

SEPTEMBER 2025 • MIRRORREVIEW.COM

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MEDTECH
Pathfinders
Redefining Professional Development in **2025**

A portrait of Cindy Grabowski, a woman with dark hair, wearing a black turtleneck, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

CINDY
Grabowski
Founder | Mind Grove

How One Woman's Unconventional Career is Reshaping MedTech Education

Cindy Grabowski

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Cover / Story

“
Never
underestimate
curiosity over
credentials.
”

Founder
Mind Grove



The year is 1995. A 26-year-old secretary named **Cindy Grabowski** is called into the Chief Medical Officer's office.

She has a high school diploma, two young kids at home, and a reputation for being exceptionally good at her job. The CMO makes her an offer that seems to come from another universe: He wanted her to apply for an entry level role in his Clinical Research Group. Grabowski's reaction is immediate and instinctual. She lists every reason he shouldn't hire her, a rapid-fire recitation of her own perceived inadequacies.

The CMO listens patiently and then says a sentence that will not only change her life but will become the foundational principle of the company she will one day build. "*Cindy,*" he said, "*you push paperwork like no one, people like working with you, and people learn their job on the job. We can teach you what you need to know.*"

That single moment of seeing potential beyond pedigree launched a remarkable 30-year journey through the heart of the medical device industry. It is a story that saw a young secretary rise through the ranks to become a Vice President and Director working at nine different MedTech companies, including seven start-ups, manage multimillion-dollar budgets, launch clinical studies in ten countries, and help drive over \$3.2 billion in acquisitions. More importantly, it is the story of how that on-the-job education, that practical, comprehensive knowledge learned in the trenches, ignited a passion to build a new entry point into the industry, one that values interest over credentials and competence over classrooms.

The 30-Year Intrapreneur

Cindy Grabowski's career is a powerful testament to the idea of the "intrapreneur," an employee who operates with the restless, problem-solving, and holistic mindset of an entrepreneur from within an organization. For three decades, she didn't just stay in her lane; she made it her business to understand the entire highway. "*I was always curious about what everyone else did, how our work interconnected,*" she explains. "*That's how you survive in startups.*"



This relentless inquisitiveness was Cindy's real education. While her resume doesn't have the traditional academic credentials, it has something far rarer - a profound, visceral understanding of how MedTech companies actually work. She didn't just learn the rules and regulations; she learned the real work that moves programs forward. It's a distinction she is passionate about. "*Most education in this industry is based on theory,*" Cindy says. "*But what medtech professionals need to excel isn't more compliance training. It's practical, skill-based learning that prepares them to contribute in the real world.*"

This conviction simmered for years, but the catalyst for action came in August 2023. "*I realized my colleagues and I would eventually retire, taking decades of interdepartmental knowledge with us,*" Cindy recalls. She saw two critical gaps. First, despite offering strong wages and meaningful work, medtech was an industry people mostly "fell into" by chance, with no clear path for talented individuals from non-traditional backgrounds. Second, she saw that companies were chronically falling short on developing their own employees, often not knowing how to help them get to the next level, leading to poor retention. The solution was clear: she needed to build a platform that could codify the very on-the-job learning that had made her own career possible. She needed to build *Mind Grove*.

Capturing Lightning in a Bottle

When Cindy began to share her vision for a new kind of practical, role-specific training platform, she reached out to 32 of her most trusted and experienced colleagues. The response was immediate and universal. "*Every conversation ended the same way,*" she says. "*Where was this when we were coming up?*" The concept resonated with everyone, from first-year professionals to seasoned CEOs.

That overwhelming validation shaped the structure of **Mind Grove**, which she founded in 2024. It would not be a company built on theory, but on lived experience. She assembled a powerhouse team of 37 Founding Consultants, a brain trust that includes 28 medtech veterans and 9 training and instructional design specialists. Across the full team of 28 subject matter experts (SME), Mind Grove brings more than 350 years of combined expertise. Within that, the Career Pathway Leader SMEs alone contribute over 200 years of direct, industry-tested experience.

"*Our team didn't just study medtech. We lived it,*" Cindy says. "*When we design curriculum, we're drawing from battle-tested experience. We know which skills actually matter because we've seen careers succeed and stall.*" This group of SMEs contributes 5-10 hours per week, pouring their hard-earned knowledge into the platform. Training and design specialists then use AI tools to transform that knowledge into engaging scripts, accelerating the development process by a factor of ten. Every script then returns to the SMEs for a rigorous accuracy review.

The result is a scalable and efficient model that delivers comprehensive and practical training. This model was directly influenced by feedback from medtech professionals that Cindy surveyed prior to founding Mind Grove. The responses from CEOs, individual contributors, and even venture capital executives were unanimous - skills-based training like this simply didn't exist, and they urged her to build it.

The Highway, Not the Lanes

The core of Mind Grove's curriculum is not just teaching the specifics of a single role, but fostering the collaborative, integrated mindset of an intrapreneur.



Cover / Story

“Cross-functional integration isn’t an add-on to our curriculum, it’s the foundation,” Cindy explains. “We’re not teaching people to stay in their lanes. We’re teaching them to see the entire highway.”

This approach is exemplified by their Introduction to MedTech Suite, set to launch in October 2025. The eight-module program will deliver a comprehensive foundation in the industry’s basics, FDA classifications, device categories, and the development lifecycle. But it will also, crucially, teach learners about each of the functions involved in bringing a product to market and what the professionals in those departments actually do. The final module tests learners’ understanding through interactive scenarios that require them to identify which professionals need to collaborate at each stage of the development process. The programs are designed for both new entrants just learning the industry and early and mid-career talent and teams who want to upskill with purpose. The key areas covered include Quality Assurance, Regulatory Affairs, Clinical Affairs, Data Management, Reimbursement, and Marketing.

The Chief Pathfinder’s Playbook

Cindy’s title, **Founder and Chief Pathfinder**, perfectly encapsulates her role. *“I’m navigating uncharted territory while wearing ten different hats daily,” she says. “You’ll find me in script development, testing prototypes, pitching to companies and universities, and fundraising.”*

But her approach to building the company is as unconventional and strategic as her career path. From the outset, she made a critical decision: she is limiting equity investment in Mind Grove to a maximum of 15%. *“By keeping majority control, I execute our vision without compromise,”* Cindy explains. This isn’t about ego - it’s about protecting the mission. It ensures that the company can grow without diluting its core values and, importantly, that she can appropriately compensate the 37 Founding Consultants whose expertise is the very foundation of the business.

Her proudest milestone so far has been assembling that team. *“Convincing 28 seasoned veterans to contribute decades of hard-earned expertise to an unproven startup feels like capturing lightning in a bottle,”* Cindy says.



Cover / Story

The passion and dedication of her team, VPs spending evenings reviewing scripts and veterans dedicating weekends to perfecting modules, is proof to her that this is not just a consulting gig, it's a movement.

The Soapbox

This movement is fueled by a sincere and righteous frustration that has been a constant throughout Cindy's career. *"The biggest challenge I've faced is the arbitrary bachelor's degree requirement that still gates access to medtech opportunities that can be performed without a four-year degree!"* Her passion is evident when she speaks.

"Here I am with 30 years of expertise and proven success, yet leaders still use degrees as gating factors. Don't get me started, I'll get up on my soapbox because this perfectly illustrates why Mind Grove exists."

For Cindy, this isn't just a professional annoyance. It's a systemic flaw that harms the entire industry. *"We're filtering out incredible talent based on credentials rather than competencies, robbing the industry of potential intrapreneurs,"* she argues.

Her own career is proof that passion, practical skills, and real-world experience can be just as valuable as formal education in opening doors. Cindy is quick to point out that she is not against degrees- they are essential for many roles, from engineers to physicians. What she challenges is the use of a bachelor's degree as the automatic gatekeeper for every entry-level position in medtech.

Too often, companies dismiss candidates without a four-year degree while also demanding "experience," a Catch-22 that keeps talent out. Mind Grove is her answer: A platform designed to give candidates an alternative pathway through skills-based training, enabling them to enter the industry, earn a solid wage, and, if their role requires it, pursue higher education with the support of employer tuition programs rather than crippling personal debt.

The Future is Fluent and Focused

Cindy sees the future of professional development in medtech shifting dramatically. She notes that while it consistently ranks as a top concern for leadership, most companies still use outdated, classroom-style training models. *"The biggest shift is toward microlearning for adult learners, exactly Mind Grove's approach,"* she predicts. *"Adults need bite-sized, immediately applicable knowledge they can consume during evenings and breaks, not week-long seminars or semester courses."*

Her vision for Mind Grove is already expanding to meet this future on a global scale. The company is collaborating with Ethovox for ethical AI voiceover services, a partnership that will allow them to instantly translate their training content into 30 different languages. *"The medical device industry is inherently global,"* Cindy notes, *"yet most professional development remains trapped in English-only formats."* She is also exploring partnerships with prominent academic institutions to embed Mind Grove's practical, competency-based curriculum into their programs, getting learners medtech-ready from day one.

Since starting Mind Grove, Cindy says her work has become her hobby, that it hasn't felt like work for a single day. It is the perfect alignment of her life's experience with a mission that is very personal. Her final message to the industry is a direct challenge to the status quo and an echo of the CMO who gave her a chance three decades ago. *"Never underestimate curiosity over credentials,"* she advises. *"The future belongs to organizations brave enough to see potential beyond pedigree and develop the collaborative mindset that transforms specialists into intrapreneurs shaping medical innovation."*

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