

AN INVENTORY OF CROSS-CULTURAL SKILLS

Adapted from the Big Guide to Living and Working Overseas: Selling your international skills

Employers are looking for people who have cross-cultural experience and skills. It is especially important to demonstrate this knowledge if you are just starting out in your international career. You must prove that you can survive and be successful in a work setting while abroad. Tell employers where and how you acquired your international experience—some acquired domestically, and some abroad. Tell them that you are aware of the international skills required and that you enjoy the cross-cultural work environment. Include cross-cultural information in your resume but don't overdo it! Choose only three or four places that will have the greatest impact. When speaking directly to employers, mention cross-cultural skills during your conversations and use them within career stories.

Here is a short inventory of phrases to help you get started in identifying which cross-cultural skills are important in your personality.

Cross-Cultural Relations and Communications

- Positive attitude toward change and new environments
- Recognize and respect people's diversity and individual differences
- Enjoy working with diverse populations
- Comfortable working with people from different cultures
- Outgoing individual, personable, able to develop close relationships quickly
- Adept in new environments and at understanding the motivations of others
- Seek opinions of others when making decisions
- Able to relate to and interact with people of differing personalities and backgrounds
- Able to notice details that others might normally miss
- Sensitive to economic considerations and human needs

- Able to cope with constant change
- Broad background and knowledge of world affairs and cultures
- High degree of physical stamina; excellent and robust health
- Able to adjust to and fit into different situations
- Significant experience in and enjoyment of intensive cross-cultural environments
- Maintain composure under close public scrutiny and criticism.

Organizational Effectiveness in a Cross-Cultural Environment

- Enjoy cross-cultural work environments
- Adept and attracted to multicultural environments, both social and professional
- Thrive in a culturally diverse workplace
- Diplomatic skills and sensitivity to different management styles

- Understanding of work within the culture of the group, including multicultural work groups
- Sensitive to the dynamics of a cross-cultural workplace
- Maintain effectiveness under difficult circumstances
- Able to pursue goals when difficulties arise
- Able to operate successfully in different settings and to adapt to a wide range of situations
- Good listening, clarifying, questioning and responding skills
- Remain focused on obtaining results when facing delays
- Tolerant, curious and appreciative of different work patterns while remaining committed to deadlines
- Think critically and act logically to evaluate situations, solve problems and make decisions
- Able to respond quickly to changing circumstances
- Maintain composure in stressful situations or when under pressure
- Sensitive and aware of how one's actions may effect others
- Open to different viewpoints, techniques and methods of operations
- Able to organize and work in a sensitive manner with people from other cultures
- Enjoy challenges and tasks that require a special or extra effort
- Poised; do not easily lose composure or sense of purpose

Sample Cross-Cultural Skills for an Internship Abroad

- Gained valuable knowledge and experience performing tasks in a multicultural work environment
- Enjoyed communicating and managing processes in an environment very different than a American workplace
- Enjoyed the subtleties and mannerisms of the British work style
- Was adept at making contacts with a wide range of players, from laborers to managers, inside and outside of my organization
- Was known for my abilities to integrate into the local population and make friends quickly
- Often acted as a bridge between field staff and senior managers
- As the only American on a Norwegian business team, I recognized that it was important to be sensitive to the Norwegian way of working
- Keen observer of the various management styles emanating from this pan-European milieu
- Working in Venice gave me a clearer understanding of the regional differences found in the Italy