

Network to Work Meeting – June 2022

RESOURCE DOCUMENT – STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL CAREER REINVENTION

Successful Career Reinvention

As a participant in the SCSEP program, you are here to receive training that will allow you to return to the workforce. Most of you are experiencing career reinvention as life circumstances have pushed you to seek a new line of work. Career reinvention involves learning new skills as well as using existing skills – these are often called “transferrable skills” – in new ways.

To be successful in your career reinvention and in your job search, it is crucial to have a solid understanding of yourself and the skills, talents and traits that you bring to the table. Once you have that knowledge, you will be prepared to answer that dreaded but important question, “*Tell me about yourself*”. Whether you are networking, writing a resume or cover letter, or in an interview, it is crucial to be able to market yourself by selling your skills and traits.

Unfortunately, many of us don’t see ourselves for who we really are. We may assume everyone can do the things we are good at, and that we don’t bring anything special to the table.

Each of you has your own unique abilities that you can offer to an employer. The following tools can help you identify and recognize those abilities and skills for yourself.

Skill Identification Activity

Adapted from: Yana Parker’s Damn Good Resumes, www.damngood.com

Are you having a hard time identifying the skills you want to promote? Sometimes we take our abilities for granted, assuming everyone can do what we do. Use these questions to help you clarify the transferrable skills and marketable personal traits you want to showcase throughout your job search.

A. For Everyone

Answer these questions:

1. How would you describe yourself as a worker? What would you like an employer to know about you?
2. How would your co-workers or friends describe you?
3. Name 3 - 5 of your strongest skills and talents (in your work and/or life).
4. List all of the things you like about yourself.

B. For Experienced Job Hunters in Transition

Answer these questions:

1. Bosses have often ***counted on you for something*** at which they think you are especially good. What have they counted on you for?
2. If you had to teach a bright new employee the "tricks of the trade" (i.e., how to do a great job in your line of work), ***what special thing that you do*** would you teach this employee?

3. If you had to put together a training manual, how would you describe the ***most important thing needed in order to carry out excellently*** the kind of work you do best?
4. Think of a time when ***you went well above-and-beyond*** your job description. What did you do?
5. What do ***you know or do so well*** that you could teach it to others? What is the main tip you would tell people about how to do that like a pro?
6. If your friends and/or ***co-workers were to brag about your skills***, what would they say?
7. If you felt comfortable bragging about yourself, ***what would you brag about?*** What are you most proud of?
8. What difficulties or barriers have you overcome to get where you are now? ***What skills helped you to overcome those difficulties?***
9. What ***creative things have you done*** that you feel good about?

10. What ***praise, acknowledgement or awards*** have you gotten from customers, colleagues or employers?

11. Think of a ***problem you were able to resolve*** that others could not. What did you do? What skills or abilities did you use?

12. If you suddenly had to leave the area for a while (say, to take care of an elderly or sick relative) ***what would your work friends miss about you*** while you are gone? How would their jobs be tougher, or less enjoyable, when you're not there to help?

C. For Adults with Little or NO PAID WORK HISTORY

Answer these questions:

1. Good friends and family count on each other for lots of things. What do your friends and family ***count on you*** for?

2. What ***good qualities did you inherit*** from your family? What have you done that shows you have that quality?

3. Do you have any ***volunteer or community service experience that you're proud of?*** (For example, PTA, church, neighborhood organization.) What did you do / what skills did you use?

4. Which subjects **were you best at in school?** Why did you enjoy those particular studies?

5. What **praise or acknowledgment** did you get from your teachers or trainers?

6. What do you **know or do so well that you could teach it** to others? What's the main advice you'd tell people about how to do that like a pro?

7. Think of a **problem that came up that you were able to address** and improve the situation, when others were stumped. What did you do? What does that say about your abilities?

NEXT STEPS:

1. First, answer all of the remaining questions in this activity. List anything and everything you can think of.
2. Review your list. Highlight those skills and traits that you can – and would like to – use at a new workplace.
3. Cross out any skills that aren't clearly important workplace skills or may not have particular value at work. (Like the ability to change out a kitchen faucet, for example.)
4. Next, think about the story about yourself that you might share with others during your job search. What do you really want to tell about yourself? Remove from your list anything that's not crucial for explaining your background or related to the skills sought by a particular employer.
5. Narrow your list down to 8 to 10 work-related skills you are most proud of.
 - a. Write out ways you have successfully and meaningfully used these skills in a job or your training.
6. Organize your points in a way that makes sense in telling your story "about yourself".

Sources for Matching Skills to Jobs

Once you have identified your best and favorite work-related skills, you can consult with various sources to discover the kinds of fields and jobs that utilize those skills. You may discover an interest in a career field that you never considered before!

A. Here's some advice from Indeed.com on how to conduct a job search by skills.

(See <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/job-search-by-skills>)

1. Start in your desired field

In a job board like Indeed.com, look through jobs in the field that interests you the most. There are many positions, so you can likely find ones that fit your skills and interests. Search through jobs that interest you and make a note of any other ones that seem to fit your skill set as well. If you don't have a specific field in mind, conduct a broad search around your interests.

2. Get suggestions online

Another thing you can do is look for suggestions online. For example, you could search for something like *"jobs for people who are good at math"* or *"best jobs for people who like to work in a team"*. More than likely, you'll find plenty of results with suggestions of jobs you can consider. From there, you can research each job suggestion further and add any that seem like a good fit to your list.

3. Search for jobs from your list

After getting plenty of ideas, whether from friends, the internet or your research, you can begin to look more closely at the jobs on your list. Go through each job and look for open positions online. From your search, you can learn more about this position. For instance, you can learn what types of places employ people in these positions, how much they earn and where they are located. You may find during your search that some of the jobs you were considering are no longer a good fit, so you can remove them from your list.

4. Closely read the job descriptions

As you search through the jobs on your list, be sure to closely read the job description for each. Try to learn what skills the job requires and see if they match up with your list of skills. If they do, you can add this job to your shortlist. Carefully reading the job description will help you to not only discover if the job is a good fit for your skills, but you can use the skills they mention when you are modifying your resume or completing their application to increase your chances of getting an interview.

5. Look at related jobs

When conducting a job search, search engines will typically provide you with other jobs related to your search. You should explore these related jobs to see if they happen to be a good fit as well. For example, you may be looking for a job as an online paid advertising manager, but realize the related job of social media manager is a better fit. Looking at related jobs can also help you to discover which skills are in demand in that industry, which is good to know if you'd like to advance your career in the future.

B. Here are links to some other sources for matching skills and jobs:

- <https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Skills/skills-matcher.aspx>
 - On this site sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor you rate your ability on 40 key workplace skills. Then you are shown careers that match your ratings.

- <https://www.mynextmove.org/>
 - On the home page of this site, look for the search box in the section that says “Search Careers with Key Words”. The prompt is to “describe your dream career in a few words.” A list of the top careers will be displayed, starting with those most closely matched to your skills. The results also designate those careers with a bright outlook.

- <https://www.onetonline.org/skills/soft/>
 - Here you select your key soft skills and then a list of occupations with related skills is displayed. It also tells you the level of education required for each occupation.