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What are the best transferable work skills?

You've perused a handful of job postings and noticed certain keywords crop up time and again. It seems every hiring manager wants someone who is detail-oriented, can prioritize tasks and maintains strong relationships. These, and many others, are known as "transferable skills."

As the name suggests, transferable skills are the skills you can bring to any position. They are applicable in any industry or profession, they allow you to exceed expectations, and they can be developed and diversified through work, study, volunteering and life experience.

What are the best transferable work skills? That is a difficult question to answer. There are many different transferable skills. They can be hard or soft skills, and they tend to be interconnected in complex ways. With that said, the following five could find a place on any job seeker's resume.

Problem-solving

Problems arise in any business or enterprise, so hiring managers desire applicants with the skills to solve those problems. These applicants excel in analyzing a situation, identifying underlying complications and generating potential solutions. They then implement the best one. Never ones to rest on their laurels, problem-solvers continue to iterate until the solution exceeds expectations.

Corresponding skills: Creativity, research, critical thinking, decision-making and strategic planning.

Communication

A must for any job. Effective communication means an applicant can convey information and messages so there is little confusion as to the intended meaning. This ability saves everyone the time and headache of untangling miscommunications. Communication also incorporates the applicant's ability to listen and receive information, a crucial component of conflict resolution.

Corresponding skills: Writing, negotiating, active listening, public speaking, technological communication, and the ability to provide and accept quality feedback.

Self-management

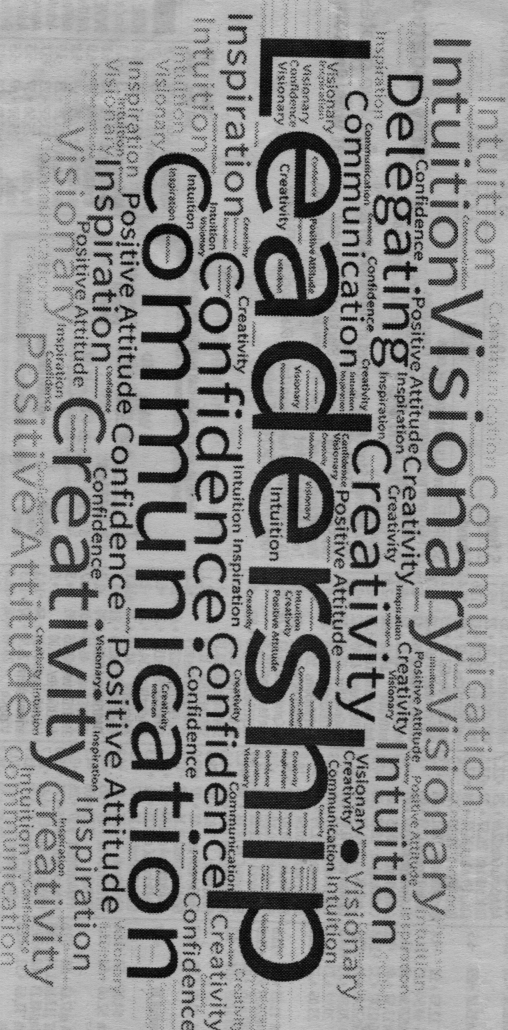
Employers need applicants who can give critical tasks their focus and undivided attention. Such focus makes for smoother workflow and a calmer work environment. Self-management skills generate that focus. They demonstrate that an applicant can direct their professional life and maintain control over its many little details. Management skills are these same skills, extending to the team level.

Corresponding skills: Organization, punctuality, adaptability, motivation, goal setting, time management, project management and priority establishment.

Teamwork

If an applicant cannot work with others, they will be a detriment to any employer unlucky enough to hire them. Because of this, hiring managers always assess teamwork skills before making an offer. Applicants must demonstrate their ability to work toward a common goal with others, make positive contributions, and be empathetic to their coworkers' needs.

Corresponding skills: Leadership, mentoring, coordination, conflict resolution, interpersonal skills, relationship building and team management.



Technical competence

Unless responding to a job posting for an old-timey lamplighter (unlikely), an applicant will need some form of technological competence. What technological literacy they will need will vary from job to job. But it's a safe bet they will need to be fluent in such universal programs as email, web browsers and Microsoft Office suite.

Corresponding skills: Computer skills, clerical skills, job-specific software and troubleshooting skills.

More skilled than you know

Are these the best transferable work skills? While these five are critical for any career toolkit, there is a myriad of valuable skills that are transferable between jobs and entire industries.

That's why we have included a selection of corresponding skills beneath our choices. While these skills can overlap and interconnect, they do have subtle differences. For example, cre-

ativity is integral to problem-solving but includes its own set of strengths and practices, such as the capability to connect disparate concepts into original ideas.

When you read a job posting, keep an eye out for the keywords that will clue you into what transferable skills the employer desires. Then tailor your resume to exhibit that skill. Be subtle but also optimize around those keywords. As you learn to recognize transferable skills, you will soon realize you have mastered far more than you realize. This realization will not only help you include those skills on your resume but give you the confidence to pursue the jobs you want.

This special advertising section was prepared by independent writer Kevin Dickinson. The production of this section did not involve the news or editorial staff of The Washington Post.