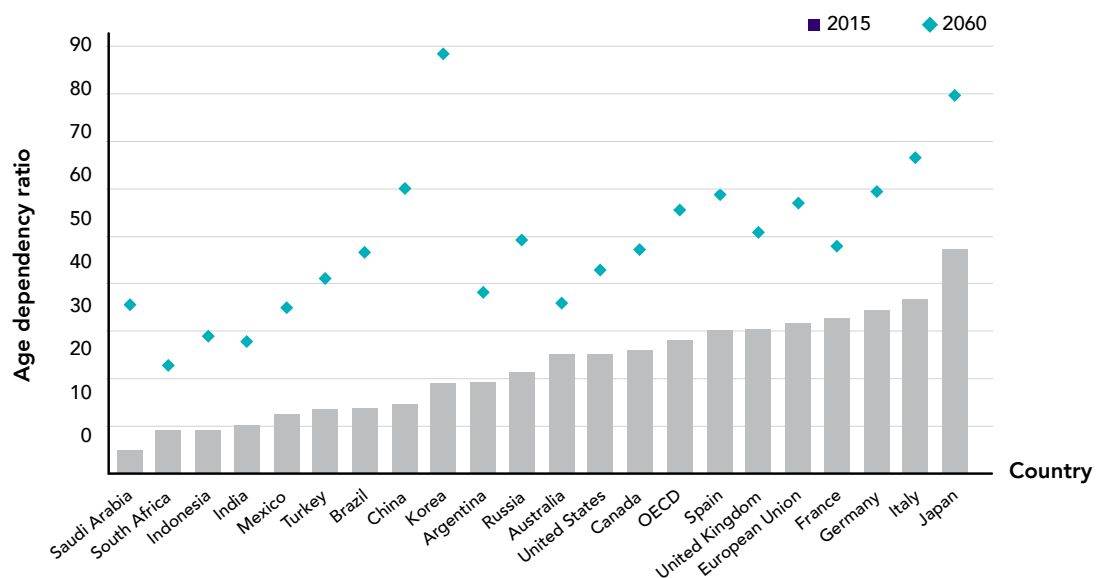


## MAIN ARTICLE

# Career Development and Human Resource Management of Older Workers: A Scoping Review

This article was extracted from the *Australian Journal of Career Development*, Volume 30, Issue 3, 2021. It is accessible to all WSG CDF Credential holders. Read more about the credentialing benefits here: <https://go.gov.sg/cdf-credential>

A higher life expectancy combined with lower birth rates and mortality rates resulted in ageing population globally. By 2060, the old-age dependency ratio (measurement of dependents aged zero to 14 and over the age of 65, compared with the total population aged 15 to 64) is projected to at least double in all G20 countries.



Career development initiatives directed at long-term employability will become an increasingly important issue for organisations that need to retain older workers to mitigate labour and skill shortage problems as the recruitment pool of the future will be composed of more older workers than younger workers.

There has been a trend in Australia and other Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries (e.g., Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom) to encourage older workers to delay retirement and work for longer. Research has shown that career development improves the employability of older workers, enhances their work engagement, and provides incentives or them to delay retirement.

The Singapore government has also in recent years been increasing the retirement and re-employment age of senior workers. Employers are also encouraged to engage in structured career planning sessions for workers who are 45 years old and 55 years old. Conversations at age 45 can be centred on their future career plans and potential support from the company, while those conducted at age 55 can focus on the relevant skills needed for the re-employment.

The current research evidence indicates career development can support governments and organisations' workforce retention agendas and keep older workers engaged with their jobs.

15 studies were examined, and all found that career development supports older workers to remain at work. Career development was associated with increased career satisfaction, perception of organisational support, increased work engagement, value for lifelong learning, job enrichment, improved self-esteem, better employability, and more opportunities for promotions.

## SYNTHESIS FINDINGS

The main barriers for organisations to implement career development are constricting older workers to age-bound perspective of their career longevity, rapid technological and organisational change, incompatibility between conventional vertical career progression and extended careers in the same job.

Six major themes emerged from the various studies.

### 1. Definition of career development for older workers is evolving



There was a diverse range of definitions of career development for older workers. In the late 2000s and early 2010s, it was commonly defined as learning new skills, being offered promotion opportunities, and being provided with a clear career path within an organisation. In the mid-2010s, there was a shift to focus on the individual's responsibility for their own career development and progression within organisations. There was also increased calls for organisations and older workers to engage in a shared dialogue about the utility and effectiveness of career development as a part of HRM practices. In the late 2010s, there was greater focus on career development as a means to develop an inclusive workplace culture and HRM strategy to improve the employability of older workers.

### 2. Career development benefitted organisations and older workers



In times of labour and skill shortages, existing career development initiatives helped organisations to retain experienced older workers and reduce turnover intentions through employee engagement, organisational commitment, participation in learning and development, and career adaptability. HRM strategies such as career customisation and horizontal career pathways within the same organisation empowered older workers to feel a sense of ownership and agency over their own career development; thus, improving older workers' chances of achieving career longevity, getting bonuses and promotions.

### 3. Challenges with implementing career development for older workers



Career development initiatives should be made accessible, feasible, and attractive to older workers, such as hands-on and self-paced learning, equal accessibility for older and younger workers, etc. However, the implementation of a 'user-friendly' design takes time and resources, and the results may not be immediate, which may be a deterrent factor for organisation. In addition, organisations need to ensure that managers have the skills and expertise to respond to older workers' needs. This can be challenging because it can be difficult to tell whether the needs stem from individual bias or systemic barriers.

### 4. Career development as a means to promote inclusive and sustainable workplaces



All studies recommended career development as a useful HRM practice to support older workers to extend their working lives. Career development helps older workers to transit to more suitable jobs as they age, incentivise retraining and upskilling, improve employability, and instil a sense of collective purpose in working at an organisation. It was recommended that organisations be more open to consider horizontal career development pathways for older workers as it has the potential to broaden the definition of career development for older workers, normalise the concept of employability as a measure of career success, and discourage organisations from judging older workers based on how far they have 'climbed up the career ladder'.

### 5. Limited qualitative and mixed methods studies



Most of the selected studies used quantitative research methodologies. Studies found that career development incentivised and supported older workers to remain at work, yet organisations rarely provided them for older workers. Qualitative studies should be used to examine these issues in some depth, such as the challenges that organisations experience in implementing career development initiatives and provided recommendations on how to overcome those challenges etc.

### 6. Overrepresentation of age-neutral and individual-focused theoretical frameworks



Most of the studies used age-neutral and individual-focused theoretical frameworks to guide their research designs, e.g. how individual manages job demands and personal resources, how they develop attachment to their organisation, etc. Most of these theoretical frameworks can be applied to older workers but few considered how the ageing process affects career development (i.e. ageing theory and lifespan career stage theory). There were some relational-focused theoretical frameworks (e.g. social exchange and the norm of reciprocity). Only one study used organisation-focused theoretical frameworks (i.e. workforce retention management and workplace diversity management), which were explicitly about older workers.

## CONCLUSION

Recent studies suggest a need for shared responsibility between older workers and organisations when implementing career development as a part of HRM strategy. Long-term and proactive planning is required to integrate career development as a part of HRM practices for older workers.

This is challenging because it requires organisations to make investments in skills and lifelong learning, as well as offer and tailor career development opportunities for older workers that can empower and equip their workforce to fully participate in today's economy and society. However, this has the potential to improve work engagement, employability, and learning capabilities of older workers.

Governments can also play an important role in facilitating this process either by supporting such initiatives at workplaces or starting new programmes targeted at career development for currently employed older workers.

## Food for Thought

With the raised retirement age and re-employment age, late career planning will become more common and mainstream. How should career practitioners and advisors in Singapore help our aging workforce proactively plan their late career? And how should HR personnel embed career development practices within their organisations?

**Source:** Irene Mok, Lynette Mackenzie, Kate Thomson (2021). Career development and human resource management of older workers: A scoping review. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 30(3), 226–239. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10384162211069208>

## Further Readings



[Career Development And Human Resource Management Of Older Workers: A Scoping Review](#)



[The Talent Revolution: Longevity and the Future of Work](#)



**Help us to better help you!**

Share with us your [interest](#) to attend a Masterclass on "The Talent Revolution" and we will notify you when we run it!



## IN CONVERSATION

Following the last issue of TRUE NORTH where we shared how WSG is tapping on big data to better diagnose jobseekers' barriers to employment, we have interviewed WSG's Principal Career Coach and Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to share more insights and experiences on the use and development of the Career Health Index (CHI).

## Career Health Index (CHI) Model with BCG and Career Coach



### How did BCG conceptualise the Career Health Index model and the 4 dimensions of CHI?

The objective behind the Career Health Index (CHI) model was to complement the coaches' thinking and intuition through a data backed approach. The CHI model helps to improve their understanding and drives job seeker employability.

We worked closely with WSG, to map the jobseeker archetypes and their job search journey, understanding global best practices as well as the local context, and leveraged a wide range of internal and external data to build a holistic 360-degree view of an individual's career health to arrive at 4 dimensions i.e., i) Background and circumstances, ii) Ability and Hard Skills, iii) Mindset and Soft Skills and iv) job market situation.

### What are some key learnings from developing the model from BCG's perspective?

Jobseekers often struggle to articulate what they need or want, and coaches are stretched to understand how to best help them. Hence, we conducted deep ethnographic research to understand the jobseekers' journey, challenges and needs. The biggest learning from this exercise was that Career Health is not a factor of hard skills alone, mindset also plays a major role.

Next is how to get the data right. The CHI model helps to deliver a comprehensive picture to enable the coaches. We leveraged data from multiple sources and curated this using sophisticated text algorithms like NLP (Natural Language Processing), predictive modelling and validation with alternative sources of information. In the future, better case management practices can help to continuously improve the machine learning model over time.

Third, it's important to supplement with on the ground coaches' experience. Hence in addition to getting the coaches' perspective during the initial design, the CHI model was piloted via an agile tool to verify its accuracy. The results of the pilot were quite encouraging. It helped coaches support jobseekers better and identify specific interventions to improve employability in the short term, as well as the long term.

The CHI model is only the first step and opens the gateway to many more applications of data in the realm of the future of coaching, employment, and upskilling.

### **With the development of the initial CHI model completed, what do you think CHI 2.0 should look like? Are there any other areas of employment facilitation that could benefit from using data models?**

The current version of the CHI model was designed primarily to support coaches. In its future iteration, we see the model evolving into a user-friendly version that can potentially be scaled up and used directly by individuals to assess their career health.

Lastly, it's important to continue refining the machine learning model as we collate more data to streamline the workload for the coaches, while driving greater benefits for the jobseekers.

### **Additionally, can you share your experience working with WSG on developing such data models that helps complement how employment facilitation?**

CHI is potentially a game-changer for jobseekers, coaches, and policymakers.

In the future, jobseekers can proactively use CHI for self-discovery of career health / employability, plan career move, explore career switch and proactive upskilling.

For WSG and career practitioners, it can enable coaches to unpack employment barriers, provide more effective and personalised interventions/recommendations, and measure the impact of interventions rendered to jobseekers. Lastly, it can also provide essential inputs for policy formulation in employment facilitation.



**Mr Jason Low Kok Soon**

Principal Career Coach (Lead)  
Workforce Singapore

WSG CDF Certified Career  
Clinical Supervisor (CCCS) &  
Certified Career Practitioner  
(CCP)

#### **Please provide a brief intro of yourself and your role in WSG.**

I am a certified career practitioner and certified career clinical supervisor, with more than 10 years of experience in career coaching, with supervisory responsibilities in the last 5 years.

The career guidance of our clients is based on a framework which considers clients' background, education, competencies, previous work experience, and sector that the client is keen to enter as well as assessment of the client's state of readiness or adaptability to the environment. This is also known as client's mindset, prejudices, assumptions, motivation, and confidence. Based on this framework, I will map out the profile of the client (case conceptualisation) before co-creating a set of possible interventions with the client.

As part of my supervisory role, I guide coaches across a spectrum of experience and I am also a facilitator for WSG's Career Facilitation Programme and Career Advisory Programme. In my coaching conversation with coaches, we often use common language to discuss our cases. The implementation of the Career Health Index (or CHI in short) has further enhanced the way I supervise and develop our coaches.

#### **How long have you and your team started using CHI?**

We have been using CHI since early 2020. Prior to CHI, coaches adopted the SEED (Structured Evaluation Employability Diagram) methodology to gather clients' background. We also applied a variety of career theories and coaching tools such as Person-Centered Theory, Schlossberg's 4S Model and Motivational Interviewing to design the most suitable approach to support our clients' needs.

#### **How has CHI helped you and your team enable jobseekers in their job search journey?**

With the implementation of CHI, we are now able to determine employment barriers such as resilience and adaptability more clearly in a structured manner. This allows us to better customise interventions to support our clients. Adopting the CHI model also helps to create a common set of terminology among the coaches and this helps to facilitate case discussion and training, paving the way for better case management.

The CHI model continues to evolve, and it will improve as we continue to enhance the data that we use to train the model. I look forward to the day when a matured CHI model would enable coaches to recommend even more effective interventions that lead to best outcome for our jobseekers. This will help us in partnering our jobseekers in their career journey.