

# The Five C's

When I consider a possible job, it is not usually to star above the title in a new Sondheim musical or to have Spielberg's next summer tent-pole franchise built around me. It is usually a more modest venture and to evaluate it, I use a template I call the Five C's. In generally descending order of importance, these five are Cash (will it bring me substantial sums of money?), Career (will it raise my profile, balance my resume and/or move me along in my career?), Creative (will this role feed my artistic soul?), Coverage (will this show give me needed weeks for health coverage?), and Community (is this a chance to act with my friends or be of service to the folks I like?). I have taken jobs for each of these five reasons.

I offer you this template free of charge, though your order may be much different from my own. One thing that was clear at our plenary national conference was that the reasons why members do a particular job are many and varied and that these reasons differ greatly between the office cities and the liaison cities. This is one of the reasons that attempting to enact national, one-size-fits-all contracts from coast to coast is sometimes counter-productive.

An interesting perspective is to think about the Five C's as a template for why we got into this business. It probably wasn't to get Rich and Famous, and it certainly wasn't to get health coverage; it was to exercise our creativity and be part of an artistic community. That's the real bottom line for most of us; and along the way, we'd also like to earn some money, keep our vocation viable and maybe earn some health coverage. The tricky dance for the staff and elected leadership is how to maximize the number of creative opportunities while at the same time maintaining decent compensation for those opportunities. As I said, we know the priorities and balance thereof are different in different areas of the country, so we strive to be flexible.

In the next few months, we will negotiate AEA's two biggest contracts: Production and LORT. (In negotiations, the Five C's become Three C's: Compensation and (Working) Conditions and (Health) Contributions.) These contracts are both national, but we have shown our flexibility by creating tiers.

How flexible do you think we should be in these negotiations? In which areas? Among the Three C's, what are your priorities?

I assume you keep my columns stacked next to your bedside for inspiration (or to cure insomnia); if not, they are archived on the President's page on our website. Look them over. There is a theme running through them beyond the purple prose and soporific style. It is that your personal success and the success of the union depend upon your participation and communication. Vote. Send us your ideas. Join a committee. Plan. Network. Support one another. No matter how big or small the acting pieces in your "mosaic," we are all in this together. I hope your Career is a marathon not a sprint; I hope your Creativity is frequently challenged and fulfilled; I hope you regularly earn health Coverage; I hope you make some meaningful Cash; and I am glad you are part of my Community.