

Marketing your Transferable Skills

Graduate & Postdoctoral Program
Career Development Centre
Wilfrid Laurier University

Learning Objectives

- Understand your goals as a job candidate
- Discover how to effectively present your skills to a potential employer
- Understand the concept of transferable skills
- Recognize opportunities for presenting your skills through each phase of the job search process

Your Goals as a Job Candidate

- To present yourself as an insightful, 'well-rounded' candidate who stands apart from the competition
- To make an effective impression during your job search which begins prior to your job search
- To obtain meaningful opportunities that contribute to career success

Career planning is a dynamic process



However, before you can effectively **present** your skills you must first **know** your skills!

Presenting your skills involves...

- **Understanding** your strengths
- Knowing **how you use** your skills
- Knowing the skills **required** for a job
- Knowing how to **connect** your skills to the job

Career Assessment tools are available through the
Career Development Centre
to help you identify your skills and preferences.

Skills Identification Exercise

Part 1:

Identify a recent work, school or volunteer situation. Recall some of the tasks that you engaged including those you enjoyed as well as those you did not enjoy.

On a piece of paper:

- Identify at least three **skills** you used and enjoyed

Small group discussion:

Discuss and compare the skills you identified

Describe your skills

Part 2:

- Select one of your own skills and write a sentence describing this skill

High energy communicator with the ability to effectively leverage technology to present complex ideas to different target audiences

The ability to understand and describe your skills with depth and insight is the key to effective job search preparation.

Moving Beyond Basic Skills...

Most jobs have some requirement for:

- **technical** or **job-specific** (Hard) skills
- **non-technical** or **organic** (Soft) skills

Transferable skills

(Soft or non-technical skills) are skills we all have to varying degrees and are applicable for many situations/jobs

Transferable Skills ...

- Enable an employer to **distinguish** between candidates with similar qualification backgrounds
- Improve the **competitiveness and impact** of a resumé or cover letter
- Provide **‘speaking points’** for interviews, networking and career management discussions

Transferable Skills ...

Important Employer Shift:

- Employers used to **hire** for technical skills and **fire** for soft skills ... now they often **hire** for soft skills and **invest** in the development of technical skills

Top Transferable Skills Sought by Employers

Can you identify the top transferable skills sought by employers?

- Communication
- Analytical/Research
- Computer Literacy
- Adaptability/Managing Multiple Priorities
- Interpersonal Abilities
- Leadership
- Multicultural Sensitivity/Awareness
- Planning/Organizing
- Problem Solving
- Teamwork

Transferable Traits

Values, personality traits and characteristics that employers seek in candidates -

- Honesty & Integrity
- Adaptability & Flexibility
- Dedication/Tenacity
- Dependability
- Loyalty
- Positive Attitude – Drive/Energy
- Professionalism
- Self-Confidence
- Self-Motivation/ Initiative

#1 - Willingness to Learn

Comments from “the other side”

We recently asked employers what transferable skills they were looking for in graduate students...

“well developed project design, planning, implementation and evaluation skills”

“data gathering analysis and presentation (for at least descriptive statistics and content analysis”

“technical writing - presenting information objectively, project reporting”

“inclusive, welcoming manner in community” settings”

Marketing your Skills

- Your task is to develop ways of **articulating** your unique skills in a **specific, not generic** way...
- You can begin this process by developing your own **unique professional identify** and **targeted qualification statements**

Building a Unique Identity

- Start by identifying and categorizing your skill themes



Think about **WHAT** you do
or **HOW** you use a skill

Target Your Skill

- Then, consider the environment in which you use your specific skills...

Communication Skills



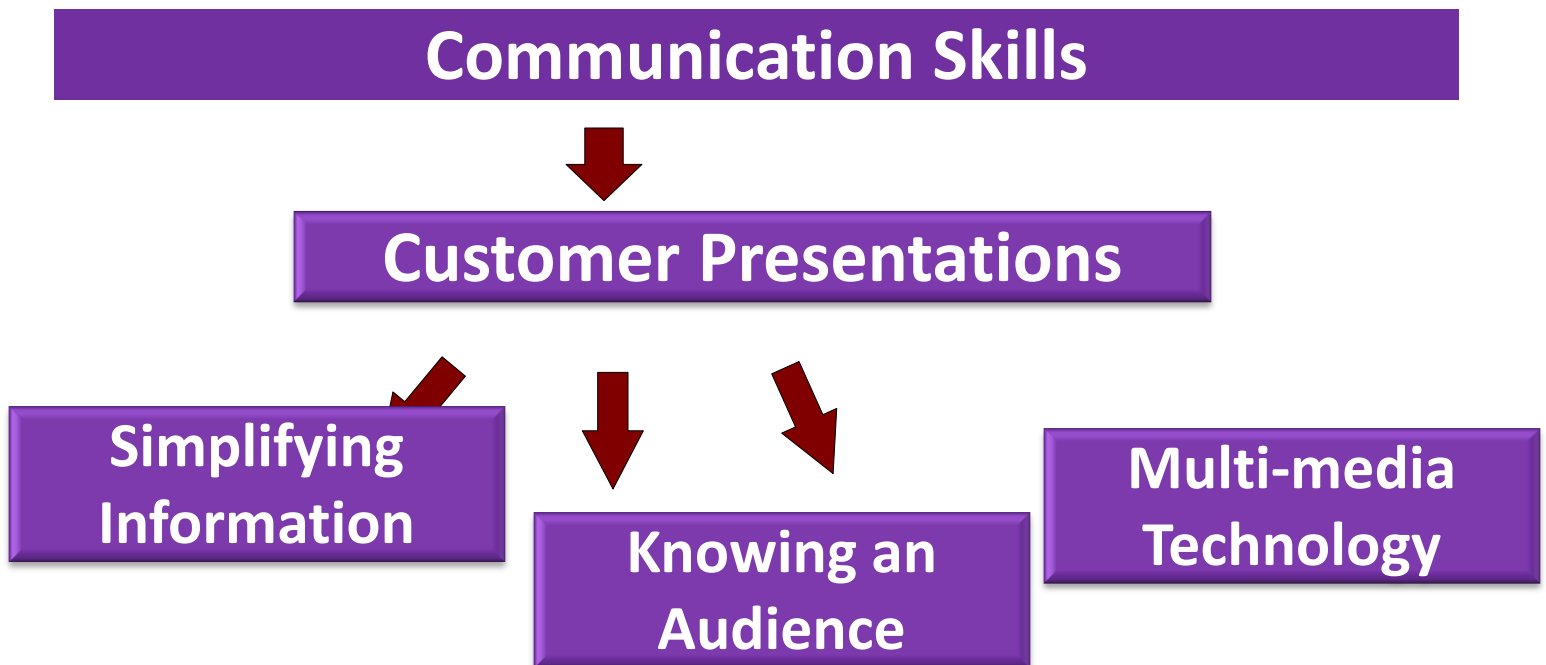
Consulting with
Co-workers

Customer
Presentations

Think about **Where** you will use
your skills

Create Your Statement

- Now, you can clarify and build your specific skills statement...



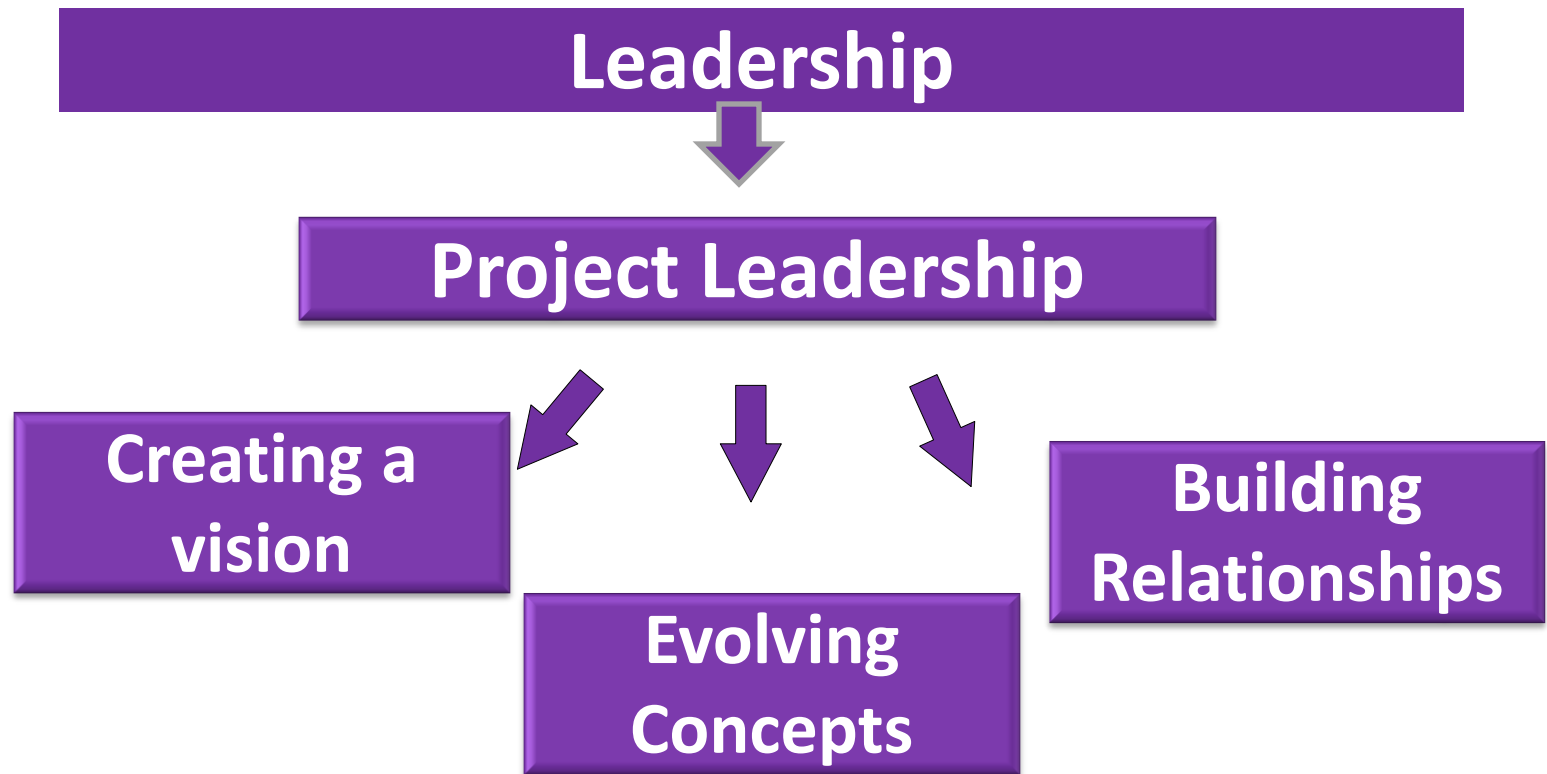
“Engaging and versatile communicator with the proven ability to effectively leverage technology to present complex ideas to diverse audiences.”

Another example...



Think about **Where** you will use
your skill

Create Your Statement



“Results-oriented leader with the proven ability to collaboratively manage projects from conceptualization through to implementation.”

Presenting Transferable Skills...

- Know what skills are **required** for the job (research job postings)
- Know **how your skills match** the employer requirements and enable you to **DO** the job

Your ability to understand and effectively communicate your skills is a key to success in finding the job you want

Think about it...

Where might you include transferable skills on your resumé?

On your cover letter?

During your interview?

During a performance review?

Remember: Being able to describe your transferable skills helps to distinguish you from other qualified applicants.

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OBJECTIVE

A solution-focused, analytical and resourceful assistant officer, seeking to continue my post-graduation professional development as an account manager utilizing the knowledge gained from Honours Financial Mathematics studies as well as professionally applied client relationship and sales management skills.

PROFILE SUMMARY

- Proven analytical and problem resolution capabilities as reported by Jane Doe, Manager of Client Care, Canada National Bank
- Solid relationship building and management skills as reported by managers, team members and clients
- Excellent time management skills displayed while successfully balancing professional, academic and co-curricular commitments.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office for creation and delivery of effective presentations, preparation of spreadsheets and business reports
- Reputation for extraordinary determination; recipient of the "Demonstrating Exceptional Salesmanship" Award

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Client Assistant Officer, Canada National Bank 2004-present
Customer Services Representative I & II

- Meet or exceed sales targets on a consistent basis
- Build and maintain client loyalty by learning clients names and recommending appropriate financial solutions
- Obtained a perfect score in 10 performance categories including relationship with others, meeting deadlines and teamwork during most recent review

Committee Member, Wilfrid Laurier University Finance Club 2004-2006

- Researched and presented a market overview on various stocks
- Co-managed a portfolio of 10-15 stocks, which out-performed the TSX for over a year

Construction Coordinator/Framer, Woodstock Renovators 2000-2003

- Directed the efforts of a team of 2-4 construction workers of stairs, walls and cottage roofs
- Maintained a safe job site through clear and on going communication with site team
- Designed cathedral front walls, including calculating the angles required

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Honors Bachelor of Arts, Financial Mathematics with Co-op Option August 2007
Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo Ontario

- Minor in Economics
- Career Development Certificate

Canadian Securities Course - Completed 2007

INTERESTS

Enjoy reading the Business section, chess, squash and weight lifting.

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

"A great asset to our branch!"

"A key contributor ... to branch sales growth."

Proven "commitment to our core values"

"An active listener and his ability to assess and resolve problems/concerns has earned him admiration from our clients on how quick he was to "get it right!"

- Jane Doe,
Branch Manager

"I've dealt with quite a few people at this branch... and (Steve) was the first person to actually come up with a solution to the problem"

Re-claimed client comment, as reported by Supervising Account Manager

Include concrete examples of how your skills will transfer.

Sample Unique Skills Statement

“Focused leader with a solid ability to continually evolve concepts and build foundational relationships that result in driving a project team towards achievement of long term goals.”

Examples of Professional profiles

Donnell Butler

<http://www.visualcv.com/djbutler>

Melissa Craig

<http://www.visualcv.com/melissacraig>



Donnell Butler

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View my profile on 

Headline

**Education and Social Policy • Diversity and Inclusion
Analysis • Consulting • Instruction • Program Evaluation • Research and Survey Design**

Summary

Donnell Butler has provided outstanding performance in a variety of information-oriented positions including Big 4 senior business advisory services professional, senior policy research analyst, and program evaluation specialist. Currently, he serves as the project director for a national study of diversity in higher education being conducted by researchers at Princeton University. In addition to project management, survey research, and data analysis skills, he brings a committed work-ethic and collaborative demeanor to any professional environment. His academic and professional knowledge cover a wide range of social policy topics including, but not limited to: education, diversity, inclusion, intergroup relations, disadvantaged populations, and economic stratification.

Profile

- Award-winning writer and instructor who is also an articulate communicator skilled in quickly engaging audiences and colleagues, establishing rapport, and developing strong relationships with diverse individuals from all backgrounds, constituencies and organizational levels.

Profile

- Award-winning writer and instructor who is also an articulate communicator skilled in quickly engaging audiences and colleagues, establishing rapport, and developing strong relationships with diverse individuals from all backgrounds, constituencies and organizational levels.
- Organized and analytical problem solver, able to design and implement research projects that achieve objectives.
- Proficient in using a wide variety of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies designed to interpret data and derive implications of research for policy and program development. Strong familiarity with survey design as well as computer programs designed to manage databases and analyze statistical data.
- Successful qualitative research project experience related to administrative and client interviewing, survey design, survey implementation, and process evaluation research.
- Adept at managing finances and budgets through application of business acumen and management skills developed during more than three years of experience in the financial services industry.
- Proven track record in winning research awards and securing funding from national organizations in competition with hundreds of other graduate students.

Expertise

- Analytical thinker and quick learner with interests in a broad range of public issues. Substantive research expertise includes: community formation and maintenance, disadvantaged populations, diversity and multiculturalism, economic stratification, education, energy, social capital and networks.
- Research skills include: community research, interviewing, management of large databases, statistical analysis, and survey design and implementation.
- Computer skills include: office productivity and presentation software (Microsoft Access, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Power Point), web design software (Macromedia Dreamweaver), and statistical software packages (Stata and SPSS).

Work History

Princeton University

Princeton, NJ, United States

Aug 2006 - Present

Project Director

Project Director, Campus Life in America Student Survey

- Direct longitudinal educational research and policy multi-institution study of over 12,000 college students regarding their experiences with diverse education environments.
- Manage communications between and among collaborating college and university partners, primary research investigators, and sponsor.
- Oversee questionnaire development process and data collection operations.
- Conduct data analyses that include data management, data integrity reviews, and multivariate statistical analysis.



Princeton University - Graduate

Princeton, NJ, United States

Present

ABD, Sociology

Donnell J. Butler is a sociology doctoral student at Princeton University. His dissertation research investigates how students' precollege experiences with racial diversity influence their college choices, interracial interactions in college, and social integration in college.

Princeton University - Graduate

Princeton, NJ, United States

Sep 1998 - May 2001

M.A., Sociology

Academic Teaching Experience

2000 – 2001. Assistant in Instruction: Sociology 301, Sociological Research Methods, Department of Sociology, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ

- Taught sections of Sociological Research Methods and SPSS training sessions twice a week to 2 classes of 20 students each. Teaching responsibilities included supervising 20 students working on research papers.
- Developed and delivered presentations on a variety of topics for audiences ranging from 15 to 40 people.
- Built web site (www.djbutler.org) that contained links related to the course material and student needs, including help on how to perform research objectives and write research method reports.
- Awarded 2002 Marvin Bressler Graduate Student Teaching Award from Princeton University.

2000. Teaching Assistant: Sociology 201, The Sociological Perspective, Department of Sociology / Freshman Summer Scholars Institute, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

Academic Research Experience

2000. Research Assistant, Center for Fragile Families and Child Well-Being, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
Primary Investigator: Sara McLanahan, Supervisor: Nancy Reichman

- Produced a data set that contained state and local economic information to be matched with the twenty cities in the Center's Fragile Families Survey. Objective required standardizing public data as well as contacting and negotiating with state data centers and local researchers to procure unpublished data.
- Information gathered included implementation dates, time limits, work requirements, and participant characteristics related to state and local AFDC/TANF plans. Data gathered also included relevant social policy measures such as welfare, child support, and the labor market in the twenty cities.

1999 – 2000. Research Assistant, Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
Primary Investigator: Paul DiMaggio

- Produced an annotated directory, *Studies of Artists: An Annotated Directory*. Provides researchers with a comprehensive bibliography, range of definitions, identification methods, and sampling procedures used in studies of artists.

Prepare An Interview Agenda

Your agenda should be comprised of the five or more key points you want to communicate to the employer during the interview

What these points should include?

- Relevant Skills and Qualifications:
Technical & Soft/Transferable skills
- Relevant Experiences
- Relevant Achievements

Communicating your Skills

- Remember, rather than presenting generic skills, you are going to identify the 'layers' of your skills
- When you offer a response to a specific question, keep in mind the **Who, What, Why and How (how relevant)** of your skills as it **applies to the job**

Types of Questions

1. Tell me about your...

self · strengths · weaknesses

2. Behavioural-based (a.k.a. Situational)

Past performance predicts future performance

Tell me about a time when...

Describe a situation that...

3. Competency-based (a.k.a. Skill-based)

Identify and/or discuss the competency (skills)

“How would you approach...”

Describe the core skills required.

The **STARR** Response

S	Situation	• Describe the setting/situation (briefly)
T	Task	• Indicate what needed to be accomplished
A	Action	• Detail the actions you took and the skills utilized
R	Relevance	• Describe the job-relevance of the skills used
R	Result	• Outline the outcomes & benefits

Sample Interview Question

- How would you answer this question...

“Tell me about a time you had to complete a difficult or complex project or assignment”

- Which transferable skills might you present within your **STARR** response?

Summary

- In every setting that you will face professionally, the ability to **successfully articulate your transferable skills**, along with the ability to **offer relevant and compelling examples** of accomplishments and lessons learned, will enable you to stand out positively through every stage of your job search process.

Success is your own fault!

Additional Resources

- **Visit** the Laurier Career Resource Centre:
 - Industry-specific resources on job search and interviewing available
- **Attend** employment preparation workshops:
 - Resumé & Cover Letter Writing
 - Interview Preparation
 - Job Search & Networking Strategies
- **Meet** with a **Career Consultant** for resumé feedback or interview coaching (Book by calling ext. 4495)
- **Access** online resources www.wlu.ca/career