

Step-by-step: Identifying Your Job Skills & Unique Selling Points

By Ben Davies

How many people do you think are applying for the same jobs as you? To give you some idea, an advert on jobs.ac.uk is read an average of 500 times. You need to find a way to set yourself apart from the other applicants. Distinguishing yourself from the competition is easy if you know how. That's where your Unique Selling Points (USPs) and transferable job skills come in.

The two key steps are:

1. Identifying your USPs
2. Communicating their relevancy in an application

What is USP?

The term USP refers to the things that differentiate you from the competition. It's something of a misnomer as it's probably not a skill or experience entirely unique to you, but it is something that boosts your appeal and makes you stand out. *It's how you link your experience and skills to the job specification.*

How can I identify my USPs?

Identifying your USPs is not an easy process. You need to think clearly and critically about yourself as an employee and your work experience. Even after picking out your main strengths, you still need to adapt this to show how it is unique to you, and how it is of benefit to the employer.

One way to discover your USPs is by using the following 5 steps:

Step 1-Evaluate: *Evaluate* your strengths as a worker. This will include listing your skills (see below) and experience.

Step 2-Differentiate: From that list, decide what it is that *differentiates* you from others and makes you a valuable employee. You need to put these ideas into concrete terms - use figures, places, and dates as much as possible to substantiate what you are saying.

Step 3- Research: Examine the person specification for the job you are applying for. Examine also the industry and the specifics of the company. The purpose of this *research* is to find out which strengths and skills will appeal most in your job application. So make a list of the things that are important in a successful candidate for this job.

Step 4-Compare: *Cross-compare* your two lists:

List 1 will detail your skills, experience and strengths;

List 2 will show you what the employer is looking for.

Look for things that are on both lists and highlight them. If nothing matches on the lists then you're going to need to go more specific and look at things in minor detail to find a USP.

Step 5-Detail: The final step is to take the most important matches from the two lists and communicate them. *Expand the details*, and show in definite terms how your experience and skills match up to the person specification to create a Unique Selling Point. Again, use numbers, dates and figures to put the USP in real terms.

What are job skills?

[Transferable job skills](#) are abilities you have acquired. We have covered this area extensively on jobs.ac.uk. Transferable skills are skills you have acquired that can be utilized in multiple situations relevant to the workplace.

How can I identify my skills?

Identifying your skills is just as important as defining your USPs. *Job Skills* is a very broad term as it covers the generic abilities and skills you have built up. Making a complete and relevant list of your skills is a worthwhile task. Here are three simple steps to doing it:

Step 1: Make a list of your past jobs (going right back to your first job) and activities (including volunteer work, secular training, and even hobbies). Make sure this list is complete.

Step 2: Write down the tasks associated with each job and activity. Again, you want this to go into great detail so don't rush it.

Step 3: Tasks lead to skills. What did you learn by doing those tasks? What abilities have you gained? Skills range from such definable things as IT skills, presentation skills, and foreign languages, to characteristics like leadership, emotional intelligence, and reliability.

You should now have a complete list of your skills. This is very useful when you are applying for several jobs, as you will be able to compare the person specification with your job skills list and choose the relevant items.

The result

Why take all the time to find and communicate your USPs? The end result is something that sets you apart and makes you stand out. You don't even have to be the most qualified and or experienced candidate, but with USPs you can grab the attention of the employer and demonstrate instantly how you will fit the role perfectly and add value to the company.