

Turning Career Competencies into Career Capital

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When we are thinking about purchasing a house, we typically look at the amount of capital we have access to and based on that decide what type of house we can afford. If there is an abundance of capital available to us, the decision to buy a home that meets our every need is much easier to make than if we had limited capital. Simply put, the more money available to us the easier it is to qualify for a mortgage and a lower the mortgage payment. Ultimately, we have more options and more banks are willing to work with us.

The same holds true for our career. What career capital do we have as a down payment for an organization we're trying to become part of? DeFillippi and Arthur (1994) were the first to look at career capital and break it down into career competencies in order to measure an individual's present career net value. He divided career competencies into three main areas:

1. Knowing-Why competencies
2. Knowing-How competencies
3. Knowing-Whom competencies

Our Knowing-Why competencies are concerned with issues of personal identify and meaning. Knowing-How competencies encompass the skills and abilities people accumulate through their work and education, and Knowing-Whom competencies are not only our ability to relate to others and develop contacts, but also networks of people and reputation with other people, which are built up as our career progresses.

Once we can identify our career competencies we can start to utilize them as a measure against an employer's core competencies. For example, if your values about work are more concerned about helping the greater society, you're more likely to match your Knowing-Why competency who shares similar values like a non-profit that works with battered women. The more we can step back and evaluate our competencies the easier it will be to identify organizations which are a better fit.

So the next time you go on an interview, make sure that you're knowledgeable about your career competencies and have done your homework on the organizations core competencies so that you can help determine for the employer is there is a fit. After all, the name of the job search game is being able to find a fit between job seeker and employer. If this can be accomplished, both parties can get what they want.

