

“I have read and reviewed many books that contained useful information but were not much fun to get through. Other books turned out to be quite enjoyable but didn't add much to what I already knew. In contrast, I can report that *Great Advice* really does provide great advice, but in an interesting, creative manner that makes the book a pleasure to read. David and Handi are clearly writing from knowledge and experience, and the pointers they offer should be of benefit to nearly all readers. I highly recommend this book to you.”

Steve Kerr

The World's First Chief Learning Officer
Former Chief Learning Officer of General Electric and Goldman Sachs

“As I read David and Handi's book the thought that kept jumping into my mind was that building a career is full of those moments where you almost need a 'coach on demand' to whisper words of advice and wisdom in your ear at the time of need. Whilst all of the advice in the book falls into the category of common sense, unfortunately in many organisations today we see people and leadership behaviours that don't pass this simple test – almost like common sense has become uncommon! As the authors note in their conclusion, no-one has a monopoly on good advice – but this book is a good place to start!”

Peter Attfield

Chief Talent & Learning Officer
Jardine Matheson Ltd

“This book has great vignettes that provide both insights and thoughtful challenges to the reader. I enjoyed the conversational style and found gems of ideas scattered throughout. Worthy read.”

Ann Ann Low

Senior Director Learning and Development at LinkedIn

“We don’t live in a perfect world. We can help each other progress towards creating islands of perfection around ourselves. David and Handi’s advice that stay with me are “keeping taking chances”, “trust but verify” and “be grateful to friends and family”. It is such wisdom that makes our lives better.”

Anil Sood

Professor & Co-founder Institute for Advanced Studies in Complex Choices

“Highly thought provoking; pushing me to think and reflect hard on my leadership journey. David and Handi successfully put their global leadership experiences into practical, no non-sense, easy to read book.”

Danu Wicaksana

Managing Director, Good Doctor Technology Indonesia

“It must have been serendipity that I had the opportunity to work with Handi while he was with Sinar Mas & thereafter Jardine Matheson. His breath of experiences in human capital development is captured in *Great Advice*, a must-read book co-authored with another experienced HR practitioner, David Wee.”

Dino Tan

Senior Vice President, Head of Family Businesses, Family Capital & Impact
Singapore Economic Development Board

“I followed David and Handi on LinkedIn for their great advice. Very glad that their advice is now available in this book.”

Eric Sim, CFA, PRM

Author, *Small Actions: Leading Your Career to Big Success*.

“The authors have generously distilled their years of experience and hard knocks into a series of LinkedIn posts – and now this book – which I highly recommend, and wish, that I had in the early stages of my career. Across the book, you will find practical and candid advice built on non-negotiables and values; all of which are important bulwarks in a rapidly-changing world. While the book is easy to read, I encourage readers to also reflect on the advice given and to apply it accordingly in the context they work in.”

Eleanor Tan

Global Head, Corporate Communications - The China Navigation Co. Pte. Ltd

“Rarely have I met someone who is full of zest, deep passion to learn, and sincerity to be helpful. Handi has been my mentor and a good friend since my first career out of college. He has a genuine character that earns him both trust from the management team and respect from juniors. We no longer work together but Handi continues to be my go-to person for advice and am psyched that Handi decides to share his extensive professional experience through this book.”

John Rasjid

Co-Founder/ CEO at Sociolla.com
Winner of Forbes' Disruptor Award 2019

“Life is too short to make all experiences yours!

Read *Great Advice* to learn wisdom from other people's experiences, especially from David's wisdom & Handi's international experience. Apply the useful, practical advice to solve day-to-day challenges in leadership and management, and to help you build a successful career and live a purposeful life.”

Kevin P. Tan

Co-Founder & CMO, SUN Education Group

“With a wealth of global experiences, Handi and David have shared very insightful advices in this book which is a much needed for the people in any career. If you are aiming high to achieve a career success, this is a must-read book which will guide you as a bible along your career journey. Great advices with practical tips!”

Laura Cho Yee Swe Myint

Head of HR, Prudential Myanmar Life Insurance

“*Great Advice* has powerful and practical tips for your career path. The combination of David’s wisdom and Handi’s experience makes the book engaging and thought-provoking. Their desire to help people have a fulfilling career seeps through each page. It’s not a book that you just read through once and be done with it. It’s a book you will be able to pick up again and again, and get something new out of it each time.”

Matt Hutson

Book Hacker @Bookmattic

“David and Handi’s advice in this book is simple but extremely powerful. They’ve packed a lot of wisdom in a series of small “posts” that are easy to read and reflect upon. No matter how experienced readers may be, everyone will benefit from this collection.”

Rajeev Peshawaria

President, Leadership Energy Consulting Company
Former CEO, Iclif Leadership & Governance Center
Former Chief Learning Officer of Morgan Stanley and Coca-Cola

“I really enjoyed the *Great Advice* – easy to read and thoroughly entertaining. I found Handi and David’s book very practical with some fantastic real life examples and tips which I found extremely useful. I would highly recommend this book to any professional who is facing day to day challenges in their current work environment. Looking forward to seeing their next book soon and learning more from these life experts ! “

Ricky Mui

Managing Director – Greater China, Robert Walters

“David & Handi have delivered a treasure trove of real-world wisdom for the workplace. Having personally worked with both David and Handi in different capacities, their cumulative experience and wisdom in building great teams and organisational culture, and in countering work challenges, will be of immense benefit to everyone trying to succeed in our ever shifting, dynamic world. A must read for all”

Roshan Thiran

Founder of Leaderonomics

“Handi and David are very experienced HR practitioners and am delighted that they are now working together to bring together such practical and easy to implement advice which I believe will be absolute pearls of great help to anyone at any level in his or her career trying to navigate this corporate jungle.

Personally having worked with Handi in the past I have always liked his positive and can do attitude which was always an asset to the organisation . It can get lonely out there but with David and Handi’s book and thoughts contained therein you are in good hands.”

Sandeep Mookharjea

Head of HR Asia Pacific, AIG

“*Great Advice* is practical and superb approach in finding people solutions. Both David and Handi have successfully mentored leaders through their careers. This book allows us to learn from them on leading self and others. This is a must-read!”

Setiawani Sukri

Chief HR Officer, AIA Indonesia

“It was truly a refreshing experience working with David in J&J. He put in action all his learnings and personal experiences and deep knowledge of talent development and transformed the L&D function and processes in the company. His strategic capability always combined with the practical solutions for all things L&D was unique and unmatched. This book brings to life all the learnings and wisdom of David and Handi in a way which can be easily adopted and executed in real life situations.

They have put together one of the most interesting, practical and readable books for all practitioners and students of leadership. An absolute must read.”

Supratim Bose

President & Chief Operating Officer, Global Emerging Markets, ConvaTec

“*Great Advice* is like a cheat-sheet for your career journey, full of wisdom and practical tips. No matter where you are in your career journey, this book gives you superb solutions and reminders in a very simple yet powerful way. A must-read for everybody!”

Tyo Guritno

CEO & Co-founder, INSPIGO

山頂文化

Great Advice

For solving
everyday challenges
at work and in life

David Wee with Handi Kurniawan



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To Aleth, who is always on my side.

—David

**To my family, for their greatest support in
this life journey.**

**To all leaders, managers, mentors, coaches and
teachers who give great advice and make
a difference in people's lives.**

—Handi

About the authors

David Wee was a founding member of General Electric's Learning Board, served as Johnson & Johnson's Global Chief Learning Officer, and was the Group Chief Talent Officer for Sinar Mas. David is currently a Board Advisor for the Institute for Advanced Studies in Complex Choices, a non-profit organization based in Mumbai, India and is a Council Advisor for Avvanz, a talent lifecycle management company based in Singapore.



Handi Kurniawan has an extensive global experience as a human resource executive at General Electric, Standard Chartered Bank, Sinar Mas and Jardine Matheson, having been based in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Beijing, Taipei and the United States. He is the author of a bestselling career book in Indonesia, *Go Global—Guide to a successful international career*, and two other books, *Global Career* and *The Brain Master*, published by Kompas Gramedia Group, a leading publisher in Indonesia. Handi has also written numerous articles for newspapers and business magazines, and is a sought-after speaker in Asia.



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/handi-kurniawan-60748914/>



www.FirstClassCareer.com



@handi.kurniawan

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PREFACE

I got more than my fair share of great advice and they all share these characteristics: honest, credible and can be acted on. And that's what Handi and I want Great Advice to do. We differentiate facts from opinions, write on stuff that we know about or had happened to us, and make the advice practical and usable. But mostly, we want the book to showcase the stuff we know and care most about—growing people.

We love to share what we learn.

We do this 24/7.

We could do this in our sleep.

We can't help it.

It is in our nature.

David Wee

* * *

“Listen deeply so you ‘hear’ between the lines. Let them complete their sentence then you respond. Do these and you raise your game to the next level.”

That's what David shared with me after my presentation to the Chairman and Board of Directors. I thought I did very well, but I would also always remember that advice. You know why? I did move up a notch!

I am grateful to get this great advice many years ago.

And that's what brought the two of us together. We wanted to help others get the advice they need. When they are trying to get hired, managing their careers and making critical life decisions, getting the right advice can offer guidance, even lift spirits.

David and I are similar. We worked at General Electric and Sinar Mas, one of the largest conglomerates in Indonesia.

We are seasoned professionals who experienced setbacks, disappointments, office politics, but we also experienced being in the winning team at the world-class companies.

We are passionate about growing people, coaching, teaching, mentoring—some consider these work, but for us, it's a calling.

We are also different. David is an introvert, I'm an extrovert. He thinks deeply before deciding and then goes all in. I am intuitive, decide fast and act with speed. Together, we represent different generations and different ways of seeing the world.

But we both seek the same outcome—dispensing sound, useful, valued advice.

I invite you to read *Great Advice* with a pencil in hand, analysing, reflecting, discussing, challenging and linking ideas with what's happening in your life.

Handi Kurniawan

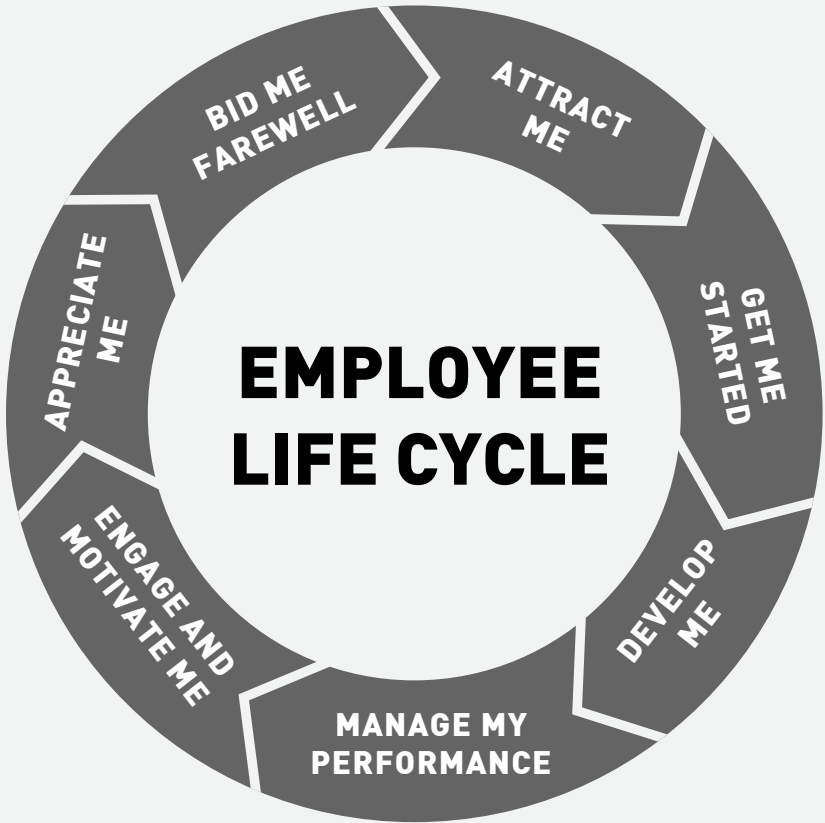
INTRODUCTION

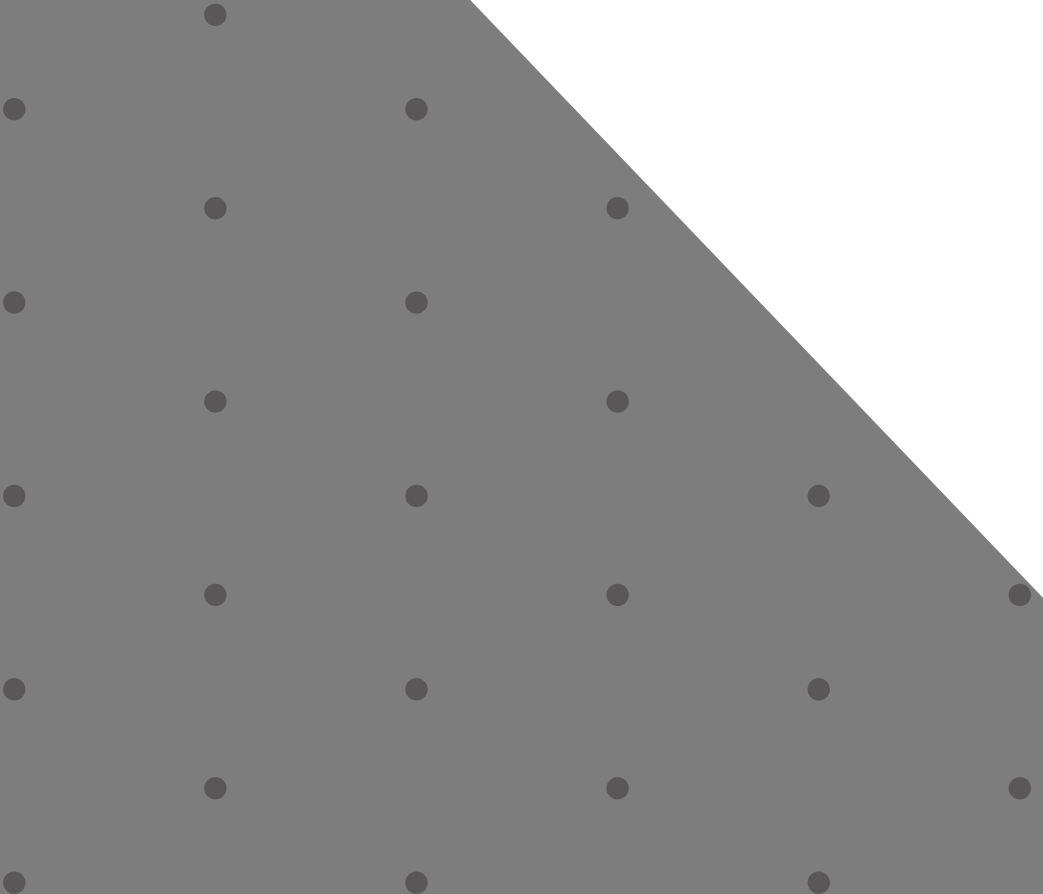
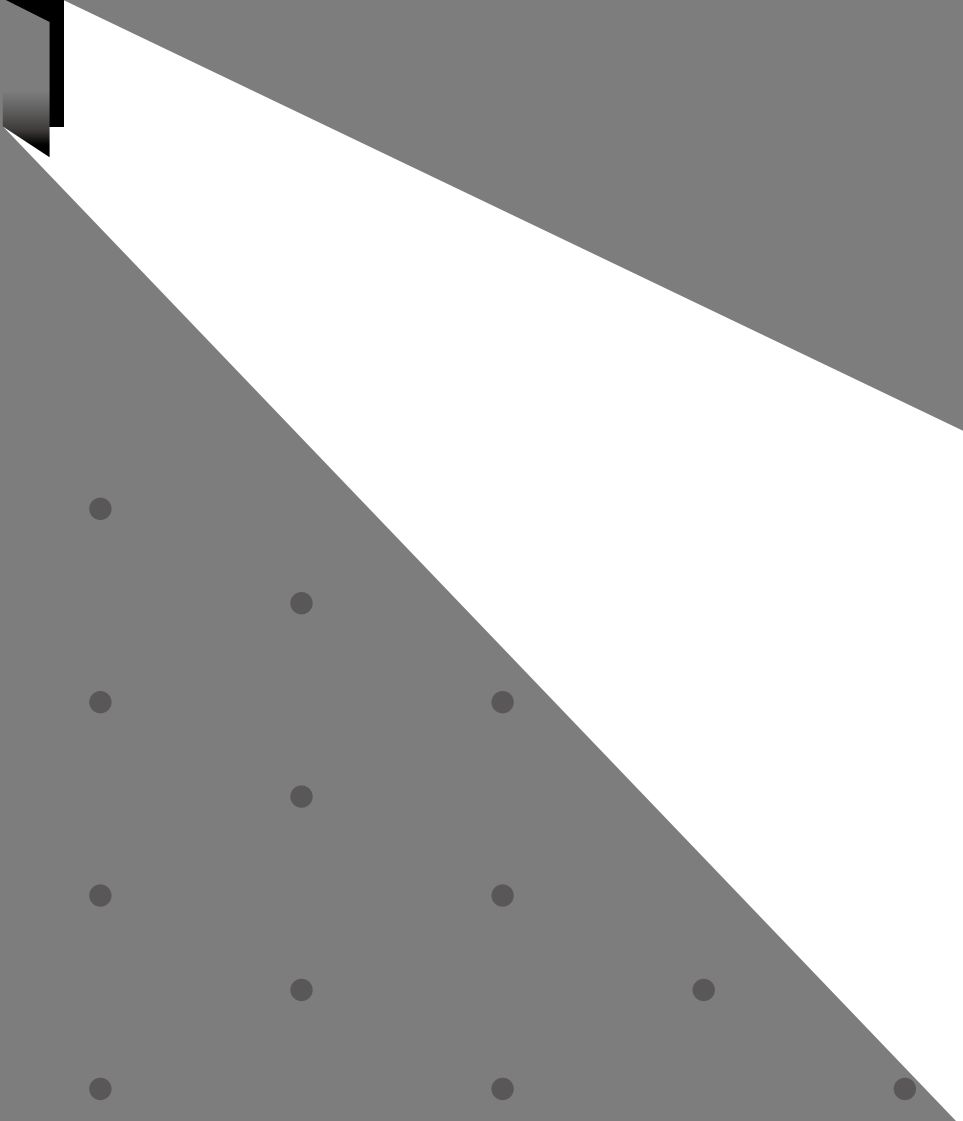
When we ask people what is topmost on their mind, the same things come up over and over again—career growth, personal development, rewards and work-life balance.

And that's how we have organised the book. It follows the seven-phase life cycle of an employee. We populate each phase with stories, content and recollections that propose a solution; ask a question; and challenge a convention. We put ourselves in the shoes of an employee, a high potential, a toxic manager and a manager that inspires, so different perspectives are shared. We present different situations and inspiring events that range from the stress of being retrenched, to finding the courage to do the right thing, to helping people burst from their shells and fulfil their potential.

We close the book with “Family and Friends” because you can't separate work and life.

Think with us and enjoy the ride!





“Even Jack Welch said he got hiring wrong 50% of the time when he first started.

If you don’t have the perfect hire, it’s okay.

Working to make the person successful is far more important.”

—David

“If you believe you have the capabilities, never sell yourself short.

If you don’t have what it takes, never put your ego too high.”

—Handi

ATTRACT ME

01



“We need your help”

I flew in to meet a prospective employer.
Driver brought me to the penthouse.
Wine and cheese, delightfully paired, were served.
We had a conversation, not an interview.
He thanked me for making time to see him
and shared how impressed he was at what I had done in GE and J&J.
And that’s why “we need your help”.
He made me feel special.

He described his vision and the transformation of his company—
why these were important for communities, employees and country,
and how these would provide more jobs, better education and improve the
lives of a multitude.
It was always about duty, about others.
It was not about him.
He got me excited.

This man was humble and loyal, and also demanding and challenging.
People were drawn to him because he made them feel ... special.
He believed in continuously improving every day,
but was willing to take a risk and go for the big swing.
And above all else, he valued people: “For a company to grow, people must
grow first.”
He engaged me.

So when he asked, “Will you help us?”

I said yes and became a member of his team.

I worked hard and was on call 24/7, but it never felt like work.

When you serve a great leader and a purpose larger than self, work becomes fulfilment.

And what does fulfilment look like?

Improving the lives of thousands.



02



How to wow a candidate

Korn Ferry arranged for me to be interviewed by J&J.

I was on the phone with my potential boss. “Where do you live?” she asked.

“East Coast.”

“You like ice cream? Let’s meet at Häagen-Dazs.”

The first thing she said was, “What’s your favourite flavour?” She knew how to put a candidate at ease and quickly build a rapport. I liked and respected her immediately.

The second interview was with the CEO. His secretary said that it would be more convenient for me to meet at XX hotel because “the J&J office is far for you”. Wow. An interviewer who puts a candidate’s needs over his? And when he said, “The only thing that can stop our growth is not having enough of the right people,” I got inspired.

J&J wanted to make an offer, but I requested to meet one more person. It was a risk but knowing the people I would work closely with was important. So I got to meet the regional business leader. She was incredibly grounded, humble, listened very well and emanated quiet confidence and strong convictions. Her last words were, “Join us; grow leaders.” Without hesitation, I said, “I will.”

And that's what I did for the next five years in J&J.

**When you strike the lottery, the only thing to say
is thank you very much and work to deserve it.**

