



Identifying transferable skills for successful hires

...increase and improve your pool of candidates by identifying their transferable skills!

*by James Muskett
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Employers often prefer to hire someone in their industry, even when the candidate's skills don't completely match the requirements of the role. The trouble is that the belief that industry knowledge will mean that the candidate is able to hit the ground running might result in missing out on candidates who sometimes have better skills, can bring new perspective and are more motivated to make a difference to their organisation.

What are 'transferable skills'?

Simply put, they are the skills and aptitudes acquired during any activity in life - jobs, classes, projects, parenting, hobbies, sports, virtually anything - that are transferable and can be applied to job functions. They are the general abilities that are useful across a range of different jobs and industries and may be role-related, technical or general.

Identifying transferable skills

Although there's a lot of talk about transferable skills, identifying skills that are transferable beyond a position or industry can be challenging, but job skills can be broken down into six general categories:

1. Communication

Good communication is about conveying thoughts and ideas effectively, as well as listening to others and understanding what they are attempting to communicate. Key areas include speaking effectively, writing concisely, listening carefully, expressing ideas, negotiating and persuading others.

2. Organisation, Management and Leadership

Effective leadership and management is about directing and motivating others to achieve individual, team and company goals. Key skills include planning and coordinating tasks, solving problems, managing conflict, making decisions, managing groups, delegating responsibilities, motivating and coaching/training others.

3. Research and Planning

Planning and research skills enable the identification of needs and solutions to accomplish specific objectives. They include setting goals and identifying courses of action, gathering relevant information and evaluating results, along with forecasting, predicting, analysing and interpreting information.

Creating detailed job descriptions and asking behavioral-based interview questions in order to identify transferable skills will help you make great hiring decisions!

4. Teamwork and Interpersonal

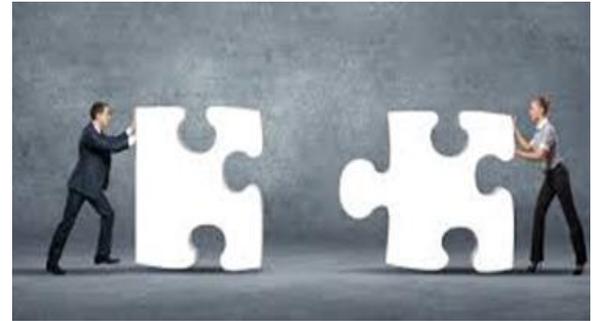
These skills are about the contribution made to groups and the way people relate to and interact with others to achieve a common goal. They include providing support for others, contributing and encouraging the ideas of others, developing rapport and respecting other opinions and accepting group responsibility.

5. Self-Management

This is about how a person directs their own activities toward the achievement of objectives and includes resilience, adaptability and drive. Other key areas include managing time and organising priorities, working under pressure, making decisions, meeting goals, accepting responsibilities, setting and meeting deadlines, being punctual and attending to detail.

6. Technical

In this digital age there are literally thousands of databases, online content management systems, software, Macs, PCs, tablets and in-house systems that companies utilise for the day to day management of their business operations. Is this person able to use a range of systems and technologies? Could they harness your systems and suggest efficiencies to processes or innovations to improve the service you deliver to your customers? A candidate with good technical skills, even if they haven't used the same systems may even be able to interrogate or extract information you previously have not had access to.



Effective Recruiting

Identifying transferable skills from a resume can often be difficult if a candidate has simply described past jobs. Combine with that the tendency to look only for certain key words rather than synonyms means that pinpointing a legitimate match between the candidate's skills and the requirements of the vacancy is much easier if the candidate has highlighted their achievements.

At the interview, asking behavioral-based questions will allow the interviewer to probe with the intent of identifying the candidate's depth of skills. By asking some pertinent questions, you can expand upon what the candidate did in their past job and how they utilised their transferable skills.



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