

HOW TO BE A CAREER CHAMELEON



Claire Fletcher and Ghylène Palmer believe marketing your transferable skills could help you win your next job.

Let's face it, in the current day, jobs and careers can change surprisingly often, perhaps not as often as you would change your socks, but possibly as often as you would change your car tyres, or even your toothbrush.

The skills that stand you in good stead in a fast-paced professional environment are often the skills least related to your professional qualifications. These skills are the ones that allow you to be a career chameleon, to smoothly change colour to fit your new backdrop and transition well to a new norm.

We are talking about transferable skills – practical skills that will help you either move into a new role in the same workplace or move into a different sector altogether.

There are many transferable skills such as communicating well, good decision making skills, setting realistic goals which are achievable, the ability to perform tasks quickly and efficiently, planning and managing your time well by setting priorities, listening to your clients, listening to your colleagues, having a positive outlook and being confident about what you are capable of – but also being responsive to constructive criticism. It's also important to be considerate and respectful of others and committed to the cause.

Adaptability and flexibility are very important skills in our rapidly changing industry, and significant for career change or career advancement. We have both recently had personal experience with applying and embracing our existing transferable skills in the newly merged library and information services environment here at Murdoch University.

Ghylène has had to adapt to a new environment, moving from a public library to an academic library, then again to a completely different role from the one she initially applied for, in quite a short timeframe. Claire has had many jobs over the years, including customer service, technical support, library assistant, librarian, and now acting senior librarian.

We think it's important to ask yourself what you can do to make sure your skills remain current and relevant. Think about what you would like to head towards in the future, and develop your skills accordingly. It's also important to keep up with current trends in your areas of interest and engage with the professional community through reading or personal and professional learning networks.

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HAVE YOU GOT THESE KEY TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS?

- BEING ABLE TO WORK WITH A DIVERSE RANGE OF PEOPLE
- PROBLEM SOLVING – AND BEING WILLING TO OFFER SOLUTIONS
- ABILITY TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE, BE FLEXIBLE AND ADAPT TO WHATEVER COMES YOUR WAY
- BEING ABLE TO COMMUNICATE COMFORTABLY WITH PEOPLE AT ALL LEVELS
- KNOWING HOW TO OBSERVE AND OPENLY ASK OTHERS WHERE THEY ARE AT, AND TO HELP THEM MOVE FORWARD
- BEING ABLE TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES WHEN THEY PRESENT THEMSELVES
- BEING WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN SOMETHING NEW