Contents

Introduction Welcome to the Career Airport 1

Chapter 1 Check-In 9

The Job You Accept May Not Be the Job You Start 12
The Org Chart Lies 16
The Deal Closes Before the Organisations Meet 20
Borrow the Map, Not the Judgement 22
Your First Useful Contribution Sets the Level 25
People Meet Your Role Before They Meet You 28

Chapter 2 Security 31

Trust Is Rationed, Not Given 34
Small Gaps Create Big Doubts 38
You Can Break a Rule Nobody Told You Existed 41
Trust Does Not Turn an Estimate into a Fact 44
Do Not Give the Robot Your Credit Card. Yet. 47
You Cannot Be Everyone's Insider 49
Sometimes People Need to Borrow Your Confidence 52
If You Explain Away the Feedback, You Haven't Heard It 54

Chapter 3 Departure Lounge 57

Visibility Beats Patience 60
Do Not Reject Yourself Before They Do 64
Watch What the Organisation Does, Not Only What It Says 67
Not Every Flight Is Worth Boarding 70
Create Opportunities Before Roles Exist 73
Signal Willingness Before the Opportunity Appears 76

Chapter 4 Boarding 79

Priority Boarding Is a Story People Tell About You Before You Arrive 82
Being Ready and Being Chosen Are Not the Same Thing 86
Imposter Syndrome Is a Memory Problem, Not an Ability Problem 89
Position the Idea Around the Listener's Priorities 93
Calibrate; Don't Copy 97
The Seat Goes to Whoever Solves a Specific Problem Best 100
Position Yourself at the Next Level Before You're Asked 103
Missing This Boarding Doesn't Cancel the Whole Trip 107

Chapter 5 In Flight 111

Turbulence Reveals Who You Are Under Pressure 113
Questions Arrive as Verdicts 116
Cruising Is Invisible Until Something Goes Wrong 118
If Your Automation Needs Its Inventor, It Is Not Automation 121
Teaching Others Accelerates Your Own Learning 124
Seek Discomfort Deliberately 127
Every Generation Has a Technology Moment: Become a Practitioner 130
Write the Angry Email. Then Delete It. 133
Perfect Arrives Too Late 136
Facts First. Judgement When the Facts Run Out. 139
Use the Metric That Drives Improvement, Not the One That Looks Good 143

Chapter 6 Baggage Claim 147
Reputation Arrives on the Belt Whether or Not You Packed It 150
Some Bags Never Appear Again 154
The Person You Feel Like Is Not Always the Person They See 157
The Fix Was One Line. The Story Was Considerably Longer. 160
Damage Happened in Transit and It Is Not Always Your Fault 163
People Remember How You Recover More Than How You Failed 166
Chapter 7 Connections 171
The Gate for the Next Opportunity Is Rarely Next to the One You Just Left 174
Delaying a Difficult Decision Does Not Make It Kinder 176
Upward and Forward Are Not Always the Same Direction 179
Protecting Your Role Is the Quickest Way to Limit Your Progress 182
Being Busy Is Not the Same as Progressing 185
The Annual Review Isn't Your Career's Timeframe 188
Your Most Valuable Connections May Not Be Above You 192
Chapter 8 Leaving the Airport 195
Leave People with a Good Last Memory 198
Unhappiness Accumulates Until It Feels Normal 201
Loyalty Is Not Blind 204
A Counter-Offer Changes the Offer, Not the Reason 207
If Five Minutes Matters, Reconsider the Pace 210
Some Things Should Stay in the Terminal 213
You Do Not Need the Next Destination Yet 215
Departure Board 218