

Translating Your Experience Into Transferable Skills

(For more complete information on transferable skills in your career refer to the
"Identifying Transferable Skills" topic in the Virtual Career Center)

Begin with Stories of Your Professional and Life Experiences

1. List at least 10 accomplishments from your work history, and from other life experiences. These will be the foundation of your transferable skills analysis.

Prioritize the examples, numbering them in order of importance to you (for instance: significant project to you; new challenge you met well; you enjoyed the project).

2. Do some free writing for each example -- write about
- the activities / tasks you completed to reach the goal / accomplishment
 - developing and mastering skills
 - building on initial skill sets and expanding your skills, especially when you really reached new goals
 - personal characteristics that added to completing the goal effectively.

As you review the paragraphs, look for the patterns of activities, skills and personal characteristics that you used to complete the goal, and why you view this completion as an accomplishment. Themes can emerge to help point out your motivated skills, skills that you most like to use, and feel most comfortable and competent using. Begin with your list of motivated skills as you explore how to use best skills in new situations.

3. Add to accomplishments and examples: keep track of your activities for at least a month. Use a two-column format: list the accomplishment/relevant experience on the left, and on the right list the occupation-specific and category(ies) of functional skills involved, and how you recognize new ways to transfer the skill(s) into your current / next work. Recognizing current accomplishments can also remind you of previous examples that you may have forgotten about.

4. This will be a work-in-progress, so keep the list in a format that is easy for you to carry with you and add accomplishments and experiences to. Reprioritize the examples as you continue to achieve in all areas of your life / career.

5. If you get stuck, ask family, friends and former colleagues for reminders (what they know you've done, and what they've heard you talk about) and to listen as you begin the narration. They can help you explain your examples completely and can help you put names to some of the skills that you may not readily recognize.

6. Match your stories with occupational skills and skills you circled and asterisked on the list of transferable skills, to get to the essence of how your qualifications meet what employers are seeking in best candidates.

7. Use the tipsheet, "Identify Your Transferable Skills" [link], to begin listing your transferable skills, prioritizing them (so that you assess your best strengths) and writing your examples of successes with those skills.

8. Use job postings as research for functions and keywords relating to your about transferable skills.

Includes material adapted from *Through The Brick Wall: How to Job Hunt in a Tight Market*, Kate Wendleton, 1992. Villard Books, New York.