

Marketing Your Transferable Skills to an Employer

Career Planning for
Graduate Students & Postdoctoral Fellows

Career Development Centre
2013

Career Development Certificate

- Available to all Graduate students
- Credited upon completion to your co-curricular record
- Enhance your knowledge, resumé and/or CV
 - Career Planning for Grad Students
 - Marketing your Transferable Skills
 - Resumé Writing* **OR** Academic CV
 - Job Search* **OR** Academic Job Search
 - Interview Success

* Core Workshop Series

Individual Appointments

Types available

- Career Planning
- Assessment Debrief (tking@wlu.ca)
- Job Search Strategies
- Resume & Cover Letter Critiques
- Interview Coaching or Practice

Times available

- Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Tuesdays until 7 p.m.
- Note: max. 5 per academic year

Alumni Services

Life-long services available to all Laurier alumni -

- Career Workshops
- Employer events
- Career panels
- Individual appointments
- Alumni Employment Services (if registered)

Other Services

Resumé Proofreading Service

- Available only after a Resume Feedback appointment
- 24 hour turnaround (business day)
- tking@wlu.ca

Career Resource Centre

- Computers, Printers & copiers
- Directories, Career-related books & periodicals
- Employer & Further Education guidebooks

Hello
my name is

Introductions

Name – Program – Goals

Today's Learning Objectives

- **Understand** your goals as a job candidate
- **Discover** how to effectively present your skills to a potential employer
- **Understand** the concept of transferable skills
- **Recognize** opportunities for presenting your skills through each phase of the job search process

Your Goals as a Job Candidate

- To present yourself as an insightful, 'well-rounded' candidate who stands apart from the competition
- To make an effective impression during your job search... which may begin *prior* to your job search
- To obtain meaningful opportunities that contribute to career success



Career planning is a dynamic process



Before you can effectively **present** your skills you must first **know** your skills!

Presenting your skills involves...

- **Understanding** your strengths
- Knowing **how you use** your skills
- Knowing the skills **required** for a job
- Knowing how to **connect** your skills to the job

Career Assessment tools

are available through the Career Centre to help you identify your skills and preferences.

Understand Your Skills

Technical (hard) skills - specific or tangible skills that can be objectively quantified or measured.

- Years of Experience
- Education/Certification
- Artistic/Musical Skills
- Computer Skills
(Programs/Hardware/Software)
- Knowledge of specific methods or procedures
- Physical abilities
(strength, dexterity, speed)
- Mechanical/technical knowledge
- Languages
(written/verbal)
- Specialized Training

Research Your Skills

Interpersonal (soft skills) –

intangible traits, that are subjective not easily measured.

- Communication (written/oral)
- Ability to learn
- Responsibility/Maturity
- Analytical/Logical abilities
- Leadership
- Decision-making
- Tact/Diplomacy
- Negotiation/Consultation
- Adaptability
- Positive Attitude
- Initiative/Innovation
- Team work
- Interpersonal Abilities
- Presentation/Public Speaking
- Co-ordination/Planning

WHAT are Transferable Skills?

Versatile skills or competencies
(technical or interpersonal)
that you can apply and make use of
effectively across a range of roles...

(even those for which you
lack direct experience!)

So...Why do employers care?



"What's in it
for me?"

HOW clearly articulating your transferable skills can help

- ✓ **Signal** a clear understanding of the target role-requirements and relevant impact
- ✓ **Improve** chances for smooth transition into a new role or field (e.g. from academia to industry)
- ✓ **Boost** the odds for future career success and professional progression
- ✓ **Reduce** risk of redundancy over the long term

Categories of Transferable Skills

| Type of Skill | Focus |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Soft Skills | Interpersonal or people skills |
| Analytical Skills | Intellectual or cognitive |
| Technical Skills | Practical, hands-on skills |
| Organizational Skills | Administrative and planning skills |
| Personal Skills | Workplace character |

**For each skill category,
you will want to be able to identify examples of transferable skills that you possess.**

Transferable Skills ...

- Enable an employer to **distinguish** between candidates with similar qualification backgrounds
- Improve the **competitiveness and impact** of a resumé or cover letter
- Provide **'speaking points'** for interviews, networking and career management discussions

Transferable Skills ...

Important Employer Shift:

“Employers used to **hire** for technical skills
and **fire** for soft skills ...
now they often **hire** for soft skills and
invest in the development of
technical skills.”

Comments from “the other side”

We recently asked employers what transferable skills they were looking for in graduate students...

“well developed **project** design, planning, implementation and evaluation skills”

“data gathering **analysis and presentation** (for at least descriptive statistics and content analysis”

“**technical writing** - presenting information objectively, project reporting”

“inclusive, **welcoming manner** in community” settings”

Transferable Skills Exercise

Refer to the Job Description(s) provided.

Analyze, identify and summarize **transferable** skills in each skill category that might be valued by a prospective (non-academic) employer.

Prepare a summary statement using one of the identified transferable skills.

**“As a RA/TA I acquired skills in...
which will be valuable in this role because...”**

Essential Transferable Skills

Can you identify the top transferable skills sought by employers?

- Communication
- Analytical/Research
- Computer Literacy
- Adaptability/Managing Multiple Priorities
- Interpersonal Abilities
- Leadership
- Multicultural Sensitivity/Awareness
- Planning/Organizing
- Problem Solving
- Teamwork

Transferable Traits

Values, personality traits and characteristics that employers seek in candidates -

- Honesty & Integrity
- Adaptability & Flexibility
- Dedication/Tenacity
- Dependability
- Loyalty
- Positive Attitude – Drive/Energy
- Professionalism
- Self-Confidence
- Self-Motivation/ Initiative

#1 - Willingness to Learn

Marketing your Skills

- Your task is to develop ways of **articulating** your unique skills in a **specific, not generic** way...
- You can begin this process by developing your own **unique professional identify** and **targeted qualification statements**

Building a Unique Identity

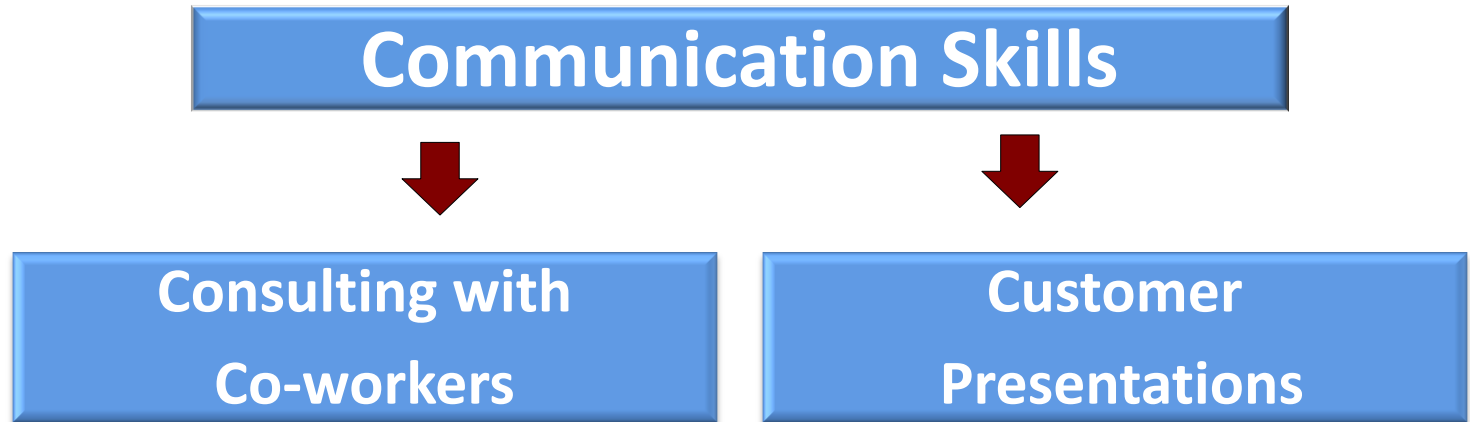
Step 1: Start by identifying and categorizing your transferable skill themes

| Category of Skill | My Skills |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Soft Skills | e.g. Communication |
| Analytical Skills | |
| Technical Skills | |
| Organizational Skills | |
| Personal Skills | |

Think about **HOW** you use your skills

Target Your Skill

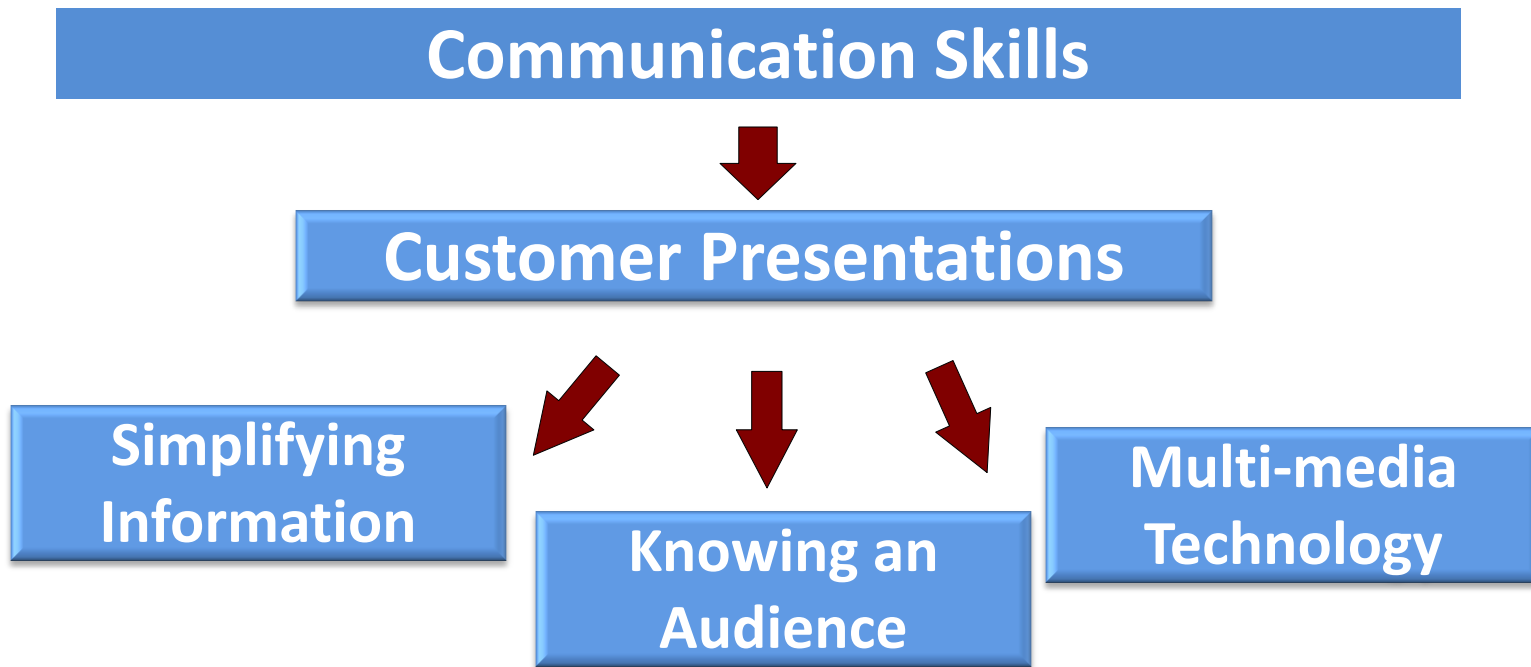
STEP 2: Then, consider the environment in which you use your specific skills...



Create Your Statement

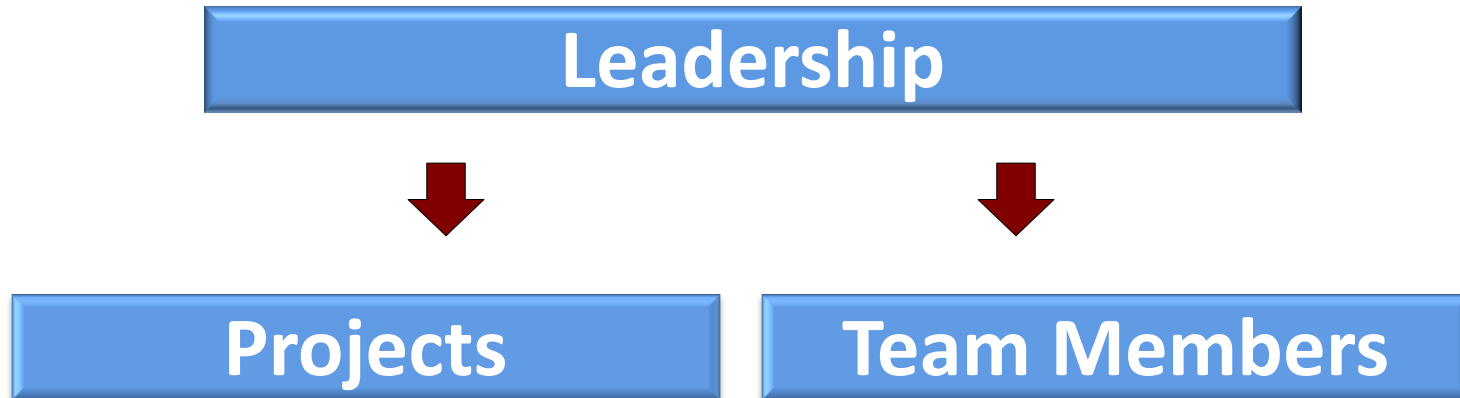
STEP 3: Clarify how you use this skill

STEP 4: Build your specific skills statement...



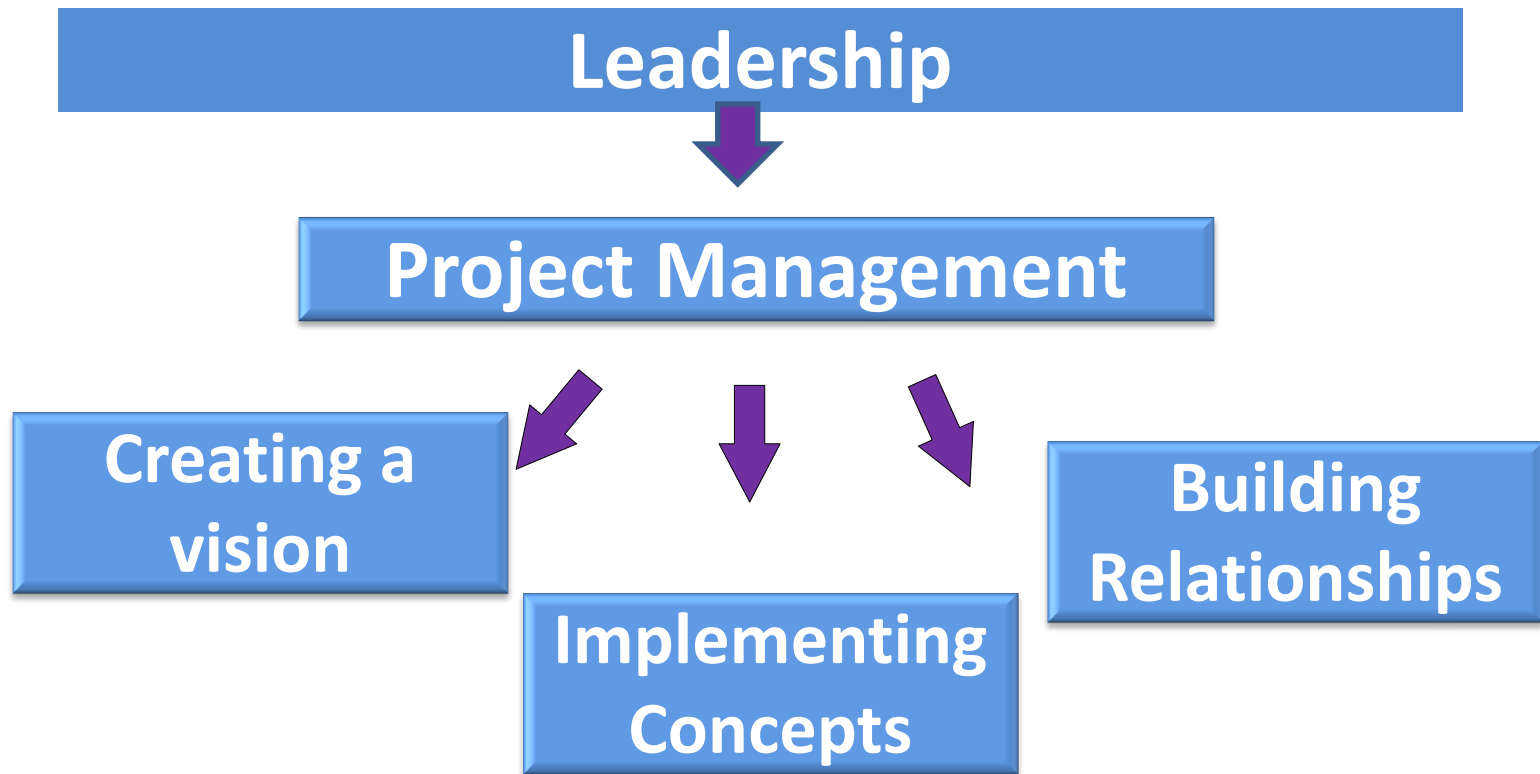
"Engaging and versatile communicator with the proven ability to effectively leverage technology to present complex ideas to diverse audiences."

Another example...



Think about **where or how**
you will use your skill.

Clarify how you use the skill & Build Your Statement



“Results-oriented leader with the proven ability to collaboratively manage projects from conceptualization through to implementation.”

Skill Description - Exercise

You are applying to the role of **Program Analyst** with a NGO.

Step 1: Identify a transferable skill/theme that you believe would be important/relevant to this role.

Step 2: Target this skill based on the environment.

Step 3: Build your skill statement

The ability to understand and describe your skills with depth and insight is the key to effective job search preparation.

Skill Description - Exercise

Select one of your own transferable skills and write a sentence describing this skill

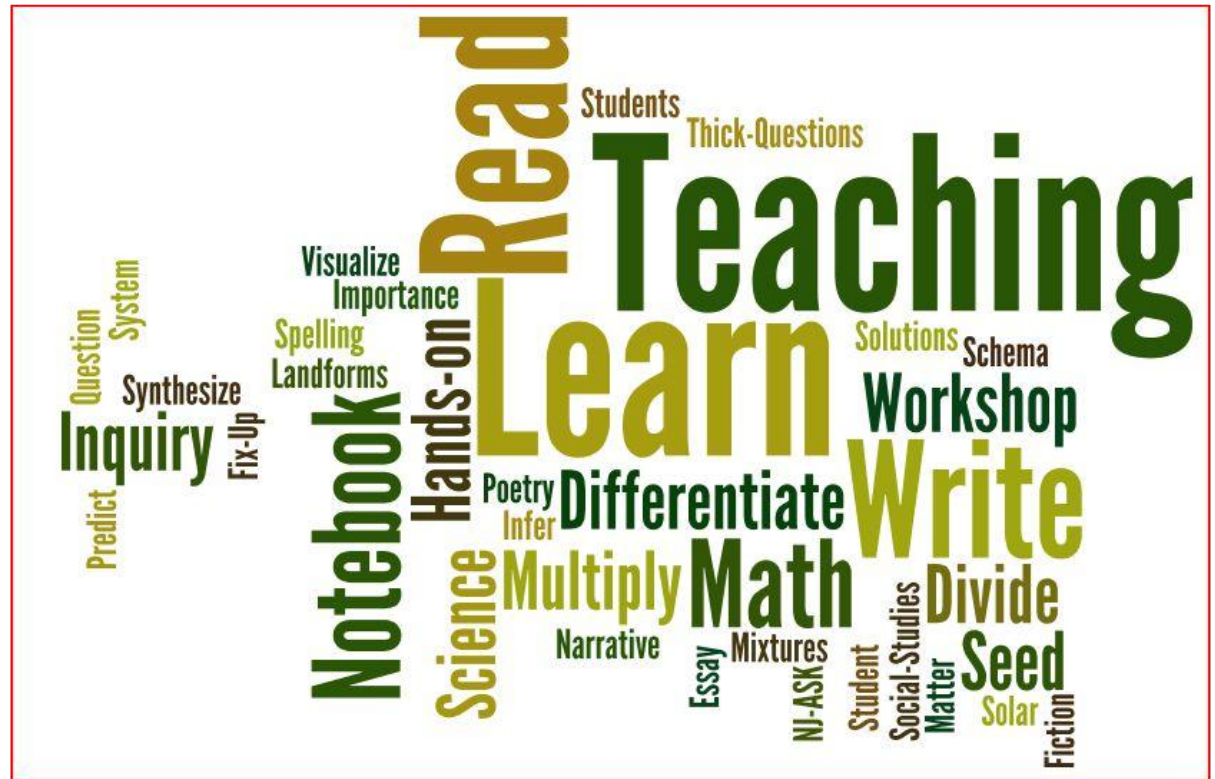
High energy communicator with the proven ability to effectively leverage technology to present complex ideas to different target audiences.

The ability to understand and describe your skills with depth and insight is the key to effective job search preparation.

How to identify key skill requirements

Use Job Posting for Key Word Searching

www.wordle.net



Where might you present your Transferable skills?

- ☐ resumé?
- ☐ cover letter?
- ☐ interview?
- ☐ performance review?
- ☐ networking conversation?

Career Development Centre
wlu.ca/career

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OBJECTIVE

A solution-focused, analytical and resourceful assistant officer, seeking to continue my post-graduation professional development as an account manager utilizing the knowledge gained from Honours Financial Mathematics studies as well as professionally applied client relationship and sales management skills.

PROFILE SUMMARY

- Proven analytical and problem resolution capabilities as reported by Jane Doe, Manager of Client Care, Canada National Bank
- Solid relationship building and management skills as reported by managers, team members and clients
- Excellent time management skills displayed while successfully balancing professional, academic and co-curricular commitments.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office for creation and delivery of effective presentations, preparation of spreadsheets and business reports
- Reputation for extraordinary determination; recipient of the "Demonstrating Exceptional Salesmanship" Award

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

- Client Assistant Officer**, Canada National Bank 2004-present
Customer Services Representative I & II
- Meet or exceed sales targets on a consistent basis
 - Build and maintain client loyalty by learning clients names and recommending appropriate financial solutions
 - Obtained a perfect score in 10 performance categories including relationship with others, meeting deadlines and teamwork during most recent review
- Committee Member**, Wilfrid Laurier University Finance Club 2004-2006
- Researched and presented a market overview on various stocks
 - Co-managed a portfolio of 10-15 stocks, which out performed the TSX for over a year
- Construction Coordinator/Framer**, Woodstock Renovators 2000-2003
- Directed the efforts of a team of 2-4 construction workers of stairs, walls and cottage roofs
 - Maintained a safe job site through clear and on going communication with site team
 - Designed cathedral front walls, including calculating the angles required

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Honors Bachelor of Arts, Financial Mathematics with Co-op Option** August 2007
Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo Ontario
- **Minor in Economics** ▪ **Career Development Certificate**
- Canadian Securities Course** - Completed 2007

INTERESTS

Enjoy reading the Business section, chess, squash and weight lifting.

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST



"A great asset to our branch!"

"A key contributor ... to branch sales growth."

Proven "commitment to our core values"

"An active listener and his ability to assess and resolve problems/concerns has earned him admiration from our clients on how quick he was to "get it right!"

- Jane Doe,
Branch Manager

"I've dealt with quite a few people at this branch... and (Steve) was the first person to actually come up with a solution to the problem"

Re-claimed client comment, as reported by Supervising Account Manager

Presenting Transferable Skills...

- Know what skills are **required** for the job (research job postings)
- Know **how your skills match** the employer requirements and enable you to **DO** the job

Your ability to understand and effectively communicate your skills is a key to success in finding the job you want

Summary

In every setting that you will face professionally,
the ability to **effectively articulate
your transferable skills,**
along with the ability to
offer relevant and compelling examples
of accomplishments and lessons learned,
will enable you to stand out positively.

Final word...

Luck favours the prepared!

- Louis Pasteur



Connect with us!

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wlu.ca/career



facebook.com/lauriercareercentre



lauriercareercentre.wordpress.com



linkedin.com (Laurier Career Centre group)