Marketing your Transferable Skills

Graduate & Postdoctoral Program
Career Development Centre
Wilfrid Laurier University
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 begins prior to your job search

• To obtain meaningful opportunities that contribute to career success
Career planning is a dynamic process

However, 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 Development Centre to help you identify your skills and preferences.
Skills Identification Exercise

Part 1:
Identify a recent work, school or volunteer situation. Recall some of the tasks that you engaged including those you enjoyed as well as those you did not enjoy.

On a piece of paper:
- Identify at least three **skills** you used and enjoyed

Small group discussion:
Discuss and compare the skills you identified
Describe your skills

Part 2:
- Select one of your own skills and write a sentence describing this skill

High energy communicator with the 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.
Most jobs have some requirement for:

- technical or job-specific (Hard) skills
- non-technical or organic (Soft) skills

Transferable skills

(Soft or non-technical skills) are skills we all have to varying degrees and are applicable for many situations/jobs
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
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
Top Transferable Skills
Sought by Employers

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
Comments from “the other side”

“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”

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

• Start by identifying and categorizing your skill themes

**Leadership**
- Vision
- Motivation
- Delegation

**Organization**
- Setting Priorities
- Creating Goals

**Communication**
- Relationship Building
- Collaboration

Think about **WHAT** you do or **HOW** you use a skill
Target Your Skill

• Then, consider the environment in which you use your specific skills...

**Communication Skills**

- Consulting with Co-workers
- Customer Presentations

Think about *Where* you will use your skills
Create Your Statement

• Now, you can clarify and build your specific skills statement...

Communication Skills

Customer Presentations

Simplifying Information

Knowing an Audience

Multi-media Technology

“Engaging and versatile communicator with the proven ability to effectively leverage technology to present complex ideas to diverse audiences.”
Another example...

Think about *Where* you will use your skill
“Results-oriented leader with the proven ability to collaboratively manage projects from conceptualization through to implementation.”
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
Think about it...

Where might you include transferable skills on your resumé?
On your cover letter?
During your interview?
During a performance review?

Remember: Being able to describe your transferable skills helps to distinguish you from other qualified applicants.
Include concrete examples of how your skills will transfer.
Sample Unique Skills Statement

“Focused leader with a solid ability to continually evolve concepts and build foundational relationships that result in driving a project team towards achievement of long term goals.”
Examples of Professional profiles

Donnell Butler
http://www.visualcv.com/djbutler

Melissa Craig
http://www.visualcv.com/melissacraig
Education and Social Policy ● Diversity and Inclusion 
Analysis ● Consulting ● Instruction ● Program Evaluation ● Research and Survey Design

Summary

Donnell Butler has provided outstanding performance in a variety of information-oriented positions including Big 4 senior business advisory services professional, senior policy research analyst, and program evaluation specialist. Currently, he serves as the project director for a national study of diversity in higher education being conducted by researchers at Princeton University. In addition to project management, survey research, and data analysis skills, he brings a committed work-ethic and collaborative demeanor to any professional environment. His academic and professional knowledge cover a wide range of social policy topics including, but not limited to: education, diversity, inclusion, intergroup relations, disadvantaged populations, and economic stratification.

Profile

- Award-winning writer and instructor who is also an articulate communicator skilled in quickly engaging audiences and colleagues, establishing rapport, and developing strong relationships with diverse individuals from all backgrounds, constituencies and organizational levels.
Profile

- Award-winning writer and instructor who is also an articulate communicator skilled in quickly engaging audiences and colleagues, establishing rapport, and developing strong relationships with diverse individuals from all backgrounds, constituencies and organizational levels.
- Organized and analytical problem solver, able to design and implement research projects that achieve objectives.
- Proficient in using a wide variety of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies designed to interpret data and derive implications of research for policy and program development. Strong familiarity with survey design as well as computer programs designed to manage databases and analyze statistical data.
- Successful qualitative research project experience related to administrative and client interviewing, survey design, survey implementation, and process evaluation research.
- Skilled at managing finances and budgets through application of business acumen and management skills developed during more than three years of experience in the financial services industry.
- Proven track record in winning research awards and securing funding from national organizations in competition with hundreds of other graduate students.

Expertise

- Analytical thinker and quick learner with interests in a broad range of public issues. Substantive research expertise includes: community formation and maintenance, disadvantaged populations, diversity and multiculturalism, economic stratification, education, energy, social capital and networks.
- Research skills include: community research, interviewing, management of large databases, statistical analysis, and survey design and implementation.
- Computer skills include: office productivity and presentation software (Microsoft Access, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Power Point), web design software (Macromedia Dreamweaver), and statistical software packages (Stata and SPSS).

Work History

Princeton University
Princeton, NJ, United States
Aug 2006 - Present

Project Director

- Project Director, Campus Life in America Student Survey
- Direct longitudinal educational research and policy multi-institution study of over 12,000 college students regarding their experiences with diverse education environments.
- Manage communications between and among collaborating college and university partners, primary research investigators, and sponsor.
- Oversee questionnaire development process and data collection operations.
- Conduct data analyses that include data management, data integrity reviews, and multivariate statistical analysis.
**Education**

**Princeton University - Graduate**

Princeton, N.J. United States  

**ABD, Sociology**

Donnell J. Butler is a sociology doctoral student at Princeton University. His dissertation research investigates how students’ precollege experiences with racial diversity influence their college choices, interracial interactions in college, and social integration in college.

**Princeton University - Graduate**

Princeton, N.J. United States  

**M.A., Sociology**

**Academic Teaching Experience**


- Taught sections of Sociological Research Methods and SPSS training sessions twice a week to 2 classes of 20 students each. Teaching responsibilities included supervising 20 students working on research papers.
- Developed and delivered presentations on a variety of topics for audiences ranging from 15 to 40 people.
- Built web site (www.djbutler.org) that contained links related to the course material and student needs, including help on how to perform research objectives and write research method reports.
- Awarded 2002 Marvin Bressler Graduate Student Teaching Award from Princeton University.

2000. Teaching Assistant. Sociology 201, The Sociological Perspective, Department of Sociology / Freshman Summer Scholars Institute, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

**Academic Research Experience**


Primary Investigator: Sara McLanahan, Supervisor: Nancy Reichman

- Produced a data set that contained state and local economic information to be matched with the twenty cities in the Center’s Fragile Families Survey. Objective required standardizing public data as well as contacting and negotiating with state data centers and local researchers to procure unpublished data.
- Information gathered included implementation dates, time limits, work requirements, and participant characteristics related to state and local AFDC/TANF plans. Data gathered also included relevant social policy measures such as welfare, child support, and the labor market in the twenty cities.


Primary Investigator: Paul DiMaggio

- Produced an annotated directory, Studies of Artists: An Annotated Directory. Provides researchers with a comprehensive bibliography, range of definitions, identification methods, and sampling procedures used in studies of artists.
Prepare An Interview Agenda

Your agenda should be comprised of the five or more key points you want to communicate to the employer during the interview.

What these points should include?

- Relevant Skills and Qualifications:
  - Technical & Soft/Transferable skills
- Relevant Experiences
- Relevant Achievements
Communicating your Skills

• Remember, rather than presenting generic skills, you are going to identify the ‘layers’ of your skills

• When you offer a response to a specific question, keep in mind the Who, What, Why and How (how relevant) of your skills as it applies to the job
Types of Questions

1. **Tell me about your…**
   - self · strengths · weaknesses

2. **Behavioural-based** (a.k.a. Situational)
   - Past performance predicts future performance
   - Tell me about a time when…
   - Describe a situation that...

3. **Competency-based** (a.k.a. Skill-based)
   - Identify and/or discuss the competency (skills)
   - “How would you approach…”
   - Describe the core skills required.
# The STARR Response

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Sample Interview Question

• How would you answer this question…

“Tell me about a time you had to complete a difficult or complex project or assignment”

• Which transferable skills might you present within your STARR response?
Summary

• In every setting that you will face professionally, the ability to successfully 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 through every stage of your job search process.
Success is your own fault!
Additional Resources

• **Visit** the Laurier Career Resource Centre:
  • Industry-specific resources on job search and interviewing available

• **Attend** employment preparation workshops:
  - Resumé & Cover Letter Writing
  - Interview Preparation
  - Job Search & Networking Strategies

• **Meet** with a Career Consultant for resumé feedback or interview coaching (Book by calling ext. 4495)

• **Access** online resources [www.wlu.ca/career](http://www.wlu.ca/career)