

# Building Career Capital: Helping Workers to Enhance Career Mobility Within Our Uncertain Times

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# This workshop is likely to be of interest to you if...

*You want to make it easier for yourself to transition between roles*

*You want to help to build mobility within your organisation*

*You want to help your clients to build career mobility*



# 'Transitions will become the norm' for everyone<sup>1</sup>

**Within our VUCA world, job for life is less a realistic employment goal<sup>2</sup>...**

**People will be working for longer, 'for some into their 70s or even 80s'<sup>1</sup>...**



**Career mobility is defined as our ability to transition between roles**

# We can find work transitions stressful...



## Internal:

Review career identity  
Rethink career story  
Re-evaluate career success

## External:

New skills  
New patterns of interactions  
Life restructuring of life around  
opportunities

Source: Arnold, 1997; Pummell, 2008; Clarke, 2009; Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010

# ...especially with business leaders where the stakes are arguably higher

Source: Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010

# We need to build resources to aid our career mobility, defined here as career capital

Career capital is defined as ‘the overall set of non-financial resources a person is able to bring to his or her work’

Arthur, DeFillippi and Jones, 2001: 101

## ***Conceptual strengths:***

- ✓ ***Grounded in Bourdieusian Theory<sup>1</sup>***

*Social capital, cultural capital, capital circularity, field and symbolic capital*

- ✓ ***Anchored in robust empirical evidence***

- ✓ ***Has broad conceptual range***

- ✓ ***Is significant in dynamic global business contexts<sup>2</sup>***

<sup>1</sup>Source: Bourdieu, 1986

<sup>2</sup>Source: Tempest and Coupland, 2016



# These insights are based on doctoral research

## Research title:

Business Leaders: Career Capital and Role Transitions

## Research aim:

To explore the career capital required by business leaders to facilitate role transitions within a single business within the UK

## Research questions:

**What**

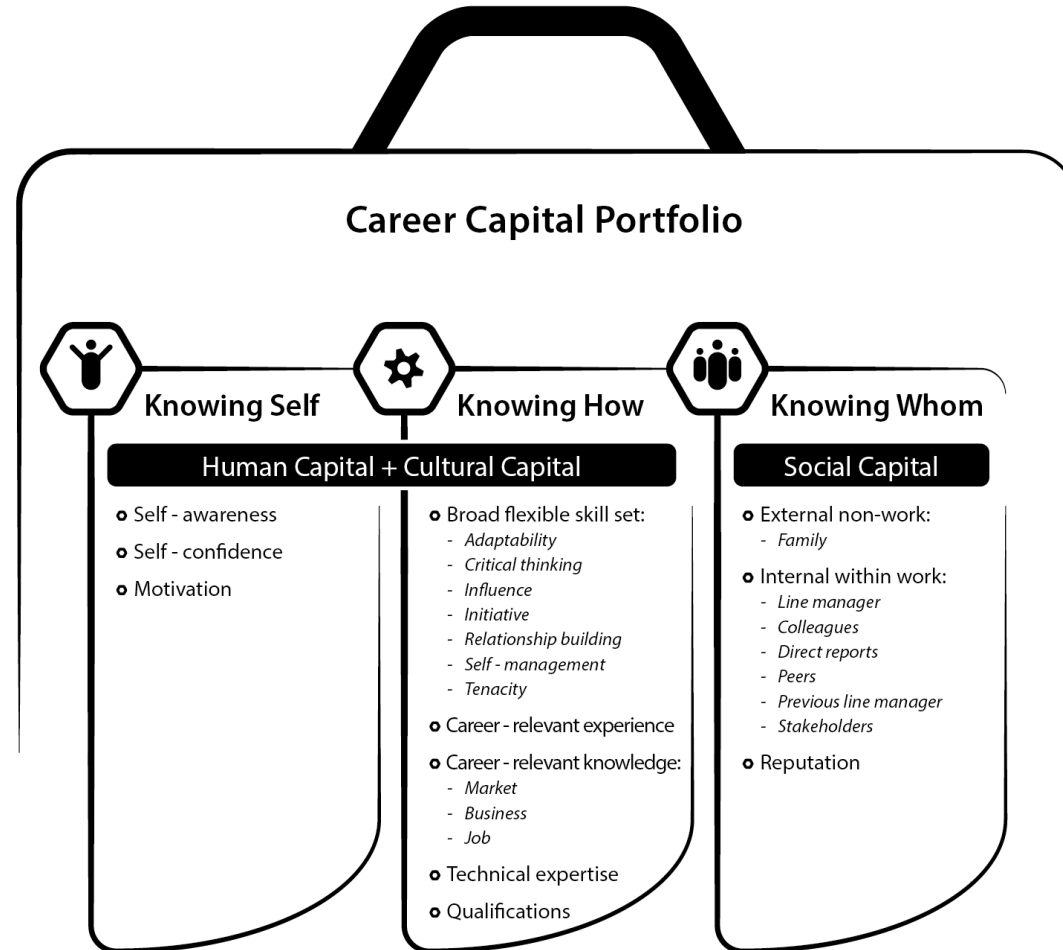
**How**

**Barriers**

**Organisational  
and individual  
implications**



# All role holders have a career capital portfolio aiding role transitions...



...which comprises between 5-14 career capital aspects

# However, career capital has a dark side...

We may have **too little** career capital

And **conflict** may emerge with some of our colleagues

Some of our contacts may **block** our transition

Or even **too much** hindering our transition



Or even **lose** some of our relationships

We may become **misaligned** with some of our colleagues

## ... it can hold us back during our transition



# It can act as a liability in a multitude of ways...

*"I took far too much on. When I moved into the role, one I was very eager to impress with my peers and customers and I welcomed with open arms anything that came my way rather than prioritising and pushing back.*

*And so I found for the first few months I was just, yes, I was swamped [...] if I am honest I didn't deliver much quality."*

*"My previous boss was a bit distraught I think because I wanted to leave that role, not because I was so bloody brilliant but because it left him with a problem. And he still brings it up now that I was stolen away and he mentions it to my boss on a fairly regular basis."*

*"So I got kicked around the room a few times for no real reason other than he didn't like it and he was having a bit of a stomp and I say this with the greatest love for [Stakeholder] I think that he is a really nice guy but he was a bit of an arse during that time."*

*"I had to work massively hard [...] It was evident in her questions that she was asking 'Is this is this a [function] guy?' and 'Are we going to have a functional [...] clockwork worker?' because that is not what they wanted.*

*[...] They wanted someone different, so I had to prove that I was somebody different."*

## ... slowing us down in our role transition

## Also, career capital is fluid,...

*“Yes certainly my direct reports at the time helped, [...] in terms of giving me knowledge because I came in with little or no understanding, no understanding about the plant and little or no understanding of how it works.”*



<sup>1</sup>Source: Bourdieu, 1986

*“Are we going to have a functional [...] clockwork worker?’ because that is not what they wanted. They wanted someone different, so I had to prove that I was somebody different.”*

*“I guess for my personality, I think that when you are thrown into the deep end your confidence suffers a bit.”*

## ...it can change through the role transition

# What are the implications of these findings?

## Role holders

- Anticipate and manage forthcoming role transitions
- Reduce potential stresses, easing their anticipated career move

## Organisational managers

- Build an understanding of career capital required to make internal transitions
- Create targeted development programme to build role holders' internal mobility

## Career practitioners

- Cultivate transition management offering for clients
- Help clients to enhance career mobility

# These insights can inform new career diagnostics

## Quantitative:

- ✓ Career capital assessment
- ✓ Self-scoring section, assessing current and anticipating required career capital before transitioning

## Self-reflective :

- ✓ Surfacing of related issues
- ✓ Exploring forthcoming role transition in more depth: anticipating barriers

The case organisation has already begun developing career diagnostics to explore role holders' career capital portfolios, both current and required, supporting mobility conversations

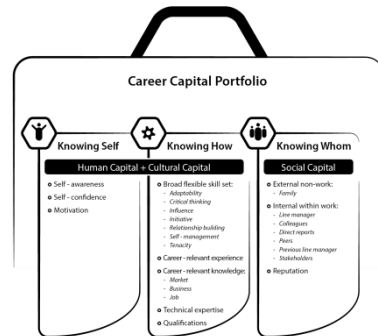
# Summary ...



Transition management will become increasingly important



Transitions can be stressful



Developing a career capital portfolio will help



Anticipating how career capital will impede our forthcoming role transition is useful



Considering how our career capital may evolve in value is helpful



# Thank you

Happy to answer your questions

Happy to stay connected:

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