

Knowledge is Power!

How to Leverage What You Know

By
Mariette Edwards

*You are the only person in the world who
Knows everything about what you know.*

Julia Cameron, in her book “The Artist's Way” talks about your vein of gold. That vein of gold is what you know. In my experience, you “know” things in three ways. The first is your know-how, what you have learned to do. The second is what you have observed or learned about your situation or surroundings including the people you work with and the way things work in your industry and/or organization. The third is what you know without knowing how you know it. This kind of knowing is your talent or gift.

Leveraging your know-how or what you have learned how to do

When I worked for a technology equipment manufacturer a few years ago, my role as HR Director was centered on building a strong relationship between our employees and the company. To that end, I set to learning as much as I could about the jobs our employees did, especially hourly workers on our various assembly lines. When I left that company, I could make wire harnesses, stuff computer boards and run the shrink-wrap machine! I had acquired a special know-how that I leveraged a few years later when I was President of a small defense industry manufacturing company. Because of what I knew, I was able to fill in on a crucial project by building the wire harnesses for a new product prototype we were behind schedule on delivering. Now this is certainly an extreme example but we all have special know-how. What is yours?

Leveraging what you know about the way things work

When Jamie wanted to transform her big city clinical pharmacist desk job into a telecommuting career from the rural horse farm she would build in another state, she had to use everything she knew about her work, her company, her boss and her self. The first step in achieving her objective was to begin telecommuting one day a week while still living and working in the big city. She began by researching her company's telecommuting policy and creating case studies on anyone in her company who actually did telecommute. Long before making her telecommuting request, Jamie leveraged what she knew about planning for success by learning all about the equipment she would need to set up an office in her home that would

mirror her on-site capabilities. She committed to her goal by purchasing the equipment and setting it up well in advance of her request. Jamie also assessed who in her chain of command could be an advocate for her request and quickly determined that her new boss was her strongest potential ally. Jamie's task then was to learn as much as she could about what her boss valued in his direct reports and what were his most important goals. In that way, Jamie could accelerate the process of building good will with her boss and increase her chances for achieving her objectives. When everything was in place, Jamie made her request and today she telecommutes full-time from her horse farm in the tiny town in another state she dreamed about. She successfully leveraged what she knew.

Leveraging your talent for knowing

I was speaking with a client recently who was having difficulty putting into words what she did on her last job--a highly technical position in IT. As she talked I was able to rearrange what she was saying to capture the essence of what she had actually done. At one point, she asked me if that was a skill I had learned or something I just “knew” how to do. I explained that I am pre-wired to process information that way. It's not something I learned. I just know how to do it without knowing how I know how to do it. It's a gift.

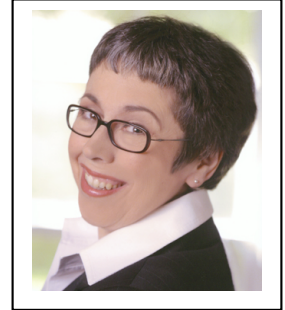
The curious thing about our special gifts is that we often overlook them when we are preparing for a job change or going for a promotion. Yet your gift of knowing is so important in communicating what sets you apart, what makes you different, what makes you such an attractive candidate for the job. I received a letter recently from a reader who was very frustrated with his job search. He felt employers just didn't see how valuable he was. “They should recognize my worth from the experience I have”, he said. His work experience is probably not all that different from hundreds of other candidates. What could have set him apart are those special “knowings” only he has.

Remember, you are the only person in the world who knows everything about what you know.

Knowledge is power! The more you are able to recognize and appreciate what you know, the quicker you can apply that knowledge to achieving your career goals.

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