

Showcase Your Transferable Skills Successfully

By Deborah Brown-Volkman

The concept of transferable skills is important for job seekers in today's economy. In your resume, cover letter, and during the interview process, you need to prove that you have the experience, knowledge, passion, and drive to get the job done.



If you have been doing the same job for years, and plan to stay in a similar position, or identical industry, your present skills are what you showcase to employers. If you are looking to switch industries or take a different position than the one you have now, you will have to show potential employers why you are

the best candidate and the best match for the position.

What are transferable skills? They are the skills you have acquired up to this point in your life that can help you do something else in your career.

So, How Do You Showcase Your Transferrable Skills Effectively? I Have 4 Ways For You.

I. Stop Telling Yourself That The Only Job You Can Get Is The Same Job You Have Now.

Many people tell me that a job in a different industry would not be available to them because they don't have experience in that industry.

It is true that people do look to what you have done in the past as an indicator of what you can do in the future. And yes, people can write you off quickly if they scan your resume and see that you have not worked in their industry or held the same title before.

You can overcome screening techniques that might eliminate you. It's your job to tell people why you are a match for a position. Use facts and examples that support your case. Show them that you not only understand the responsibilities of the position, but how your skills are transferrable. In addition, your background has given you insight that will help you perform that role exceptionally well. They may or may not accept your background, but at least you tried. But, the

people you speak to won't believe you if you don't believe in you first.

Tell yourself that you won't get a job for whatever reason, and you won't. Tell yourself that you will and you just might surprise yourself.

II. Start To Research Where Your Present Skills Can Fit Somewhere Else. Begin with job descriptions you believe you would be interested in. Go online and do a search on your present title. What jobs do you see?

As you search for jobs, it doesn't matter where the jobs are located yet. You just want to get a sense of what the job market is asking for. Five to ten job descriptions is a good number to look at initially.

Then, take out a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle of a page. On the left hand side, make a list of the requirements for the jobs you want, and on the right hand side next to each item on the list, do the following:

1. If you have done the same tasks, but in a different industry, write down what you did.
2. If you have done something similar, write down how it was similar or close to what they are looking for.
3. If you have not done a task before, write down how in the past you did not know how to do something, and how you got up to speed quickly. Detail the process. This will be your plan for showing how you can acquire new skills.

Here are some examples:

1. You have done the same tasks, but in a different industry.

If you managed a project, created a business plan, or sold something, how you went about doing these tasks are the same regardless of the industry you were in. The terminology



Career Profile

may be different, but how you got from point A to Z is the same. Write down how it's the same.

2. You have done something similar or close to what they are looking for.

If they want you to run reports using a software program that you had not used before, get online and see what type of reports that software produces. The software may be different than what you are used to, but the output of the report is probably the same. Write down how it's the same.

3. You have not done the task before.

Let's say you have to sell a product that you have not sold before. But, you believe that once you learn the product you could do a great job. In this instance, write down how you sold something in the past that you didn't know how to initially.

Detail

how you got up to speed. Write down the classes you took, the people you spoke to, whatever you did to learn the product quickly. This will show your initiative, drive, and ability to master a new skill fast.

III. Realize That Experience Is Not ONLY Something You Get Paid For.

Experience comes from different places. Yes, work is one of them. So are hobbies and volunteer work.

I helped a woman who was in corporate communications get a job in the non-profit art world because her hobby and passion was art. Everything you have done up to this point in your life is relevant.

Take out that piece of paper again.

Write down all of your skills, talents, and abilities. Compare them to the job descriptions you have been looking at. Can something from your life outside of work help you get a job you want? Write down how.

There is a reason I want you to do all of this writing. When you can get your thoughts out of your head and down on paper, they become objective. You might not think a hobby has any relevance to your job search, but then you see it on paper, and you realize it does. In addition, a job search has its ups and downs and moments of doubt. These pieces of paper will remind you of your accomplishments, will help you feel better about yourself, and help you get back on track.

IV. Re-Write Your Resume.

If your resume is filled with words and initials that only the people in your industry understand, and you want a job outside of your industry, then this has to come off. Create a new version of your resume that details what you did regardless of what industry you worked in.

For example.

* 16 years experience in marketing financial services becomes 16 years marketing experience.

* Worked closely in team approach with Department Heads in Programming, Research, Marketing, Business Development and Finance becomes worked closely in team approach with Department Heads.

* Conducted market/competitive analysis for the financial analysts and prepared business plans for venture capitalists become conducted market/competitive analysis and prepared business plans.

* Ran reports for the XYZ team becomes ran reports for the team.

I would rather have someone wonder what industry you worked for, and then have TO ASK YOU, rather than write you off because they believe that for the 3 seconds they spent reading your resume that you are not right for the job.

So, what do you say? You only have one life to live, so it might as well be a life you love!

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