Thinking About Your Transferable Skills

Employers are looking for candidates that understand their needs. The best candidates know what type of person the employer is looking for, and their resume shows that they are that person. Therefore, your resume must reflect that (1) you have an understanding of what the employer is looking for, and (2) you possess those skills and abilities. You can use the list on the following pages to make sensible decisions about resume content.

Transferable Skills: the meat of the resume.

The categories on the attached list represent skills that employers are frequently looking for, regardless of job function or industry. These skills are called *transferable skills* because they can be applied ANYWHERE, and it doesn't matter where you've learned them – it only matters that you can use them. Most people possess all these skills to some degree, but your resume should focus on those that matter MOST for the job you are seeking.

1. Your first step is to **make a sensible determination of the top transferable skill sets** that the employer is likely to be interested in. You can get a good clue from the job description, and even just by thinking logically about what the job involves. See if you can find those transferable skills (or something similar to them) on the list. By the way, most job seekers do not do this. They just assume that everything is of equal importance to the employer, and that it all needs to go on a resume. *That is a FATAL assumption.*
2. You won't have room on your resume to talk about everything the employer needs and everything you have to offer. You have to focus on the most impactful information. So your next step is to **prioritize the transferable skills** you've identified as being important to the job. Without this step, you run the risk of drawing attention to the fact that you don't really "get" what the employer is looking for. You may have great interpersonal skills, but if that's not the most important thing to the employer, then it shouldn't be the largest and most important section of your resume, either.
3. Transferable skills can be demonstrated in many ways, some of which are listed beneath each skill category. Create a journal where you jot down places and times that you actually DID the type of activities that "prove" you possess the transferable skill. **Describe your use of that skill** in a statement. (Some of these statements will actually be used on your resume.) Remember, you don't have to limit your content to paid employment. Consider education experiences, volunteer experiences, internships, etc. You need to tell the stories of how you've used the employer-relevant skills in real life situations. **You won't use all these statements on your resume,** but you'll have identified many possible options for resume content, and be able to choose the best content for any given job you're applying for.

YES, IT'S HARD WORK TO DO THIS. But when you're done, you'll have (1) identified 90% of your resume content (2) have a thorough understanding of the skills you possess (3) helped yourself to prepare for an interview, because you'll be able to describe your skills and experiences.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS such as:

- Negotiate, bargain, persuade, debate issues without being abrasive to others
- Greet, represent others to the public, sell, demonstrate a product or service
- Possess courteous telephone skills
- Report, convey information, explain
- Listening
- Interview, elicit views, probe for information
- Organize and present ideas effectively for formal and spontaneous speeches
- Participate in group discussions
- Present personal views on such subjects as politics, social conditions, and religion; or critique plays or other writings orally or through the written word
- Influence the opinions of people through words
- Read information and prepare oral or written summaries

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS SUCH AS:

- Maintain group cooperation and support
- Build rapport with peers, superiors, or subordinates
- Develop lasting or impactful relationships with others
- Interact effectively with peers, superiors and subordinates
- Express one's feelings appropriately
- Understand the feelings of others
- Make commitments to people
- Analyze behavior of self and others in group situations
- Empathize, offer support, sensitive to feelings, caring
- Recognize needs
- Develop rapport, establish relationships, accept others
- Raise self-esteem, encourage others
- Help others see themselves
- Teach, mentor, guide, coach
- Counsel, advise
- Cooperate
- Group facilitating

DECISION-MAKING SKILLS SUCH AS:

- Understand the steps involved with effective decision-making
- Facilitate groups in the decision-making process
- Evaluate data in order to come to a decision
- Implement sound decisions
- Take responsibility for decisions
- Evaluate the effects and effectiveness of a decision
- Be able to make decisions without feeling pressured
- Remain flexible with decisions
- Explain unpopular decisions to others
- Make decisions that will maximize both individual and collective good

PROBLEM-SOLVING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

- Anticipate problems before they occur
- Define the problem and identify possible/apparent causes
- Identify possible alternative solutions and select the most appropriate ones
- Develop plans to implement solutions
- Evaluate needs and determine courses of action to meet those needs
- Create innovative solutions to complex problems
- Adapt one's concepts and behavior to changing conventions and norms
- Imagine alternatives, formulate and use principles
- Forecast, predict, foresee, perceive trends

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

- Identify a general principle that explains interrelated experienced of factual data
- Apply appropriate criteria to strategies and action plans
- Take given premises and reasons to their conclusion
- Analyze the interrelationships of events and ideas from several perspectives

TEAMWORK AND TEAM BUILDING SKILLS

- Motivate team members to work toward common goals
- Collaborate on projects
- Support and praise one another for reaching goals and accomplishments
- Work effectively with organization members
- Facilitate brainstorming activities

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

- Indentify tasks to be accomplished
- Facilitate discussions on program planning processes
- Give constructive feedback
- Pull together elements in an orderly, functional and structured whole
- Organize, create procedures, systematize
- Catalog, compile, classify, sort, rank information
- Translate, interpret, summarize and simplify
- Record, update
- Calculate, compute
- Attend to detail, carry out requests

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Develop a budget accurately estimating expenses and income
- Justify the organization's budget to others
- Work within a budget
- Keep accurate and complete financial records
- Ensure the timeliness of payments
- Develop and implement a fund-raising event

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Develop guidelines and strategies for carrying out a course of action
- Use effective coaching/mentoring skills with peers or subordinates
- Identify people who can contribute to the solution of a problem or task, enlisting help, sharing credit with others
- Bring about a settlement or agreement by bargaining; use argumentation techniques to persuade others

ANALYTICAL SKILLS

- Use logic or scientific thinking to deal with many different kinds of problems
- Gather and interpret data
- Understand and express complex technical and scientific information
- Make decisions based on information that can be measured or verified
- Work precisely and accurately
- Observe, reflect, use insight
- Experiment, dissect, apply a variety of methods to test the validity of data
- Analyze, conceptualize, abstract
- Synthesize, classify, compare, find patterns, diagnose, develop hypothesis
- Locate necessary resources, use a variety of sources of information

PERSONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

- Analyze and learn from life experiences – both one's own and others
- Relate the skills developed in one environment (school, for instance) to the requirements of another environment (work)
- Match knowledge about one's own characteristics and abilities to information about job or career opportunities
- Identify, describe and assess the relative importance of one's needs, values, interests, strengths and weaknesses
- Develop personal growth goals that are motivating
- Identify and describe skills acquired through formal education and general life experiences
- Accept and learn from negative criticism
- Persist with a project when faced with failure unless it is clear that the project cannot be carried out or is not worth the time or effort required to complete it
- Generate trust and confidence in others
- Take risks
- Accept the consequences of one's actions
- Seek additional opportunities for professional development
- Regularly participate in a healthy combination of activities for stress management
- Evaluate personal and professional strengths and weaknesses
- Discern appropriate behaviors for the workplace