

## How to Think About Your Transferable Skills as a Commercial Pilot



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WEBINAR  
3rd June

### Pilot Careers - The Future of our Skies

Join the RAeS Careers Team, along with our expert panelists and members of the RAeS Flight Training Group on the 3rd June between 15.00-16.30pm BST

[Register at careersinaerospace.com/events](https://careersinaerospace.com/events)

### What Are Transferable Skills & Why Are They Important?

There are certain keywords in almost every job posting that relate to skills: communication, adaptability, teamwork, problem-solving & critical thinking, and leadership. They are known as transferable skills because no matter what the job or profession is, they make the difference between success and failure.

To help clarify, I highlighted a handful of common transferable skills for commercial pilots that can be applied in a variety of other 'non-flying' roles both within and outside of the sector.

### Top Transferable Skills For Flight Crews

#### 1. Effective Leadership

You must effectively manage the cockpit and lead your crew. Thus, you have a solid understanding of effective leadership and the consequences of poor leadership. As a pilot you set the tone for the flight by creating an atmosphere of safety, as well as commitment and passion for the role.

Your ability to listen to others, be open to new perspectives, and adapt when faced with changing circumstances will serve you well for the rest of your career.

#### 2. Flexibility & Adaptability

As a pilot, you often have to deal with unforeseen scenarios such as delays, technical problems and changes of aircraft. As a result, you developed the ability to swiftly take into consideration a variety of changing circumstances and change your behaviour or actions quickly to adapt to the given situation. The skill is essential for most jobs in any industry.



### **3. Emotional/Cultural Intelligence**

The flight deck is a multi-cultural environment and quite often the person sitting next to you is a complete stranger with a different background. An open and approachable mindset is required to complete the tasks. Employees who possess a high level of cultural intelligence play an important role in bridging divides and knowledge gaps in organisations across industries.

### **4. Complex Problem Solving**

You have the ability to solve complex problems and simultaneously consider a variety of options and variables to come up with a speedy solution. A fundamental part of every manager's role is finding ways to solve issues. Therefore, being a confident problem solver is really important to your future success.

### **5. Team-working & Collaboration Skills**

As an airline pilot you have the ability to work within a cohesive team. You are adept at working with other pilots on the flight deck, as well as with air traffic controllers and members of the cabin crew. Your ability to coordinate actions and provide clear and honest feedback will serve you well in any managerial role.

### **6. Time Management**

Time management skills are exceptionally important for aviation pros as airlines are measured by their On-Time performance. Any delay caused to a flight is a waste of valuable resources and may cost the airline in fines. As a commercial pilot, you have the ability to manage complex tasks and deadlines within given parameters of time that are critical to mission accomplishment. Time management skills are sought after in all roles no matter the industry.

### **7. Communication**

Whilst clear communication skills help in almost any job, it **really** matters for pilots. In fact, incorrect or incomplete pilot-controller communication is a factor in around 80 percent of flight incidents or accidents. Having this critical skill will stand you in good stead whatever you decided to do next.

### **8. Multi-Tasking**

You can simultaneously and effectively manage and take action on multiple priorities and projects at once. Employers want to get the most out of their staff and an employee that can complete multiple tasks will definitely be viewed as an asset.

### **9. Confidence, Attitude & Self-Discipline**

As a pilot you are trained to remain calm and deal with abnormalities or emergencies such as low-fuel events and weather scares in accordance with your training. Being able to remain calm under pressure (which doesn't come naturally to most people) will help you succeed in any role you decide to take.



## How to Highlight Transferable Skills When Applying for Roles

Remember that you are trying to close the "skills gap" between you and someone who isn't changing careers and has already done the job. The more you can do that is directly related to the role you are applying for, the more competitive you will be.

### 1. Get Tangible Proof

Demonstrate to potential employers that you have researched the new industry or role. Doing your homework shows you are willing to put in the work. Even better, take an online course and have some assignments to show. Volunteering in the new industry or function to have some work samples might also work.

### 2. Share activity, if not outright experience in the field

Just because you're not officially working in your target career field doesn't mean you're not doing anything relevant.

Talk about an article you read, a seminar or conference you attended. If you're volunteering or consulting, talk about your recent project. Many career changers are further along than they realise in their new target field, but they shy away from speaking with authority because they don't have years of paid experience. Don't make that mistake.

### 3. Get Referrals

Set up informational interviews with people active in your target field and try to get them to refer you and share leads with you. Being referred by someone who is already active in the career you want carries a lot of weight. Having 'social proof' plays a key role when transitioning into another field.

Don't be afraid to approach people directly who work in roles at organisations you're interested in. You'd be surprised how willing people are to help, especially in difficult times. And who knows, they might just have a need for someone with your skillset.

Your ability as a pilot to pivot quickly and effectively will play a critical role in ensuring that you prosper once the current storm in the aviation industry subsides.

## Further support and advice

- Contact the RAeS Careers team if you would like a 1-2-1 virtual appointment. Our service is free and impartial and open to members and non-members alike.
- Visit the Resources section of the [Careers in Aerospace website](#) with all-age advice including CVs and job interviews.
- The RAeS also runs the free Alta mentoring scheme for women in aerospace and aviation – more details at [aerosociety.com/alta](https://aerosociety.com/alta) and create your profile at <https://alta.onpld.com>

**Thank you to Arpad Szakal LLM MRAeS for his support in putting this advice together. Arpad has very kindly supported us with our previous two webinars and as always, we thank him for his ongoing support with our Carers & Employability activities. If you wish to contact him, you can do so via [LinkedIn](#).**

Any questions please contact the RAeS Careers Team at [careers@aerosociety.com](mailto:careers@aerosociety.com)