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LEADERSHIP PLAYBOOK

Your ~~Survival~~ Success Guide to
Career-Critical Moments

CREATE THE CAREER YOU WANT, ONE PLAY AT A TIME

When you encounter a career-critical moment... run the play





TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Lead Your Career - Start Here

PLAY 1) PULSE SURVEY

PLAY 2) CAREER OBJECTIVE SETTING

PLAY 3) LEAD GOAL SETTING DISCUSSIONS

PLAY 4) CLARIFY YOUR DRIVE

Leading Self

PLAY 5) LEAVE WORK AT WORK

PLAY 6) BOUNDARY SETTING CHECKLIST

PLAY 7) DECISION-MAKING PROTOCOL

PLAY 8) RIGHT-ON-TIME RESET

Leading Others

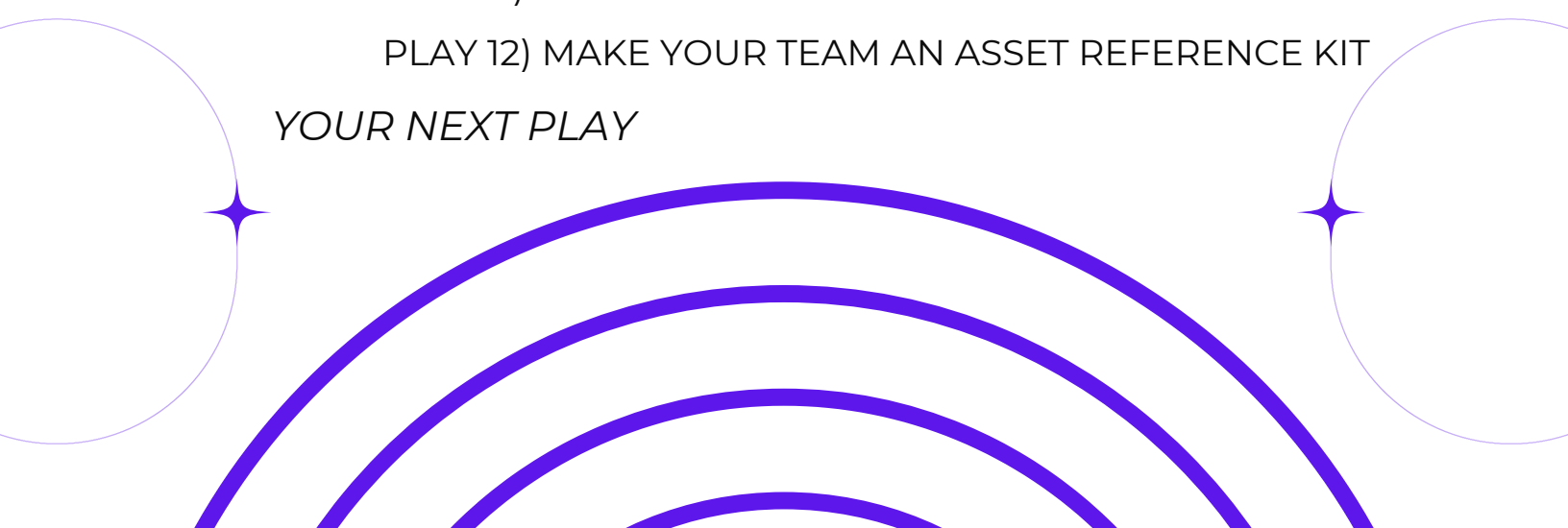
PLAY 9) LEADERSHIP STYLE PROFILER

PLAY 10) LEADING THROUGH TRANSITIONS

PLAY 11) MAXIMIZE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

PLAY 12) MAKE YOUR TEAM AN ASSET REFERENCE KIT

YOUR NEXT PLAY



INTRODUCTION

THE LEADERSHIP PLAYBOOK

Business is changing faster than ever, and the skills required for long-term success continue to evolve. Without an intentional approach to your career, it's easy to spend your time reacting to change instead of creating opportunities through it.

You were meant for more.

This moment can become the turning point where you begin leading your career with intention.

Your unique skills and experience have prepared you to make a meaningful impact through your work. Now it's time to design your career on your terms and thrive in a changing world of work.

DESIGNED TO THRIVE IN YOUR CAREER

You may be committed to creating more success and satisfaction in your career, but unsure what to do next to make it happen. "If only there were a playbook to follow..."

Inside you'll find practical plays for the career-critical moments that shape your career.

Each play is designed to help you navigate those moments with greater confidence and clarity.

Turn to the play that best matches the challenge, opportunity, or decision you're facing.

Start with the play that best fits your current situation, then return to the others as your career continues to evolve.

This Playbook is designed for action and results. Don't move on until you've run the play.

Let's begin.

Cheri



PULSE SURVEY

ASSESS WHERE YOU ARE

Beyond your organization's engagement survey, pause to take stock of your own career and life. What's going well? What isn't? This pulse survey is the first step toward intentionally creating what's next. Rate each area on a scale of 1-10, then identify what you want to change to move one step closer to where you want to be. Don't overthink your ratings. Your first instinct is usually your most honest one.

CAREER

WORKING WELL

Consider these dimensions:

- Content of work
- Level of work
- Level of skill
- Level of rewards
- Level of job security

NOT WORKING

Consider these dimensions:

- Content of work
- Level of work
- Level of skill
- Level of rewards
- Level of job security

DO DIFFERENTLY

What I will

- think
 - feel
 - do
- differently to achieve the different results I want next

HEALTH

WORKING WELL

Consider these dimensions:

- Physical fitness
 - Nutrition / Hydration
 - Movement
 - Sleep
- Emotional wellness
- Spirituality

NOT WORKING

Consider these dimensions:

- Physical fitness
 - Nutrition / Hydration
 - Movement
 - Sleep
- Emotional wellness
- Spirituality

DO DIFFERENTLY

What I will

- think
 - feel
 - do
- differently to achieve the different results I want next

RELATIONSHIPS

WORKING WELL

Consider these dimensions:

- Partner
- Children
- Friends
- Family
- Community

NOT WORKING

Consider these dimensions:

- Partner
- Children
- Friends
- Family
- Community

DO DIFFERENTLY

What I will

- think
 - feel
 - do
- differently to achieve the different results I want next

CAREER OBJECTIVE SETTING

SET YOUR DIRECTION

Your organization likely has a process for setting business objectives. But when was the last time you intentionally set objectives for your own career? Without a clear direction, days, quarters, and even years can pass while the business moves forward, but your career doesn't.

Now it's your turn. Set specific objectives across these four dimensions using the examples below as inspiration. If you completed Play 1, consider the objectives that would bring each area closer to a 10.

INCREASED EXCELLENCE

- Performance ratings
- Business results generated
- Expanded impact
- Skill mastery
- Prioritization
- Swift decision making
- Compelling personal branding
- High-ROI calendar design

INCREASED EASE

- Honor ideal schedule of working hours
- Intentional breaks to recharge
- Blocked time for deep, strategic work
- Resolve internal conflict
- Lead effectively and manage horizontally
- Resolve interpersonal conflict
- Routines for better wellness
- Work / Life synergy

INCREASED EARNINGS

- Manage up
- Promotion of title
- Compensation target
- Content of work
- Scope of role
- Size of team
- Autonomy
- Flexibility

INCREASED ENJOYMENT

- Time off targets
- Travel plans
- Hobbies
- Protected quality time with others
- Clarified purpose
- Increased fulfillment
- Active management of mindset
- Curated experience of work / life

LEAD THE DISCUSSION GOAL SETTING

AS A LEADER AND CONTRIBUTOR

If you lead people, you'll likely have this conversation from both sides of the table. Don't assume your goals, contributions, or aspirations are already understood. Use both sides of this page to prepare for each role and make the most of this conversation. Great goal-setting conversations don't document expectations. They shape what's possible. Set the tone for year-end results now!

LEADER

THE MISSION

Create clarity around what success looks like and help your team member believe they can achieve it.

ACTION PLAN

- Explicitly state all goals and ways of delivering required to meet expectations
- Make sought after outcomes objectively observable so nothing is left to interpretation
- If feedback from stakeholders on the manner in which they delivered these results are important, note it
- Set the system for checking in on progress throughout the year - the format, forum, frequency
- Clarify the responsibility lies with the team member to push updates to meet these expectations
- If the bar has been raised, be crystal clear about what this team member must do to meet expectations in this new paradigm
- Sell the team member on why these goals are important to the organization and to their career

CONTRIBUTOR

THE MISSION

Know how to be successful in your role, how to recognize success, and meet or surpass expectations

ACTION PLAN

- Use this conversation to clarify your path toward your career goals, including promotion, compensation, expanded scope, and new opportunities.
- Ask for what you want by setting it as a goal for this year
- Frame it in a business-first benefit to the organization manner, i.e. your impact grows and then your career grows, what's in it for your leader
- Ask how feasible your leader believes that timing is
- Ask what other goals you need to have to make it happen
- Propose your ideas for how to achieve your goals for their feedback
- Give your leader something thoughtful to react to
- Ask if there are opportunities or exposure that you should be raising your hand for

CLARIFY YOUR DRIVE

FOR CLARITY AND MOMENTUM

When you feel stuck, stalled, or caught in procrastination, work through these questions to reconnect with what matters most and move forward with intention. Willpower may help you start, but a compelling reason why will help you keep going. The strongest motivation comes from knowing exactly why your goal matters to you.

SITUATION

What area of your work or life are you procrastinating or feeling stuck?

What is your ideal vision for this area of work and life? Be as descriptive as you can.

Why is achieving this vision important to you? List as many reasons as you can think of.

How is this critically important to you, your future, your identity / how you see yourself? Why does it feel big?

CAUSE

Do you love your reasons for having this drive to create this vision? Are they truly yours?

Why do you sometimes resist or avoid what you know would move you closer to your vision? Is fear or doubt in the way?

If you don't take action that moves you closer to your vision, what will be the outcome? What will remain the same? What will worsen?

How would you feel about that outcome created by inaction? Be as descriptive as you can.

IMPACT

Where will embracing the drive lead you? What will be that outcome? Be as specific as you can.

How would you feel about this outcome after following your drive? Be as descriptive as you can.

What decision will you make and what action will you take right now to embrace your drive?

Why would you want to make this choice for you right now?

COMMIT

How do you feel when you honor your drive, even when there is fear or doubt?

What do you believe about yourself now that you didn't before? Be specific.

In what other areas of work and life will this benefit you? Be as descriptive as you can.

What commitment will you make so this becomes part of who you are, not just something you do?



LEAVE WORK AT WORK

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ENJOYING TIME OFF

When you step away from work for the evening, the weekend, or vacation, your body may be present, but your mind may still be at the office.

You replay a difficult conversation. Worry about a reorganization. Think about an upcoming layoff. Stress over missed goals. Wonder how you'll possibly get everything done.

Meanwhile, the people you care about most are sitting right beside you, but they don't get the best version of you.

Use this framework to make the business case for fully disconnecting so you can return rested, focused, and ready to perform at your best.

Rest is not the reward for great work. Rest is part of how great work happens.

CLARITY

- **Logic** - rest and recharge fully to perform better upon your return
- **Empathy** - do it for the people you care about, to deeply connect with those whom you value more than achievement
- **Identity** - do it for the future you to avoid regrets of not living a full life alongside a successful career

MINDSET

- **Sustainable Performance** - is the true goal, because burnout is bad for careers and bad for business
- **Delegating** - develops others while multiplying your impact
- **Recovery Routine** - like any asset, and every person, you require maintenance to perform your best

ACTION

- **Set Boundaries** - Communicate your availability, emergency contact info, and who to contact while you're away
- **Mindful Relaxation** - Interrupt your stress response and fully decompress
- **Tie Workday In A Bow** - End the day by identifying tomorrow's top 3 priorities so your mind can be done for today

BOUNDARY SETTING CHECKLIST

GOOD FOR YOU, COLLEAGUES, & THE BUSINESS

Boundaries are decisions you make ahead of time that help you perform at your best. They protect your time for your highest ROI work, create clear expectations, and reduce unnecessary friction for everyone involved. Use these examples as a starting point. Adapt them to fit your role, your values, and the standards you want to live by. You don't need every boundary. Start with the one that would make the biggest difference this week. Each takes on a specific challenge, poses a question, and offers a boundary script in the form of an "If... / Then I..." statement.

TIME

PHONE CALLS

- 1.C: Constant phone interruptions
- 2.Q: Who will I pick up the phone for?
- 3.I/TI: If someone who is not on my list of VIPs calls while I am working on my top priority, then I will let them leave a message so that later I can decide when to respond after evaluating against my current priorities

REAL-TIME

- 1.C: Spending much time responding to messages, emails, and visits from colleagues on their timeframe
- 2.Q: What is the best use of my time?
- 3.I/TI: If someone wants to reach me when I am advancing my top priority, then I will respond when I am free.

ADMINISTRATIVE

- 1.C: Drowning in overhead tasks
- 2.Q: How will I prioritize deep, strategic work in my day?
- 3.I/TI: If I have overhead or administrative tasks to be done, then I will schedule them after my protected time for deep work on strategic tasks that move our business forward.

BACK-TO-BACKS

- 1.C: I loathe being in back to back meetings, but that is every day
- 2.Q: Am I willing to break the habit of accepting all meetings?
- 3.I/TI: If I receive meeting requests not in my working hours, or without a clear agenda, or not a good use of my time, or that conflicts with holds for deep work / breaks, then I decline.

OTHERS

WORKLOAD

- 1.C: Assigned increasing amounts of work
- 2.Q: What will I say yes to?
- 3.I/TI: If I am asked to take on a new task, then I will note to my leader which one of my current responsibilities will be stopped or slowed in order to accommodate, and my stack rank of priorities & timeframes.

SHIFTING FOCUS

- 1.C: We don't stick with one priority through completion around here
- 2.Q: How do I want to let changes in priorities impact me and my work?
- 3.I/TI: If priorities are changed from above, then I will point out the cost / benefit of doing so. If it holds, then I will disagree and commit.

VENTING

- 1.C: Drained from others' venting
- 2.Q: Am I here to make people comfortable or make things better?
- 3.I/TI: If someone starts to vent to me, then I will respond with "I could see how you could feel that way, what can you do next to make things better?" later followed by, "I've got to get back to work."

CONFLICT

- 1.C: I am spoken to unprofessionally with a raised voice
- 2.Q: What behavior will I tolerate?
- 3.I/TI: If someone speaks to me unprofessionally, then I will end the conversation by noting "When you are ready to speak to each other respectfully so that we can partner to help the business, we can discuss then."

PERSONAL

CATCHING UP

- 1.C: I have to catch up on work at night and on weekends
- 2.Q: When will my working hours be enough?
- 3.I/TI: If I have more to do at the end of the day, then I set my priorities to pick up the next morning and I rest until then. If I am given more work, then I still only work X hours a day.

SELF-CARE

- 1.C: My work is so important that I can't take care of myself, there is no opportunity to fit it in
- 2.Q: What self-care is non-negotiable to keep me performing at the highest level?
- 3.I/TI: If I am due for health appointments, meals, and breaks, then I take them to work at my best.

MISSING OUT

- 1.C: My work is so demanding that I miss important milestones for my spouse or children
- 2.Q: At end of life, will I have wished I worked more and skipped that personal event?
- 3.I/TI: If I have a milestone for a family member, then I shift my work so that I can be present for that event.

TIME OFF

- 1.C: I don't take my time off because it's too painful to catch up when I return and what's the point because even when I am off, I am working
- 2.Q: What else is important to me in life beyond work?
- 3.I/TI: If I take time off, then I delegate to others to cover me until I return.

DECISION -MAKING PROTOCOL

ASSESS. DECIDE. COMMIT.

The quality of your career is shaped by the quality of your decisions. Use this framework whenever you're facing a meaningful decision so you can move forward with greater clarity and confidence. You don't need every step every time. Use the ones that help you reach clarity, then commit fully to your decision. Indecision has a cost. Progress comes from making thoughtful decisions and fully committing to them.

1 OPTIONS OUT

- List all viable options.
- Generate more options before narrowing down.
- Define pros and cons 1 year and 5 years out.
- Estimate the probability of each outcome.

2 PRIORITIZE

- Define your criteria.
- Stack rank based on what is most important to you.

3 WORST-CASE

- Name the worst case scenario.
- Decide how you would handle it.
- Remind yourself that you can handle difficult outcomes.

4 CONSTRAINTS

- If time and money were not an issue what would you do?
- If no one was watching what would you do?

5 INNER WISDOM

- If you choose Option A, what would the future version of you who chose Option B want you to know? And vice versa?
- Is there an option C with the best of both?

6 FUTURE SELF

- Imagine your future of your dreams and looking back to now.
- What would that version of you tell you to do here and now?

7 DECIDE

- Set a deadline.
- Make the decision.

8 TAKE ACTION

- Send the message.
- Book the meeting.
- Sign the document.

9 MAKE IT RIGHT

- Commit fully.
- Create momentum.
- Confidence grows through action.

RIGHT-ON-TIME RESET

RESET YOUR EXPECTATIONS TO PERFORM AT YOUR BEST

Use this reset at the beginning of your workday, whenever you're evaluating your career progress, or anytime you notice yourself rushing toward the future instead of engaging with today.

This exercise calms your nervous system so you can think more clearly, make better decisions, notice opportunities, and perform at your best. When you're grounded in the present, both your performance and your enjoyment of work improve. When you feel behind, your thinking narrows. This reset helps you regain perspective before taking action.

RESET QUESTIONS

How am I right on time within the bigger picture?

- How might this moment be serving me?
- What are all the ways that "all is well" right here and right now?
- What are all the things that are going right?
- How are things coming together in my favor?
- How am I better off because of what just happened?
- How do I have everything I need in this moment?
- How is where I am now enough?
- What are all the ways that I am competent?

What benchmark am I using to assess my progress?

- How have I progressed when I look back to where I was before?
- What am I learning?
- How am I growing?
- How is what I have accomplished enough for right now?

Why do I choose my current role today?

- What are the benefits to me?
- What are my reasons for showing up?
- What is in my control right now?
- Why does this make perfect sense as my decision today?

RESET BELIEFS

I am right on time and all is well.

- It takes as long as it takes.
- I'm exactly where I need to be to take my next step.
- It's time to accept what's happening now and recognize all the good in this moment
- I choose to enjoy the journey, not just the destination.
- I believe it is done before I see it.

I measure progress against where I was before.

- If I want to move forward, the fastest way is from where I am now
- Practice makes progress.
- I'll be learning and growing my way to that goal.

I am free to make the choice that is best for me daily.

- Every day I choose what has the highest ROI for me.



LEADERSHIP STYLE PROFILER

KNOW AND ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE

Start by identifying your own leadership style, then consider the styles of your key stakeholders. Once you know your audience, you can communicate in ways they naturally receive best. That's how you gain buy-in, build trust, and hold the room. People don't resist ideas they understand. They resist ideas that weren't communicated in a way that resonates with them.

STRATEGIC VISIONARY

STRENGTHS

- Big Picture
- Charisma
- Innovative

AVERSIONS

- Logistics
- Timelines
- Structure

MOTIVATE

Paint the vision and spark curiosity about what's possible

MODE

Kinesthetic - Action-oriented, experiential demo

RATIONAL THINKER

STRENGTHS

- Logical
- Analytical
- Data-Driven

AVERSIONS

- Distraction
- Emotion
- Enrolling Others

MOTIVATE

Use facts, data, and evidence to reach a logical conclusion

MODE

Quantified - Data analysis and specs of inputs & outputs

EMPATHETIC CONNECTOR

STRENGTHS

- Emotion
- Inclusion
- Relationships

AVERSIONS

- Business Case
- Conflict
- Change

MOTIVATE

Create buy-in by showing benefits to the people and the business

MODE

Auditory - Talk it through together with room to reflect

ORGANIZED MANAGER

STRENGTHS

- Planning
- Execution
- Details

AVERSIONS

- Brainstorming
- Chaos
- Uncertainty

MOTIVATE

Provide a structured plan with clear milestones

MODE

Visual - Share the plan and offer reference material

LEADING THROUGH TRANSITIONS

LAYOFFS / REORGANIZATIONS AS OPPORTUNITY

Whether you're leading through a layoff / reorganization / merger & acquisition, supporting a colleague, or experiencing one yourself, you have more influence over what happens next than you may realize. While transitions are difficult, they can also become the beginning of new opportunities, stronger leadership, and a career that fits you even better.

AS MANAGER

When asked to meet a cost savings target, you can explore how to achieve savings without layoffs, such as reduction of general and administrative expenses. If staff reduction is the only option, consider this as a new constraint on your business. Evaluate the roles and the talent in the roles. Role elimination or consolidation is one option. Eliminating individual talent due to relative contributions or to replace with more junior, less expensive talent is another. Own the difficult tradeoff decisions to preserve the business as a continued viable employment opportunity for the remaining employees. Lead with both courage and compassion. People may not remember every word you say, but they'll remember how you made them feel.

AS A COLLEAGUE

It's natural to imagine the worst for someone whose role has been eliminated. But many people later describe it as the event that redirected them toward work that was a better fit. The individual may have been languishing in a role but clinging to the familiar. Sometimes a severance package is the seed investment in our next opportunity. Colleagues can often torment themselves in the horror story version of a layoff, even when the impacted employee has already moved on to a better future. Support the colleague as a friend and release fighting what has already occurred.

WHEN IMPACTED

There is a natural flood of emotion when impacted by a layoff. It can be perceived as rejection or failure, triggering shame or discouragement. Taking the blame ourselves for layoffs that are the result of the business shrinking or being mismanaged isn't helpful or entirely accurate. The sooner we can shift from fighting reality to searching for how we can turn it into opportunity, the more constructive we will be. Finding your next role is your new full-time job and the more serious you work it, the sooner you will find your next work. Your value didn't disappear when your role did. A layoff is something that happened. It is not who you are. Direct your mind to finding all the reasons why this change will be better for you in a more highly valued role that's a better fit.

MAXIMIZE THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

MAKE THE REVIEW WORK FOR YOU FIRST

Most people approach performance reviews as something to get through. They listen, receive a rating, and move on. Instead, use this milestone to intentionally advance your career goals. Whether your review is coming up or just happened, this play will help you get more value from the conversation.

Performance reviews shouldn't simply evaluate your past. They should help shape your future.

YOUR GAME PLAN

- **What do I want my leader** to think / feel / do following this performance review?
 - I want my leader to clearly understand the value I've created this year
 - I want my leader to appreciate the impact I've had on the business and the team
 - So they reward and recognize my contributions to retain me
- **What do I want** to think / feel / do myself following this performance review?
 - My work is recognized and understood, giving myself the best chance to be rewarded in kind
 - I feel appreciated and valued
 - I know what development areas to focus on to expand my impact
- **My reflection on this year** and articulation of my concrete value-add that they are likely not fully aware of
 - Quantify your impact, answer "so what?"
 - Activities and ownership that is broader than the scope of role as defined
 - Identify and discuss sponsorship opportunities
- **Express my goal** as my big motivator, whether it is promotion, compensation, scope of work, autonomy, or flexibility
 - Clarify their level of support
 - Discuss realistic timing
 - Ask specifically what you can do next to earn your desired opportunity

MAKE YOUR TEAM AN ASSET

LEAD TO SCALE YOUR IMPACT

Many leaders are promoted because they excelled as individual contributors. Leading people, however, requires an entirely different set of skills. Use this checklist to identify where to invest next so your team becomes one of your greatest assets. Your team's success is one of the greatest multipliers of your own impact as a leader.

Clearly **define** the role, what success looks like, and the skills required before hiring.

Select people based on both their willingness and ability to succeed in the role.

Set and **communicate** clear, measurable objectives that align with both your goals and the organization's priorities.

Coach people to think through challenges, develop and implement solutions, to ultimately succeed independently while meeting your expectations.

Regular **performance review** and delivery of feedback, with the aim to recognize great work five to ten times more often than you deliver constructive feedback.

Reward great work fairly through recognition, performance ratings, compensation, and promotion when appropriate.

Continually learn what motivates each team member and align **career path** opportunities with both their aspirations and the needs of the business.

Create opportunities for visibility, exposure, and relationship building so team members develop **sponsorship** from advocates across the organization.

Actively manage performance and identify and communicate missed expectations, giving the team member every opportunity to be successful acting swiftly to improve performance before moving them out of the role if unsuccessful.

Create an **environment** for your team to thrive, where they feel belonging, pride to be on a winning team, supported, encouraged, and challenged enough to keep learning.



YOUR NEXT PLAY



CREATE YOUR CAREER STRATEGY



Congratulations on investing in yourself and your career. Now it's time to put these plays into action. Reading a playbook doesn't change your career. Running the plays does.

Your next step is to schedule a complimentary Career Strategy Consultation at www.CheriGregov.com. Together we'll create a strategy tailored to your unique goals, challenges, and opportunities.

During our session we will:

01

Clarify your biggest career challenge or goal

Whether you're aiming for greater impact, better rewards, more balance, or your next opportunity, we'll identify what matters most.

02

Build your unique career strategy

We'll uncover the root causes behind what's holding you back and map out practical next steps to move you forward.

03

Explore coaching together

Learn how one-on-one coaching can help you create more excellence, ease, better rewards, and greater enjoyment in your career.

