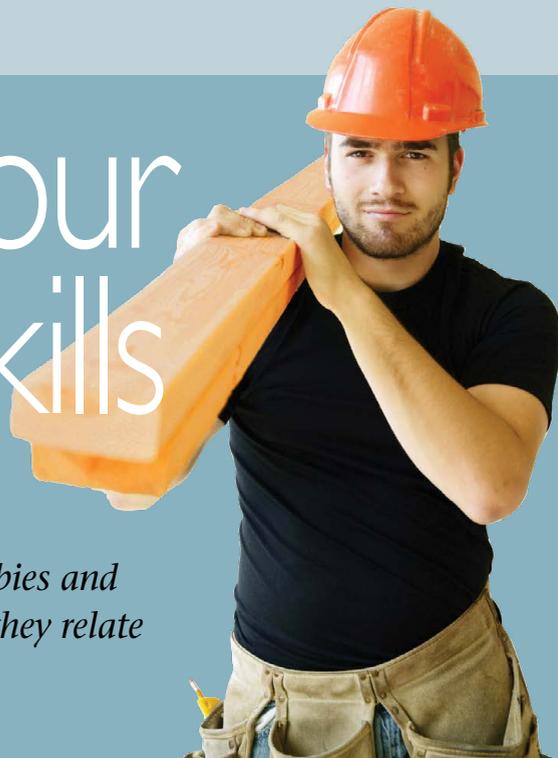# Developing Your Workplace Skills

Do your skills and experience match what employers are seeking? Skills can be learned in a variety of settings: employment, life experience, education, hobbies and volunteering. You will need to identify your skills as they relate to specific jobs.

Identify Your Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are skills you have obtained that are relevant or transferable to a specific position. Once you have identified your transferable skills, you can develop them into skill statements that you can use in an interview to show employers that you meet their job qualifications. A transferable skill statement gives a description of the skill, an example of a time in your work, home or education when you used the skill, and a statement that connects your skill to the job for which you are applying. Review the examples and develop your own transferable skill statements.

Transferable Skill Statement Examples

SKILL STATEMENT 1— Budget money: "I can keep financial records."

Example: "As a full-time homemaker, I handled all of the family money, including savings and checking, without ever bouncing a check or failing to pay a bill on time."

Connection: "If I could handle the family finances so well for twenty years while taking care of all of the other household chores, I will be a good account clerk for you."

SKILL STATEMENT 2 — Organize tasks: "I am a well-organized person."

Example: "At my last job I received assignments from multiple people, so I had to organize my time and prioritize to satisfy everyone."

Connection: "If I could handle that confusion, I can deal with the organizational demands of this job."

SKILL STATEMENT 3 — Explain: "I can explain information clearly."

Example: "Whenever anyone at work had trouble understanding a procedure, they came to me for an explanation."

Connection: "I learn quickly, train new workers and help others."

Other Resources: onetonline.org

Type in an occupation in the **Occupation Quick Search** box. Choose the occupation that most relates to your position. Scan through the skills list and select those skills that relate to you.

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To-Do List:

- Identify your transferable skills, soft skills and job skills
- Create a master skills list and match your skills to what employers want
- Transfer your military experience to employment
- Use the resources available to you on utahfutures.org to find a job and start your career
- Use the worksheets included at the end of this section

Identify Your Soft Skills

Soft skills are employment traits that help an employer decide if your temperament suits a particular job. They are clues to how well you might adapt and problem solve. Soft skills can include problem-solving, organization, time management, teamwork and communication.

Problem-Solving
Employers value employees who can effectively solve problems by finding the best course of action to take in any given situation. The process includes identifying the problem without demonstrating strong emotions or opinions, asking for input from others and being open to different solutions. Being an effective and positive problem-solver shows that you are proactive and care about the company.

Organization
Being organized helps you work efficiently and effectively. Keep your work area neat and orderly, create a schedule for appointments, use electronic folders on your computer and compile a list of tasks and deadlines to review daily.

Time Management
Time management helps you maximize your daily accomplishments and keep the company productive and profitable. Time management involves prioritizing your workload, organizing information, not procrastinating and being a self-starter.

Teamwork
Effective teamwork in the workplace benefits the organization by increasing productivity and morale.

To be a successful team player, support others in your workplace and help them accomplish their goals. You must cooperate, communicate, collaborate and compromise with co-workers to get a job done.

Communication
Communicating effectively at work allows you to share information and build relationships through speaking, writing and listening. Effective communication promotes understanding and cooperation and makes a workplace more productive and respectful.

Practice developing active listening skills to help you avoid conflict and misunderstanding:

- Look the speaker in the eye
- Acknowledge the speaker's comments through body language
- Ask specific questions
- Do not interrupt
- Restate the information in a new way to show understanding
- Concentrate and avoid fidgeting
- Take notes
- Do not talk to others or exchange notes
- Follow up

You will be more effective if you are able to **communicate** clearly with others:

- Pronounce words clearly
- Be brief
- Use a pleasant voice
- Engage the listener
- Adjust your volume
- Show appropriate enthusiasm with tone and pitch
- Use proper grammar
- Match body language to comments

Effective **written communication** is important whether your job involves extensive writing or simple email correspondence:

- Organize the message
- Emphasize important points
- Write what you mean
- Use simple language
- Keep a professional tone
- Edit and revise
- Use easy-to-read formats
- Ask co-workers to proofread

Identify Your Job Skills

Job skills are specific abilities related to a job or occupation, often listed in combination with transferrable skills and workplace behaviors in an employer's job posting.

Job skills are related to job-specific certifications or licenses, tools and tasks. Each industry tends to have its own vocabulary for required skills. For example, a truck driver has to have a Class A CDL. Other examples include proficiency with QuickBooks, Microsoft Excel or OSHA or having a Pharmacy Technician License.

Here is an example of the job skills required for a certified nursing assistant:

"*As a CNA, you will provide assistive health care services to patients, including feeding, bathing, dressing, grooming, oral hygiene and other daily living skills. You will take and record temperature, blood pressure, pulse and respiration rates. You must possess a CNA certificate.*"

If you do not meet the employer's requirements, move on to the next job. Focus your efforts where you fit the best. You don't want to waste your time or an employer's time.

Create a Master Skills List

Develop a master skills list based on those skills you identified, and use it during the following:

- Searching for jobs
- Writing resumés
- Writing cover letters
- Completing applications
- Networking
- Interviewing

Match Your Skills to What Employers Want

To identify the skills an employer requires, carefully read their job announcement and highlight skills and keywords. Take note of the employer's requests, such as work hours, physical requirements, work location, education, job skills, transferable skills and workplace behaviors. Pay attention to skills that are required or preferred, and emphasize them in your resumé and cover letter and during the interview. Talk to people who are currently working in your desired field and ask them what it takes to be successful.

Examples of matching your skills to what employers want:

- Retail associate seeking preschool teacher position:
  "As a sales associate in a retail store I successfully handled customers' daily needs and received employee of the month acknowledgements more often than any other sales associate. I had to be a patient and diplomatic problem-solver, skills that would make me a good teacher. My experience with creatively and patiently solving problems will help me to be an effective preschool teacher at your school."

- Telemarketing agent seeking position in hotel management:
  "My work as a telemarketer required me to communicate with a diverse array of people, including some who presented challenges. I refined my communication skills to effectively solve problems and provide customer satisfaction. Communication, problem-solving and decision-making are exactly the skills that are vital to effective hotel management, and I am eager to apply my talents at your hotel."

⭐ Translate Your Military Experience

If you have served in the military, you need to translate your skills and experience into terms that a civilian employer will understand. Visit the O*NET Military Crosswalk at onetonline.org/crosswalk or My Next Move for Veterans at mynextmove.org/vets/.

These resources allow you to enter your military occupational classification and match it to standard job titles and descriptions.

Other skills you might have:

Along with the skills you used in previous jobs, you may have developed job skills through education, hobbies, community activities and life experiences. Common activities such as shopping, managing finances, balancing a bank account, hosting a party and teaching a child contain potential job skills.

For example, if you are a homemaker, your skills may include being able to manage budgets, to multi-task, to teach or to train others and having knowledge in human development. If you play basketball, your skills may include interacting well with others (being a team player) or directing others (calling plays, coaching, etc.)

Top Five Skills/Attributes Employers Want

1. Leadership
2. Ability to work in a team
3. Communication skills (written)
4. Problem-solving skills
5. Strong work ethic

National Association of Colleges and Employers, Job Outlook Survey 2015.

Use Your Resources

For help identifying skills, go to utahfutures.org. Select your occupation under the **Occupation and Jobs** section and then select **Skills and Abilities** for a list of skills. For example, if you look up auto mechanic you will find that workers in this job should have strong communication skills; reasoning and problem-solving skills; math and science skills; the ability to manage oneself, people, time and things; the ability to work with people; the ability to work with things; and the ability to perceive and visualize. These are skills that are valued in many types of jobs.

Another helpful resource is the website mynextmove.org. You can enter a keyword describing the work you are interested in and the system provides of list of related jobs that usually require that skill.

There are many other helpful resources that can help you identify your applicable job skills. On jobs.utah.gov you can access employment services and become part of the our online job-matching system.

You can also visit the following sites:

*   jobs.utah.gov
*   onetonline.org
*   myskillsmyfuture.org
*   mynextmove.org
*   utahfutures.org
*   military.com/veteran-jobs/skills-translator
*   careeronestop.org
*   careerinfonet.org

Show vs. Tell

On Your Resumé:

Tell — Possess teamwork skills.

Show — Provided training to over 100 new staff by involving them in important company projects, creating a better sense of teamwork.

During Your Interview:

Tell — I am very good with computers.

Show — In my last position, I created a database for management to track inventory costs. The system was easy and efficient and cut administrative costs by 65 percent.

Employment Skills Checklist

In order to determine what jobs you can apply for, you need to know if you have the skills and experience that match what an employer is looking for in an employee. Skills and experience can be learned in a variety of settings, including employment, education, hobbies and volunteering. This section will help you identify your transferable skills, soft skills and job content skills as they relate to applying for jobs.

Transferable Skills

Review this list of transferable skills and check all the skills you have.
Remember: skills can be learned in a variety of settings, including employment, education, hobbies and volunteering.

❍ act or perform	❍ consult with others	❍ explore	❍ inventory
❍ adapt to situations	❍ contact others	❍ facilitate meetings	❍ investigate
❍ advise	❍ control costs	❍ file records	❍ lead
❍ analyze data	❍ control people	❍ find information	❍ learn quickly
❍ anticipate problems	❍ control situations	❍ fix or repair	❍ lift
❍ appraise service	❍ converse with others	❍ follow directions	❍ listen
❍ arrange functions	❍ coordinate activities	❍ follow through	❍ locate information
❍ assemble products	❍ copy information	❍ fundraising	❍ make decisions
❍ assess situations	❍ correspond with others	❍ gather information	❍ manage a business
❍ audit records	❍ create	❍ gather materials	❍ manage people
❍ be detail-oriented	❍ delegate	❍ give customer service	❍ manage projects
❍ be precise	❍ develop	❍ guide or lead	❍ measure boundaries
❍ be responsible	❍ develop policy	❍ handle complaints	❍ mediate problems
❍ budget money	❍ direct others	❍ handle equipment	❍ meet deadlines
❍ buy products or services	❍ dispense information	❍ handle money	❍ meet the public
❍ calculate numbers	❍ distribute	❍ handle public relations	❍ memorize information
❍ chart information	❍ draft	❍ help	❍ mentor others
❍ check for accuracy	❍ drive	❍ identify solutions	❍ monitor progress
❍ classify information	❍ edit	❍ illustrate	❍ motivate others
❍ collect money	❍ encourage	❍ implement	❍ move materials
❍ communicate	❍ enforce	❍ improve	❍ negotiate
❍ compare data	❍ estimate	❍ improvise	❍ nurture
❍ compile statistics	❍ evaluate	❍ inform	❍ observe
❍ complete data entry	❍ examine	❍ initiate actions	❍ operate equipment
❍ compose technical writing	❍ exchange	❍ inspect products	❍ order goods/supplies
❍ compute data	❍ exhibit	❍ install	❍ organize data
❍ conceptualize	❍ expand	❍ instruct	❍ organize people
❍ confront others	❍ expedite	❍ interpret data	❍ organize tasks
❍ construct buildings	❍ explain	❍ interview	❍ own/operate business

(continued)

Download this form at jobs.utah.gov/jobseeker/oltools/transferableskills.pdf

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Transferable Skills (continued)

- perceive needs
- persuade others
- plan
- prepare materials
- process information
- process materials
- program
- promote
- recommend
- recruit
- reduce costs
- refer people
- rehabilitate people
- remember information
- report information
- research
- resolve problems
- retrieve information
- review
- schedule
- sell
- set goals or objectives
- signal
- solve problems
- speak in public
- supervise
- support
- survey
- tabulate
- take instructions
- think ahead
- think logically
- track
- track information
- train or teach
- translate
- travel
- troubleshoot
- type
- understand
- unite people
- update information
- upgrade
- use hand/eye coordination
- use words correctly
- verify
- visit
- visualize
- volunteer
- work quickly
- write procedures
- write promotional material
- write proposals
- write reports

Soft Skills

Soft skills are employment traits that help an employer decide if your temperament suits a particular job. They are clues to how well you might adapt and problem solve. Soft skills can include time management, honesty, punctuality, efficiency, physical strength and motivation. Review this list of soft skills and check all the skills you have.

- ambitious
- assertive
- capable
- competent
- creative
- decisive
- discreet
- eager
- efficient
- energetic
- enthusiastic
- flexible and adaptable
- friendly
- good attendance
- good communication
- hard-working
- helpful
- humorous
- methodical
- modest
- open-minded
- optimistic
- organized
- original
- patient
- persistent
- positive attitude
- practical
- problem-solving skills
- reliable
- resourceful
- results-oriented
- self-confident
- sincere
- strong work ethic
- tactful
- team player
- tenacious
- thrifty
- time management skills
- tolerant
- trustworthy
- works well under pressure

Job Content Skills

Job content skills are related to job-specific certifications, licenses, tools and tasks. Each industry tends to have its own vocabulary of required skills. An example of a job content skill is a Class A CDL for a truck driver. Other examples include proficiency with QuickBooks, Microsoft Excel or OSHA or having a pharmacy technician license. List all job content skills that apply to you:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Skill Statements

Once you have identified your transferable skills, you can develop them into transferable skill statements that you can use in an interview to show employers that you meet the qualifications of the job. A transferable skill statement gives a description of the skill; an example of a time in your work, home or education when you used the skill; and a statement that connects your skill to the job you are applying for. Review the examples below, and then get started developing your own transferable skill statements.

Skill statement 1 — Budget money: *"I can keep financial records."*

Example: "As a full-time homemaker, I handled all of the family money, including savings and checking, without ever bouncing a check or failing to pay a bill on time."

Connection: "If I could handle the family finances so well for twenty years while taking care of all of the other household chores, I will be a good account clerk for you."

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Example: "At my last job I received assignments from multiple people, so I had to organize my time and prioritize to satisfy everyone."

Connection: "If I could handle that confusion, I can deal with the organizational demands of this job."

Skill statement 3 — Explain: "I can explain information clearly."

Example: "Whenever anyone at work had trouble understanding a procedure, they came to me for an explanation."

Connection: "I learn quickly, train new workers and help others."

Skill: _____

Statement: _____

Example: _____

Connection: _____

Skill: _____

Statement: _____

Example: _____

Connection: _____

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