
TAUSHA'S TIPS

FOR USING TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

By Tausha P. Major, MBA

Tip #1

Create a 5-Year Plan.

A 5-year plan helps set the tone for everything you do going forward. Remember, think strategically and write a list of all you'd like to accomplish from this moment on. Start with a personal mission and vision statement to create the proper foundation for success.

Tip #2

Create a List of the Skills You Possess.

Thoroughly dissect your background. Think about hobbies, volunteer work, parenting, former careers and any prior experience you may have gained over the years. Even if you only worked at McDonald's while in high school, write down each skill you've obtained. This will give you an opportunity to clearly outline what you're good at and what you already know. You may surprise yourself.

Tip #3

Motivated v. Burn Out

When listing your skills, it's important to know the difference between your motivated skills and your burn out skills. A motivated skill is one that you enjoy using. Alternately, a burn out skill is one that you'd rather not use no matter how much they pay you. Be sure to categorize your skills before moving forward. A great resource for sorting it all out can be found on the website hosted by Dick Bolles, author of *What Color is Your Parachute*. His website is packed with free tools to discover your transferable skills, motivated skills and burn out skills.

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Tip #4

Start from Scratch? Never!

Go back to your list of skills. What have you done previously that can tie into where you're going? For instance, if you were an EMS worker and liked the medical environment, think about becoming a nurse paralegal. Do you have tech experience and still love working with computers or computer software? Consider using those skills as a litigation paralegal. The opportunities are endless. The more knowledge base you have, the higher your earning capacity. Why start from scratch if you don't have to?

Tip #5

Research the Job Market.

Take a look at the jobs listings for paralegals across the country. Make note of job duties, qualifications and experience requirements. You should pay close attention to the professional terminology (lingo) being used in each description.

Tip #6:

Know the Legal Industry.

Research the legal industry to discover its trends, who the major players are and why, what the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics predicts the future of the profession to be and how the current economy impacts it today. You may even want to visit NFPA's website for information here. This is where a SWOT analysis is helpful.

Tip #7

Check Your Resume & Revise It.

Does your resume list a bunch of prior work experience unrelated to the legal industry? Refer to your transferable skills assessment and reorganize your resume to reflect your findings. Although you may not have worked as a paralegal before, you can still prove to a potential employer how relevant your background is to your future as a paralegal.

Tasha's Tips *Continued*

Tip #8

Create a Marketing Strategy.

Find a way to market your prior experience(s) so it tells a potential employer: "I may have worked in other fields and industries outside the legal industry, but these are the key things I've done that are transferable skills and vital to a paralegal." Or, "I may not have much experience as a paralegal but I do have experience as a _____ and most of what I did is essential to this job because _____."

Tip #9

Talk It Out.

Talk to someone with a working knowledge of the profession to get insider information. Many times, you'll get more realistic, hands on information this way. Let them know what you're trying to do and ask them to help you transform your skills and abilities into revenue.

Tip #10

Test the Water.

Before you go on the interview for the job you really want, set up a meeting with a legal recruiter. They are a great resource of information and they may be willing to explore your background with you and how it translates into your future as a paralegal.



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