

Reimagining Tool: Write Your Skills-tory

In the evolving career paradigm or “lattice-thinking,” you are more than a sum of your functional skills. You need to think outside of job descriptions to tell the story of who you are and what you bring to a department or organization. Identifying specific experiences, problems solved and results achieved and the myriad of skills required to do that point to what is relevant to other positions in the organization. These transferable skills are the foundation of your “Skills-tory.”

A Skills-tory requires an inventory of skills and accomplishments from all areas of one’s life. Unlike a resume, a Skills-tory outlines the full spectrum of skills, abilities, knowledge and experiences with related stories, or case studies, that show how the skills were developed. The story presents a problem or challenge and a description of how it was solved.

Skills to showcase fall into the categories like those listed below:

1. Technical, i.e. repairing machinery
2. Business, i.e. negotiating
3. Creative and Relational, i.e. coaching

For a full skills assessment, go to:

<http://www.careeronestop.org/explorecareers/assessments/skills.aspx>

You will find tools such as The Skills Profiler to create a list of your skills and match them to careers that use those skills.

As an example of role-spanning skills that can be used to secure adjacent opportunities, MONEY Magazine in a May, 2016 article, “*The 21 Most Valuable Career Skills Now*,” identified the abilities that bring the greatest rewards. MONEY and PayScale analyzed 54 million employee profiles, across 350 industries, with 15,000 job titles—from entry-level workers to top execs--and isolated the specific skills (from a universe of about 2,300) that correlated with higher pay, advancement, and career opportunity. The result is four categories of talents that are ‘must-haves’ no matter the role:

- a) Making sense of Big Data
- b) Managing the bottom line
- c) Wrangling new tech (field-specific)
- d) Strategic thinking.

Also see the report from ETS (Educational Testing Service) about 21st Century Competencies:

<http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RR-13-21.pdf>

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Once skills are identified, crafting them into a story to showcase how they were acquired and applied is the next step. The following questions from The Career Lattice by Joanne Cleaver can help uncover the highlights:

- How have you used one or a combination of these skills to achieve results?
- How did you realize you needed to acquire some of these skills and what did you do to get them?
- How did your problem-solving approach evolve to achieve results?
- How did you prioritize resources and time?
- What objections from individuals or groups did you have to overcome?
- How did you persuade others to adopt your point of view?
- How did you shape the purpose or mission to reflect the underlying goals?
- What was the response to the final result? Think participants, your audience, colleagues, customers, etc.
- How did you measure results?
- How would you coach someone else through the same or similar experience?

Author Cleaver provides this example of building a Skills-tory:

Job Function: Orienting new employees in your department

Relational Skill: Coaching others

Transferable Skills and Storyline:

Facilitate learning	<i>Answer these questions to tell your story:</i> How did you decide what the new employee needed to learn? What strategies did you use to help them learn?
Set performance standards	<i>Answer these questions to tell your story:</i> How did you decide what was good performance? How did you communicate that?
Review performance	<i>Answer these questions to tell your story:</i> How/when did you give feedback? How did you know the employee was ready to work independently?