

## TRANSFERABLE SKILLS: TRANSLATING NON-LEGAL WORK EXPERIENCE

In addition to noting your accomplishments, it is also important to highlight transferable skills. Transferable skills are those skills that will be assets in your next position, even if your prior experience doesn't directly relate. Transferable skills allow people to move from practice area to practice area and to change careers completely.

It is especially important to emphasize transferable skills when you are transitioning into law from a prior, non-legal career. Maybe you worked as a teacher for a number of years before entering law. You're bound to have developed strong skills in making presentations, explaining difficult concepts in easy-to-understand terms, and working with a wide range of people, from children to parents to administrators.

Maybe you worked in sales. Certainly you can tout your marketing abilities, which will be a huge asset in drumming up business for the firm. Also, salespeople tend to be very good with people, and maybe you can play up your ability to mediate tense situations.

Instead of including industry-specific buzzwords and going into detail about your day-to-day duties,

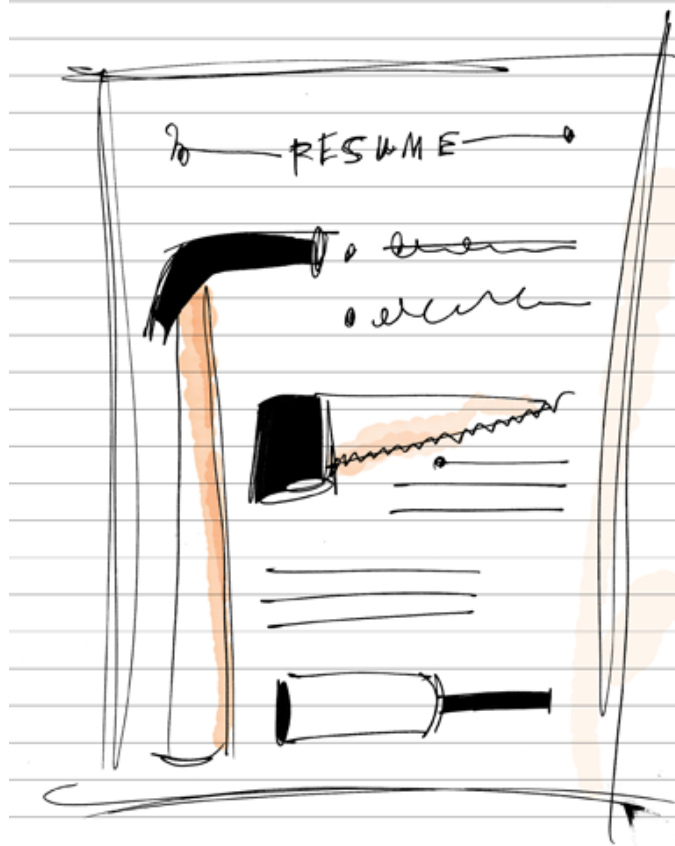
you want to show how you succeeded and how your prior career will be of value in your legal career. Here are some examples of industry-specific job descriptions that were transformed to emphasize transferable skills:

### Huh?

*Private contractor managing application testing and implementation at all U.S. locations for a large Windows XP desktop/network migration. Project scope involved 500+ applications supporting 3000+ office and high-tech manufacturing users. Scope included implementation of hundreds of business applications in the new environment via SMS. Provided upgrade and replacement strategies.*

### Oh...

*Invited to manage large-scale software upgrade project as a private contractor after successfully completing three projects for Baker, Inc., while affiliated with consulting company. Provided upgrade and replacement strategies, ensuring that each business function was maintained or improved. Completed project on time and under budget. Received commendations from Global Project Director.*



## Huh?

*Responsible for the daily funding of all subsidiaries and the broker-dealer. Produced monthly financial statements in accordance with U.S. GAAP, International Accounting Standards, and Swiss Banking Regulations. Worked with senior management of Treasury, Financial Accounting, and Financial Operations on funding integration, subsidiary integration, and the tracking of merger-related restructuring costs during merger. Reviewed and verified post-closing adjustments to the branch financial statements.*

## Oh...

*Worked closely with senior management and various departments on the implementation of new business strategies. Introduced and implemented systems that reduced headcount, controlled costs, and increased efficiency. Assessed costs and risks involved with project development and implementation. Negotiated with legal/compliance, financial control, operations, tax, and treasury departments to gain approval of transactions. Ensured that projects conformed to legal regulations.*

One of the most interesting clients we have worked with was a nationally acclaimed figure-skating coach who was looking to enter the legal profession. He had earned his J.D. in the midst of his 20-plus-year skating career, but waited to pursue an attorney job until he felt he was really ready to leave the coaching world behind.

Because his only legal experiences (an internship and some pro bono work) were almost 10 years old, we really had to use his transferable skills to sell him as a candidate. This was quite a challenge. How in the world do you translate 20-plus years of ice-skating experience into something that would attract a law firm? Well, one of his major selling points was his extensive ties to the community. Because he was well known and respected within his community, he would be able to bring in clients. In addition, he had experience working with a very demanding clientele (it doesn't get much more demanding than dealing with a stage-er "rink" mother). Finally, he had excelled in his field. Even though his accolades didn't directly relate to law, they established him as someone who had achieved excellence and recognition. If you are a proven performer, you will be attractive to employers, even if you are changing fields.