

How to identify your transferable skills with the help of psychologist Sabina Read

Often when people are considering a career change, they are deterred from applying by not having the exact experience for the role or industry they are looking to pursue. However, the experience you may lack can be made up for with transferable skills you have.

We asked psychologist Sabina Read about the importance of transferable skills, and how people could go about identifying them within themselves. Here are 4 ways you discover your transferable skills:

1. What are transferable skills and how important are they when people are considering a career change?

Transferable skills are the skills we all acquire along the journey of life that are non-specific to a particular job or industry. It's crucial to identify your own set of transferable skills, and equally important to find ways to effectively highlight and sell them to prospective employers, including identifying specific examples that showcase how you have developed and honed each skill.

2. What are some common skills that people have that can be used across different industries?

There are literally dozens of skills we may develop from studying, hobbies, volunteering, sporting pursuits, and parenting. Even the most elementary job you may have had as a student or early in your career will have helped you develop some valuable transferable skills. Examples include: negotiation, delegation, organisation, collaboration, conflict resolution, rapport building, teamwork, budget management,

problem solving, time management, report writing, IT troubleshooting, research or critical thinking. In each case, these skills could be effectively utilised in a range of industries and a host of roles.

3. Do you think people are generally aware of all the transferable skills they have? Why/why not?

When job hunting, it's commonplace to focus on the required experience and formal qualifications of any given job. Additionally, many of us are quick to shine the light on our deficits, readily identifying where gaps may exist. While an honest audit of our hard skills is necessary, too many of us overlook the many transferable skills we have developed over the years. In other cases, we may be aware of our transferable skills, but we are waiting for a potential employer to identify them, when it's the job hunter who needs to value and promote these powerful skills.

4. If someone is trying to brainstorm the transferable skills they can bring to their dream job, what kinds of questions should they be asking themselves/how can they work this out?

Discovering and highlighting your transferable skills requires some diligent matchmaking! It's best to brainstorm valued transferable skills by identifying what skills are required in the job you aspire to. Research job ads that appeal and keep a note of the transferable skills most commonly mentioned. There's little point in listing transferable skills that aren't relevant to your chosen job. Remember, the task of a job hunter is to understand and meet the needs of the employer, then throw in some bonus gems to ensure you'll remain top of mind.