

A Skills Inventory, a Helpful Self-Marketing Tool

When applying for a job, thoughtfully considering what about you qualifies you for that position may take some time. Having a list of skills made up beforehand can make this process more efficient and effective. If you have evaluated your skills, when a job opportunity arises that you would like to apply for, pulling this list out will ease the application process.

As you think about your skills and characteristics, it may be helpful to divide them into three categories. The first category consists of skills you have learned through past experience and education; these are called knowledge-based skills. Reflect on classes you have completed, projects you have been a part of and organizations you have been involved in. What skills have these experiences assisted in developing? What did you learn how to do from these experiences?

The next category is composed of general skills brought to any job, titled transferable or portable skills. Thinking back on the experiences mentioned before, what did you learn about yourself during those experiences or throughout your time in school? Perhaps you are very organized, or a fervent leader or have strong skills in time management. These are skills that can be beneficial to any job you may obtain. What type of transferable or portable skills make up this category on your list?

Lastly consider your personal traits, the things that make you who you are. These can be easily confused with portable or transferable skills, but consider what about you makes you a good employee? Maybe you are flexible and can easily get along with a variety of personality types. Or maybe you have had a creative instinct since birth and just cannot stop seeing things through a creator's eye.

Once you have divided your skills into these

categories, determine which are most relevant to the position you are applying for. Of the skills you have listed which would most benefit the potential employer? Think about how to communicate those skills to this employer, making yourself stand out from the other applicants.

It may also be helpful to have a CES advisor, an employer or a good friend take a look at these skills with you. A professional or someone who knows you fairly well and has seen your work habits may notice things about you that you have not. Making those additions will be beneficial in composing a diverse and accurate list.

After your list is compiled, you have established an invaluable tool for you to use as you write your resume, summary statement or personal statement. As you begin marketing yourself to employers, no longer will you have to dwell on what you want to tell them about yourself. Having a list you are familiar with that is true to your personality and ability will boost your potential to sell yourself in speech and print.

Be sure to keep your list of skills, it may come in handy in the future as you apply for other jobs! Having an inventory of your skills readily available helps you efficiently and thoughtfully market yourself for positions in the future. Also keep in mind that your list will grow as you gain experience.

This information is based off an article from monster.com.

Also check out services right here at K-State through the Academic and Career Information Center and Counseling Services for skill and interest inventories.

Q&A

Question: Is my CES advisor available to help me with things other than my resume?

Answer: The assistance your CES advisor can offer does not stop after your resume is ready to go. Once you are offered an interview for a job or internship, you can set up an appointment with your advisor for a practice interview prior to your actual interview date.

Not looking for a job after graduation? Karl Kandt, CES advisor of the College of Arts and Sciences, can assist with practice interviews for graduate and professional schools as well. The practice questions he will ask are based off an actual question bank from graduate and professional schools.

A practice interview can help shake out the jitters and provide an idea of how to best answer questions that may come up during your actual interview.

If you have any questions about how to put your best foot forward the day of your interview or about the interview process, bring those as well. Your advisor is here to help!

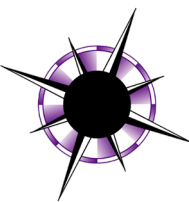
Call or visit CES to set up an appointment, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm.

CES Service of the Month

Spring Career Fairs

Not only does CES host the All-University Career Fair every fall, but each spring CES offers college-specific career fairs as well. Visiting the fairs can open doors to job, internship and co-op opportunities. These fairs are also provide a chance to network with employers.

Visit www.k-state.edu/ces for more information regarding the spring career fairs.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

EVENTS & WORKSHOPS:

Nov. 5

- Dining Etiquette (reservations required)

Nov. 6

- Fall Education Career Fair

Nov. 17

- Overseas Teaching Workshop

Chris and Rand Berny, ConocoPhillips senior vice president, corporate shared services, during his internship last summer.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Chris Merriewether will be graduating in May with a business degree in finance. However, a degree is not the only thing he will graduate with. Before coming back to Manhattan to a jam-packed summer of 12 credit hours and K-State basketball team workouts, Chris spent three weeks in Bartlesville, Okla., where he served as an intern on the ConocoPhillips finance team.

It was like a three week-long interview, Chris said, as he spent much of his time meeting with many people within the different business units of ConocoPhillips. These interviews allowed him the chance to get a better look at the actual work each position entailed. This information helped Chris narrow down the type of job he hoped to have after graduation, upholding his aspiration to work in finance.

Also during his time at ConocoPhillips, he was able to visit the ConocoPhillips headquarters in Houston, Texas. While in Houston, Chris was able to meet with his SPIRIT scholar mentor, former K-State football player, Aaron Lockett. Now working as a financial analyst for ConocoPhillips, Aaron has provided a lot of insight, said Chris.

ConocoPhillips has designed a program called SPIRIT Scholars. This program provides select students with scholarship opportunities as well as leadership and professional development. Prior to 2009, Chris spent three summers working as a financial services intern at a Wachovia bank. His experience at Wachovia coupled with his participation in the SPIRIT Scholars Program opened the door to his internship with ConocoPhillips.

Based on his performance during his internship this past summer, ConocoPhillips presented Chris with a job offer earlier this fall. In May, Chris will graduate with a degree in finance, but he will also graduate with the assurance of a job secured.

Job Shadowing - an Opportunity for Career Exploration

Experience - the process or fact of personally observing, encountering, or undergoing something. Although the knowledge gained in the classroom is helpful in determining what career to pursue, the experience of shadowing someone already in that field can be an invaluable resource when making career decisions. Whether it is an underclassmen selecting a major or an upperclassmen narrowing down the type of work desired post-college, observing a day in the life of professional can be very beneficial when a career-related decision needs to be made.

Experiential learning can bring to light aspects about positions that may be not be visible through solely reading a textbook. Hands-on experience or observation can also give one insight into the type of work atmosphere that may be associated with a specific job. Shadowing one who is already established in a career provides a golden opportunity for career exploration.

Every major at K-State has alumni who are now in the workforce. Many departments have lists with contact information, and perhaps even specific alumni who have expressed their willingness to help current students in ways such as this. Connecting with these people can be a great way line up a day to job shadow.

Since not all positions one may hope to observe are in Manhattan or the surrounding area, holiday and spring breaks allow time for travel. Also having the entire day free of classes allows for a more rounded look at the duties of a typical day in the life of the professional you are shadowing.

Alex Wilks is a May 2009 graduate of Kansas State from the College of Human Ecology with a degree in family

studies and human services. Wilks is now in graduate school at the University of Texas at Dallas pursuing a master's degree with the goal to one day be a speech-language pathologist.

Entering college, Wilks already had some shadowing experience as she spent time her senior year of high school shadowing a speech-language pathologist at an elementary school. Throughout her years at K-State, though, she wavered a bit between speech-language pathology, audiology and nursing. Assisting in the affirmation of her decision, Wilks spent time in college shadowing as well.

"In college I shadowed again at an elementary school, and also with an SLP at Children's Mercy in the home care department. I got to see what a 'day in the life' of an SLP looks like. We hear a lot in class about the components of a day, but never know how they fit together into a typical 8-hour workday," Wilks said.

Job shadowing is an experience students of all ages will benefit from. Whether it be nailing down that dream job, sifting out a position that may not be fitting or networking with professionals out in the workforce, spending observation time in a real-life work environment is a wise decision.

Professors can often provide contact information to professionals working in Kansas or across the nation. Career and Employment Services also provides employer contact information, accessible by signing in to your CES account and using the Employer Directory. Setting up a day to job shadow is just the beginning of a good path to a successful and enjoyable career.