

What Are Transferable Skills? Definition & Meaning

Transferable skills are exactly what they sound like: the skills you use in every job, no matter the title or the field. Some transferable skills are hard skills, like coding, data analysis, or other technical skills, and some are soft skills, like communication and relationship building.

15 Important Transferable Skills (Examples)

All transferable skills are important. However, employers seek out some key transferable skills, such as interpersonal skills, over others. These are the skills that you'll use in any job and can turn you from a good employee into an invaluable employee.

These transferable skills are desirable because if you already have them, your employer doesn't have to worry about training you on them. You can hit the ground running in any career field and start making positive contributions right away with this list of transferable skills.

1. Problem-Solving

Your problem-solving skills help you not only identify a problem, they also help you identify what is cause the problem and find a way to implement a solution. Employers appreciate it when employees identify bottlenecks or inefficiencies in a process or procedure. However, they are even more appreciative when staff offers solutions to those issues.

2. Analytical Reasoning

Analytical reasoning is, in some ways, part of your problem-solving skills: taking the larger problem and breaking it down into smaller problems to identify a solution. Put another way, employers want staff who can find logical solutions to the company's problems.

3. Critical Thinking

Similar to problem-solving and analytical reasoning, critical thinking is evaluating and interpreting information to make a judgment, come to a conclusion, or choose a course of action. It's more than reading something and saying, "Well, it must be true." It's looking at the evidence and evaluating it to help decide if the information is more opinion than fact before using it to back up a decision.

4. Leadership

Leadership skills aren't only your ability to supervise and manage a team. Leadership skills also include your ability to take the lead on a project and get a team to follow through and accomplish shared goals. Leadership encompasses many additional transferable skills like communication, problem-solving, and relationship-building.

5. Adaptability

As you work in a role, you may discover that you need to adjust due dates, workflow, or even how you approach your job. In some cases, you may need to learn new skills to help get the job done. Pivots often happen in business, whether a strategy or a product line.

Demonstrating that you can adapt to change shows that you can go with the flow while maintaining a positive attitude and completing your work.

6. Teamwork

Teamwork means working together as a group to achieve a common goal. But being on the team and part of the team are two separate things. Employers don't want employees who show up but don't help the team accomplish its goals. They want team players, people who make positive contributions to the group to help it succeed.

7. Communication

A transferable skill in any setting, you will communicate in almost every job. Your communication skills are your ability to share ideas and information clearly and concisely, leaving no room for misunderstanding. You need the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently so whomever you are communicating with understands your message.

8. Writing

Writing is, of course, a communication method. While writing may not be the primary task of every job, given the nature of modern businesses, writing skills have become an essential element of most careers. Employees with effective written communication skills can convey messages and information clearly despite the lack of visual cues.

9. Listening

Listening skills, specifically active listening skills, are transferable skills that cannot be overlooked especially if you're in management. To solve a problem for a client or resolve team conflicts, you have to be able to listen and understand what the other side is saying. If you aren't a good listener, you may not truly understand what the speaker is trying to convey.

10. Creativity

Creativity isn't always about your painting or drawing skills (unless it's relevant to your role). Creativity is about how you approach tasks and solve problems. Are you an out-of-the-box thinker? Do you employ novel techniques to help clients understand how to use the product? Creative thinkers find novel solutions to the problems they face. They use these skills to help their employer see things differently and solve problems in new ways.

11. Attention to Detail

Paying attention to the finer details means you notice everything. You go through projects with a fine-tooth comb to make sure it's all correct and that nothing—no matter how small—gets lost. Being detail-oriented means your employer can count on you to pay attention to every detail in an assignment and to catch errors and correct them as needed. It

also means that you're intentional about how projects are executed, and there's strong reasoning behind all decisions.

12. Project Management

Project management skills help you manage tasks from start to finish. You make sure everything stays on time and also adjust the timeline when things aren't going as planned. Employers want people who can not only see a task through but who can visualize what needs to happen on a project from start to finish. This transferable skill helps ensure deadlines are met, and projects are completed efficiently and effectively.

13. Relationship Building

Relationships are often the key building block of any company. Without good relationships between departments or with clients, there won't be any business! People who build relationships manage conflict or differing goals and help parties arrive at a solution.

14. Computer Skills

You may not be a technological wizard, but it's a good idea to know your way around the many software programs that businesses use today. For example, if you know how to work in one type of spreadsheet, the odds are pretty good you can figure out any spreadsheet, which means the company won't have to teach you the basics.

15. Management

Management is so much more than assigning tasks. It's also making sure people get things done and helping them overcome any stumbling blocks they may encounter. Management skills enable you to ensure that people are where they need to be and complete their tasks effectively.

Why Do Employers Seek Transferable Skills?

Employers know that workers with transferable skills have an extensive skill set they can tap into when needed. For example, someone with analytical skills can likely examine a problem from all sides and help break down the options that exist for solving it.

Employers also seek transferable skills in their staff because, in general, employees with transferable skills have the tools that help them go beyond their job description. A customer service representative usually has good problem-solving skills. However, a customer service rep may do more with that transferable skill than solve problems for customers. They may also notice inefficiencies in how the team is assigned incoming calls and recommend a more efficient solution, saving the employer time and money.

Why Are Transferable Skills Important to You?

As important as transferable skills are to employers, they are equally important to you and play a pivotal role in helping you grow your career.

Taking your existing transferable skills and applying them to new challenges demonstrates to employers that you're adaptable and versatile (which are also transferable skills!). The ability to transition from one role to another using these skills shows that you are flexible in an ever-changing world.

Many job descriptions list a series of skills the company wants from applicants. You may not necessarily have all of the requested skills. But, your transferable skills may be similar to the desired skills, giving you a better shot at getting the job, even if you don't seem to be a perfect fit.

Especially if you're changing careers, transferable skills play an essential role in helping you make that switch. When you're shifting from one career field to a very different one (say, advertising account manager to preschool teacher), calling attention to your transferable skills helps demonstrate how, for example, the project management skills you used to create a winning ad campaign will help you design exciting and engaging lesson plans.

Flex job article, 2022