

Transferable Skills and Their Importance While Job Searching

It's important to recognize the knowledge and skills you *already have* during your job search process. These skills are commonly referred to as *transferable skills*. Specifically, try focusing on skills that you have which may not be directly related to the job(s) you are applying for but could be utilized in a different way. It can be competitive when trying to find a new job, so the more skills you have and can talk about on a resume or in an interview, the better!

Transferable skills can come from many different places including from previous jobs, schooling, volunteer work, hobbies, individual classes, or even everyday social activities. The key is to pinpoint the skills that you have and identify how they could be utilized in the job you're applying for.

One way to communicate the skills you have is through your resume and cover letter. When looking at the job description of a job you're interested in, try to identify what you already know, or what you have either direct experience in or a variation of experience in. Keep in mind - you don't need to be 100% qualified to apply! Be sure to customize your resume and move your relevant skills to the top. The key is to make it easy for the employer to see these skills as soon as they view your resume.

Another way to communicate your transferable skills is in an interview. Come equipped to talk about what you *do know*; not what you don't know. Try to weave in your transferable skills and how you've applied them in past situations via examples when answering interview questions.

Here are some examples of how transferable skills can work for you:

- Do you have experience with using MRP/ERP systems in a manufacturing setting from a past job? Maybe the job you're applying for is asking for experience using a different system, however, it is still an ERP/MRP system. Try to mention the ERP/MRP systems you did learn and describe the ease at which you were able to do so. The idea here is to show the recruiter that you are more than capable of learning their program.
- Do you have basic Microsoft Office knowledge that you've used in past jobs or even at home on a personal level? These days, some computer literacy is important, even in a manufacturing/general labor position. So, often times, recruiters love to see this on resumes. Maybe you use Microsoft Excel to budget at home, but you haven't used it in a paid job. This still counts!

- Did you have to participate in daily or weekly meetings with your coworkers in other departments at a past job or in a volunteer setting? Were you responsible for presenting updates to the rest of your team? Communication and presentation skills are important to employers because they require that you have to not only determine what information will be most relevant to your team, but you have to communicate that information in a meaningful way.
- Customer service is also an important employment skill regardless if you will be working directly with customers. Even managing conflict with coworkers takes some customer service abilities. Being able to cite times where you've managed conflict, whether with coworkers or with customers, using problem solving and listening skills simultaneously, helps a great deal in interviews! Try to think of examples to share if asked.

Can you now see that we all have transferable skills that are valuable and can be utilized while job searching? Take some time to explore your own transferable skills with your FSET case manager to increase your chances of finding the job that you want.