It’s the Denominator, Stupid!

John Borrowman, CPC  
Borrowman Baker LLC  
Franklin, TN

Broadly speaking, the value of an asset amounts to the benefit (cash flow, perhaps) divided by the risk. What does that mean when the asset is you, and you’re prepping for an interview?

As you think about articulating your value to an interviewer, it’s human nature to focus on those elements of your skill and experience that shine the brightest:

• The snippet of information or analysis that added something new.
• The project that you brought in on time and under budget.
• The attorney you’ve taken to lunch who has finally called you with an engagement.

Very naturally, you focus on increasing the benefit; the numerator.

The would-be-boss is more likely focused on the denominator, however. He’s going to be thinking more carefully about risk. And if he doesn’t hear from you about how you can help reduce risk, he may not perceive value. That doesn’t mean you have to dig for different illustrations. You merely reframe them:

• Your ability to draw the line between time wisely invested and time wasted.
• Your sensitivity to productivity and profitability.
• Your recognition that business development is the key to a leadership role.

In the employment marketplace, as in many others, the seller is inclined to pay a lot more attention to the numerator than the denominator. That could prove to be a mistake when the buyer is the boss.