

SELL SOFT SKILLS WITH CONCRETE EXAMPLES

Summary: Learn how to market your soft skills to land a job in this article.



Question: I'm a doctoral student in the field of public-policy research, but I have decided to leave my program and pursue a career in technology. My academic background and most of my work history are in the social sciences, though I know a considerable amount about Internet technologies. My primary strengths are my communication and problem-solving skills and vision to apply new technologies to uncharted markets. What obstacles do I need to overcome and what advice can you give me about marketing myself to potential employers?

Answer: Your primary obstacle will be translating your soft skills into the technology arena. Those skills are in desperate demand, but building your case based on a proven track record of accomplishments will be the ultimate test. It's not clear from your question that you have experience in actually charting new markets. Without concrete examples of the results that your communication and problem-solving abilities have yielded, a generic list of skills does little to distinguish you from the rest of the communicators and problem solvers out there. For an in-depth look at making the connection more concrete, try HitechnologyCrossing.com.

With some start-ups, instinct and drive can be used as a substitute for direct experience. But, you'll still need to be comfortable in that world. Become a fly on the wall of the computer industry. Study its culture, jargon, people and problems inside and out. Subscribe to industry journals, take related classes, attend trade shows and network online. Gravitate toward the niches and functions that best fit your interests and potential contributions.

Once you've narrowed your area of interest, develop a marketing plan for your job search. This should include targeted employers, networking strategies, a resume, and marketing letter highlighting your unique qualifications and the use of recruiters and online career sites. Finally, perfect your presentation skills through practice interviews so that you'll garner offers in your new field.

See [Design a Career Development Plan](#) for more information.