

You have a wealth of experience in specific areas. But what if you want to change fields? Or what if you don't have a lot of experience in the job market, but you have a lot of skill in one area? Transferable skills are those that you can take with you to different fields and settings. Emphasizing your transferable skills on your resume and in interviews can give you a real boost in your employment appeal.

Transferable Skills

Employers are looking for people who have a certain set of skills, accompanied by a certain amount of experience. Sometimes, you look at a job listing and think to yourself, "I have the skills this person requires, but I've never worked in this type of setting before." This limitation does not have to stand between you and the job you want. If you are qualified for a position, the important thing is to emphasize this qualification. This is where transferable skills come in.

We all have experience that lies outside of our work experience. You may have learned how to handle taxes in your husband or wife's home based business. You may have learned about food service prep from volunteer work that you do. You could have any number of skills that you acquired outside of a paying job. These skills are transferable to a paid environment, so it's important that you let potential employers know you have them.

Highlighting Skills on Your Resume

If you are looking for a job in the same field as you have worked for many years, you won't need to highlight your transferable skills as much as someone just starting out in the job market or changing fields. For these candidates, arranging your resume according to different fields of expertise is a great way to get employers to pay attention to what you do have, not what you don't.

Functional resumes are arranged according to functional areas. You might have experience or accomplishments in the area of accounting. You would list "Accounting" on your resume and then include the skills you possess written as action verbs. Include the skills or accomplishments that best meet the needs of the job for which you are applying. Be sure to show the impact of your actions.

Highlighting Skills in an Interview

Sitting down to talk to a potential employer can be nerve-racking, especially if you feel you are under-experienced in this particular field. That's why it is important for you to go over your transferable skills beforehand. Review the items on your resume and have someone do a practice interview with you so that you can see what it's like to list your talents. Don't be afraid to say that you got your experience outside of the workplace. The important thing here is to highlight your accomplishments and give proof to your interviewer that you have what it takes to do the job.

Your transferable skills may seem cursory, but in fact, they could mean the difference between "No thanks" and "When can you start?"