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Title:

Job Applications - Identify Your Transferable Skills

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860

Summary:

If you recently left college or university and have little work experience, you may be unaware of the vast number of transferable skills you�ll be bringing to the workplace. As a student, you developed many of the top skills needed to get a foothold in the job market. Discover how to highlight these skills when applying for jobs.

Keywords:

Graduate job applications,transferable skills,job interview,identify transferable skills,student skills

Article Body:

Getting into the labour market after school or college is a daunting prospect and that�s without the minefield of jargon, overnight advances in technology and discriminatory attitudes.

OK - Let�s bust a bit of that jargon! What exactly are transferable skills?

Quite simply, they are things you can do in one area of your life which can be used somewhere else.

Let�s take an example. As a student, did you get all your assignments in on time? Were you able to set up extensions if your work was late? Did you learn how to type quickly and use a number of computer programmes effectively? Did you hold down a part-time job and manage to juggle work with study and your social life?

If you answered yes to all, or at least some of the above, you have demonstrated an extensive range of skills, such as effective time management, negotiating and good communication skills. Now, you may not give them such grand titles, but if you were filling in a job application form, that�s exactly what you�d call them.

You�ve been picking up skills from the moment you were born. The problem is that you take most of your skills for granted. That�s something we�ve got to change! So grab a pen and paper, get yourself a cup of coffee and let�s get started.

Choose any role you�ve had in your life.

As a graduate, you�ll have spent a large part of your life so far as a student and so we�ll use that in our example. Have a go at brainstorming the skills you developed in your school or student days.

What did you come up with?

Communication Skills

You had no chance of surviving as a student - and even less chance of passing your exams - if you couldn�t communicate the knowledge and skills that you are at college to learn.

How did you communicate this information? By writing essays, giving presentations or talks, delivering a lesson to other students, answering questions, writing a thesis? You may have devised questionnaires and interviewed members of the public, written articles for on or offline publication or for a college newsletter. You�ll have taken notes and summarised information from books and lectures. Think about each subject you studied and write a list of the methods of communication you used, both oral and written and write examples of each.

Teamwork

As a student you will have been exposed to group work of some sort - I know, I�m a teacher! You may have had to research a subject to make a group presentation or for a written assignment, or perhaps you produced a class newsletter or were involved in a community project with classmates. If you have played any team sports in your spare time, you will know a lot about what it takes to work as a member of a team.

Ability to work alone and on your own initiative

Much of the work you did at college was not group work, but stuff you had to do alone and you probably had to motivate yourself to get on with it. So, how good were you at getting all the work done? You may not have liked it, but if it had to be done, chances are you did it. How did you use your own initiative? Did you devise ways in which to make remembering information easier? Did you come up with creative ideas to make your work different and interesting? Did you find a job which you were able to fit in with your studies and which solved some of your financial problems?

Ability to meet deadlines

Deadlines - You certainly had a few of these in your student days. Did you meet them? You may have learned the hard way, sitting up all night at the last minute, but most people manage to get things in on time. And if you didn�t, how well did you negotiate an alternative solution?

IT Skills

As a student you will have used, at the very least, the internet, email and word processing packages. Your college will probably have provided free tuition in these and possibly also in programmes like Powerpoint and Excel. You may also have developed other skills in your own time or when you were at school, such as web design or programming. Add all these to your list.

Research skills

You will have had to do some form of research for your assignments and for your thesis or dissertation if you went to university. Write down the methods you used � internet, specialist libraries, journals, interviewing, using questionnaires, doing case studies.

Communication skills, teamwork, ability to work on your own and to use your own initiative, ability to meet deadlines, IT and research skills are all high on employers� lists of essential attributes in a graduate employee. Your job is to provide examples which prove that you have these skills. So, using the information in this article, make your own list of specific examples. They will help you shine both on paper and at the interview.

� Waller Jamison 2005