Identifying and Showcasing Your Transferable Skills

Maggie Evans, Ph.D.
July 12, 2018
Learning objectives for today

• Understand the what transferable skills are

• Identify your own transferable skills

• Read job descriptions to identify what transferable skills are desired for the position

• Learn how to communicate and showcase your transferable skills in a resume, CV, or cover letter
What are transferable skills?

Transferable skills are the competencies you develop during your experiences that you carry with you in all of your endeavors.
Employers are looking for transferable skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTRIBUTE</th>
<th>% OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work in a team</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills (written)</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills (verbal)</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong work ethic</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical/quantitative skills</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility/adaptability</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical skills</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer skills</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail-oriented</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational ability</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly/outgoing personality</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning skills</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactfulness</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Job Outlook 2016, National Association of Colleges and Employers
Activity:
Identify your transferable skills

Reflect on your past training and extracurricular experiences. What kinds of activities did you engage in during those experiences? What are some of the skills you learned or developed while doing those activities?

5 minutes
Activity:
Communicate your transferable skills

Turn to your neighbor and tell them about one of the activities you listed. Your partner will jot down all the transferable skills they hear you describe. Once you have both told your stories, discuss the skills each of you identified.

15 minutes
Report back: What did you learn?

• What kinds of activities did you share?
• What were some of the transferable skills you identified yourself?
• What were some of the transferable skills your partner identified?
• Did anything surprise you?
• Where there any themes?
Identify transferable skills in a job ad

**Technical Academic Writing Specialist - North Carolina State University**

**Essential Job Duties**

- **Work with** the Graduate School Professional Development Team and appropriate personnel from the College of Engineering to develop a robust curriculum that supports and develops graduate students’ writing and research communication capabilities, and that builds intellectual as well as administrative skills that will enhance student work in the academy and beyond.

- **Develop and teach** several development series (semester-long, noncredit courses) and additional workshops that **train** graduate students, alone and in teams, to effectively research, evaluate, and communicate complex scientific and technical ideas, concepts, processes or procedures in written and presentation form.

- **Provide instruction** through various modalities, including face-to-face and online instructional interactions.

- **Actively support** existing Dissertation and Thesis support services, assist with facilitating writing retreats and the Dissertation Institute, and other related projects.

- **Assist Professional Development Team** with additional projects and programs, such as the Dissertation Institute, Writing Retreats and technical writing/publications to support unit.

**Preferred Experience, Skills, Training/Education**

- **Experience** developing and providing instructional content in classroom and online environments, especially in the genre of technical and scientific writing, is preferred.

- **Strong working experience** with various software platforms used to produce publications, analyze data, and develop visual representations of data and concepts, processes, and procedures.
**Identify transferable skills in a job ad**

**Director, Scientific Development - Mi Bioresearch**

**Key Duties and Responsibilities**

- **Direct scientific engagement with pharmaceutical company scientists, clients, and decision makers** with the goal of providing high-level scientific input in study design and model execution to determine how and when their discovery and translational programs would benefit from Mi Bioresearch’s preclinical oncology services.

- **Support Mi Bioresearch’s Business Development (BD) goals to secure orders and deepen account penetration** through increasing the quality and quantity of meetings with pharmaceutical company scientist; ensure the best possible exchange of information for new opportunities between BD and the scientific team; generate protocols, study designs, and proposals to define projects/studies and associated prices.

- **Periodic co-travel with BD (~25% of the time) to various clients and potential clients to support scientific discussion of Mi Bioresearch services and capabilities;**

- **Represent Mi at relevant scientific and industry conferences, including preparation of oral presentations and/or poster presentations; and**

- **Support the continued development of company-based scientific marketing collateral and web materials.**
Showcase your transferable skills...

...in your CV/resume

- Summary/Objective
- Education/Training
- Relevant Experience
- Leadership/Professional Development
- Awards/Recognition

...in your cover letter

Re: My Ideal Job

Dear Dr. Amazing,

July 12, 2018

Why are you interested in this job? Why are you a good fit?

Relevant Experience #1

Relevant Experience #2

Strong Closing

It may be better to highlight your transferable skills in your narrative!
Showcase your transferable skills… …in your LinkedIn profile
A PhD is a qualification, not an identity. Think of yourself as a professional with a PhD.”

- Chris Humphrey (2016), Founder, JobsOnToast.com
Resources

University of Michigan Career Center

PhD Transferable Skills - Michigan State University Graduate School

“A Toolkit of Transferable Skills for Postdocs” by Phil Dee, Science Magazine

A Cool Trick: How to Spin 1 Resume Bullet 5 Different Ways

“Anatomy of a Job Ad” by Julia McAnallen, Inside Higher Ed