Making Yourself Competitive for Remote Jobs

In these unique times, many jobs that were formerly in-person have gone remote and will be remote for the foreseeable future. Some jobs will stay remote permanently or return in hybrid form, as we see the COVID-19 pandemic having permanent impacts on the future of work across many sectors. So how does this affect job seekers?

Proving you have the skills an employer is seeking may now require the development and highlighting of skills needed to be a successful remote employee. Those skills include:

- **Strong written and oral communication**
  - Providing ongoing status updates on projects and proactively reaching out with questions or concerns
- **Time-management**
  - Especially within a less structured and more independent environment
- **Relationship development**
  - The ability to get to know and deepen working relationships and community partnerships with those you are not able to see in person and who may even be in different time-zones
- **Adaptability and problem solving**
  - Remaining positive throughout unexpected changes and bringing a solutions-focused attitude, creativity, and resourcefulness to address challenges.
- **Technical proficiency**
  - Comfort utilizing teleworking tools such as video conferencing (ex: Zoom, Skype), real-time communication apps (ex: Slack), project management tools (ex: Asana, Trello)

So how can you show employers you have the skills to get the *remote* job done?

In your resume and cover letters:
1) Highlight any time you have worked remotely: Ex - If you had a position this past summer that you did remotely, when you list location of the organization, include that it was remote: New York, NY (Remote)

2) Have you had to develop partnerships, share information with, or collaborate with people in different offices and locations? Be sure to spell this out in your bullet points: Ex: "Collaborated with project partners located across three different site locations in order to achieve mutual goals."

3) Ever have to switch directions mid-project because something crucial changed? Tell us about it! Ex: "Adapted to changing organizational needs during COVID-19 pandemic by taking up new duties as needed and actively joining team discussions to develop solutions to new challenges."

4) Wherever possible, include the tools used to accomplish your tasks, stay on schedule, and communicate with colleagues: Ex: "Managed daily communication and tasks with colleagues utilizing slack and trello in order to increase efficient communication across teams and track progress of collaborative projects."

Preparing for Interviews:

1) Prepare stories of times you demonstrated the soft skills needed to work remotely. Utilize the SARA Framework (Situation, Action, Result, Application) to make sure the stories are relevant and impactful. Example demonstrating *Adaptability*:

    a) **Situation**: This summer my fieldwork project with the Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center which was originally supposed to be in-person became remote due to the pandemic. I was tasked with completing a study on the social determinants of health risk taking behavior.

    b) **Action**: While I was originally hoping to complete field surveys, I had to adapt and identify other ways to collect and synthesize the information needed for the project. Instead, I conducted an extensive literature review on the topic and designed a survey with a focus on harm reduction practitioners to whom I was able to administer the survey via email and phone. I also designed a community-focused survey which the organization will be able to use with their own clients at a later date once safe to do so again.

    c) **Result**: From this experience I learned that there are multiple ways to achieve desired outcomes and it is important to bring a solutions focused attitude to work.

    d) **Application**: I know this position I am applying for now is remote, and will likely require the person in the role to be able to be adaptive as we navigate what are largely uncharted spaces during the pandemic. I plan to apply the same solutions-focus lens I had to utilize in my fieldwork to this role.

Interested in developing more skills that can serve you in the world of work?
With this curated list of no-cost virtual skill trainings (which could normally cost you hundreds of dollars), the **CUNY 90-day Upskilling Challenge** will help you get the latest professional skills and knowledge to give yourself a leg up in your job search and help you shine to prospective employers. More information and sign-up here.

Want to talk about these or other career topics with a career coach?
Schedule a 1:1 Career Coaching appointment with the Office of Career Services. Book an appointment online now!