

5 transferable skills that have stood the test of time

Technology is replacing many hum drum or dated aspects of day-to-day work with new opportunities, roles and expanding industries. But what does that mean for the workforce?

Business futurologists predict that new job opportunities could include robot designers, gene programmers or even replacement body part makers. People will be needed for these newly created fields and it is through transferable skills that many will find themselves in roles they never imagined.

Even the way we work is changing. Increasingly we are seeing the workforce shift toward project-style and contract work, says futurologist Craig Rispin. The concept is similar to how Hollywood works, people work on one movie (project) and when that's finished they market themselves for the next one, says Rispin. In some industries, this approach will wave goodbye to the traditional 9 – 5 and open the door to more varied careers and opportunities.

What's important to remember is that this is not the first time the workforce has been through a revolution. Technology has been transforming the way we work for decades. Just think of the printing press. Until it came along books were copied by hand. Computing arrived after World War 2 and removed a lot of monotonous tasks for people. Then in the 1990s the Internet arrived and along with it came changes across almost every industry.

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- **Leadership skills:** Take your existing leadership skills and apply them to a one-off project at work or in your spare time. Richard Branson is the perfect example of someone putting their transferable skills to good use. Branson applied his leadership skills to run businesses across multiple industries including publishing, music, fashion, and airlines.
- **Interpersonal skills:** Being able to effectively interact with other people will be integral regardless of how dramatically the workforce changes. Take a look at this [transferable skills checklist](#) to identify some other interpersonal skills you might have or might want to build on.
- **Problem solving.** Great leaders focus on solutions, not problems. Elon Musk identified that the traffic in Los Angeles was a problem, so he (together with a small army of geniuses) designed a [yet-to-be-realised plan to build an innovative web of tunnels under the city](#). Problem solving is an essential and invaluable skill that will go a long way in ensuring future success if you continue to develop and refine it.
- **Time management.** Whether you're managing a printing press to ensure all the papers were delivered by 6am, managing scheduling software so that articles get posted online at right time or managing the robots that manage the scheduling software – all are examples of time management. As you can see, regardless of what the workforce looks like, time management will always be important. If you're someone who struggles to stick to deadlines or prioritize, it might be worth exploring ways to build this skill.
- **Creativity.** So you think you're rational and don't have a creative bone in your body? The reality is everyone can find the creative within. Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia couldn't afford to pay the rent for their San Francisco flat, so they got creative – they invented Airbnb. You can be creative in any industry you're in, it's just a matter of thinking outside the box.

The most important thing is not to try and do this all yesterday. You already have more transferable skills than you think and if you want more, write yourself a “transferable skills development” plan and take baby steps that you review weekly or monthly to ensure you’re making progress.

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