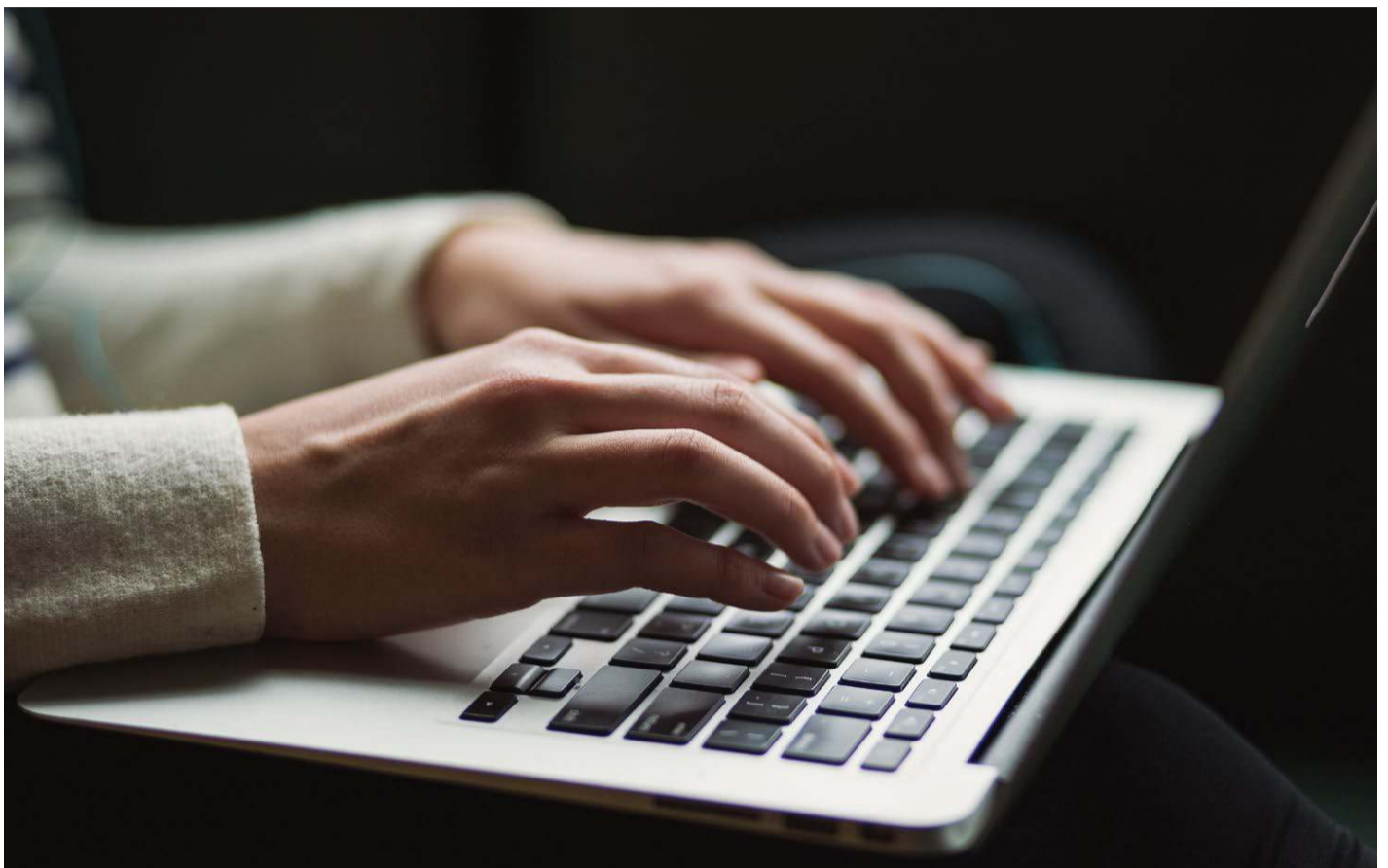


HARNESSING YOUR TRANSFERABLE SKILLS IN A COVID-19 ECONOMY

By Maya Khamala



The world is in a state of flux, of transformation, and it can be overwhelming on a professional level. But even in these unstable times, a new COVID-19 economy is emerging. The good news: your transferable skills happen to be your very best friend.

What is a transferable skill?

In a pandemic economy, hardline training and education are for the most part taking a backseat to transferable skills—the ones you’ve developed over time and which contribute to making you an asset in any workplace, regardless of profession or industry. These skills are the secret to your job searches and your overall professional success. Examples of transferable skills which are more important than ever in a pandemic and post-pandemic landscape include: strong communication, emotional intelligence, creativity, adaptability, initiative, resourcefulness, and the ability to stay well-organized and results-oriented! These are the types of qualities which demonstrate your ability to bring stability, success, and growth to a team, even in the face of uncertainty and fresh new challenges.

Why emphasize your transferable skills when job hunting?

According to Forbes, your transferable skills are your “life raft” in these times of upheaval. The reality is the job market has changed, making it necessary to change your job-hunting strategy to reflect this. Now is the time to redefine yourself by positioning your transferable skills at the front and centre of any job search. And in a post-COVID workforce, when unemployment is elevated and competition is at an all-time high, understanding your transferable skills and their value can really set you apart, not least because you’ll be more confident, qualified and prepared.

How to highlight transferable skills

The first step in highlighting transferable skills is identifying them. Ask yourself what skills you’ll need for the job at hand. Write them down and circle the ones relevant to your targeted position. Then underline the ones you can “prove” on your resume. Focus on these.

On your resume

On your resume, try to “show rather than tell” by anchoring your transferable skills in real accomplishments, broken down into challenges, actions, and results. For instance, you might format an entry in your skills section like so: *Leadership: transformed staff retention rates with ground-up development of a work-life balance incentive program.* Open your resume with this section to communicate your key skills and associated accomplishments immediately to hiring managers.

In an interview

It may seem best to fly by the seat of your pants, but if you’re a recent grad, a career changer, or feel under-qualified for any reason, it can be helpful to use the following formula for clear communication in an interview setting: “As a [past role], I [describe responsibility], which taught me [X transferable skills]. This is a skill I would draw on as a [new role].”

Familiarize yourself with your transferable skills, reinvent yourself on paper, and when it comes time to interview, you’ll be prepared enough that it will come naturally! Happy job hunting. You got this.

YES offers free virtual one-on-one career counselling to eligible job seekers on and off the island of Montreal. If you need support with your job search, especially during COVID-19, contact us at [yesmontreal.ca](https://www.yesmontreal.ca).