Effective Marketing of Your Study Abroad Experience to Employers

**Transferring the skills and knowledge you learned abroad**

By Martin Tillman

Published February 4, 2013

Whether or not you planned it, studying abroad may have made you more marketable to future employers. The skills and knowledge you learned while abroad may be easily transferrable into the working world. But it is up to you to demonstrate the link between your study abroad experience and the specific skills valued by the company or organization that you want to work for.

**Identifying Your International Competencies**

The following list of questions is intended to help you begin to identify some of the international knowledge, skills and experience you may possess. Take time to consider your answers to these questions:

* Flexibility: How have you developed greater tolerance for ambiguity? Are you a productive team player?
* Cultural Adaptability: How have you gained new cross-cultural skills, sensitivity, and awareness?
* Wider Worldview: How have you gained a deeper understanding of international affairs & global issues?
* Language Acquisition: How have you strengthened your primary, secondary or tertiary language skills?
* Leadership: How have you acquired new vision or purpose, abilities to motivate others, core skills in leadership?

These are a set of broad skills which could be highly transferable in your job search and may be viewed as important to employers in their hiring process. They are highly marketable regardless of whether you are seeking a job in the U.S, with a domestic employer, an international organization or looking to work abroad.

The list below includes specific qualities and abilities which students studying abroad may frequently develop. In preparation for a job or informational interview, you may want to think of concrete examples from your experience abroad that demonstrate your development of some of these characteristics:

* Independence/Self-reliance
* Self-knowledge
* Self-confidence
* Flexibility
* Perseverance
* Ability to cope with stress, rejection
* Assertiveness
* Inquisitiveness
* Awareness of lifestyle choices and global consequences
* Adaptability to new environments
* Appreciation for diversity
* Ability to establish rapport quickly
* Open-mindedness
* Understanding and appreciation of other perspectives
* Suspend judgment about people and their actions
* Concern/knowledge of international issues and politics
* Learn quickly
* Greater focus on career interests
* Handle difficult situations
* Critical thinking skills
* Function with a high level of ambiguity
* Achieve goals despite obstacles
* Take initiatives and risks
* Communicate despite barriers
* Learn through listening and observing
* Time management skills

Because you’ve studied abroad, you may have developed important attributes of a globally competent student which employers will value. These include:

* A diverse and knowledgeable worldview
* Comprehension of the international dimensions of your major field of study
* Ability to communicate effectively in another language and/or cross-culturally
* Cross-cultural sensitivity and adaptability

Effective marketing of yourself in your job search requires that you incorporate these attributes into your resume, your cover letter and your talking points during job interviews.

After returning to campus, consider the many ways in which you can “unpack” your international experience and “make sense” of it.

* Visit a career service advisor to revise and re-frame your resume
* Participate in campus or community programs which provides an opportunity to articulate what you learned and how you gained new intercultural and professional skills
* Discuss your experience with international students from the country in which you studied to gain a fresh perspective on the culture and norms of that society
* Practice articulating how you overcame obstacles in adjusting to your overseas experience, became more flexible and open-minded, more competent in a second language, and more self-confident

**Resources for Unpacking Your Study Abroad Experience**

[*Global Competency Quick Reference Guide*](http://www2.binghamton.edu/career-development-center/quick-reference-guides/global-competency.pdf)
*Nancy Paul*
*Career Development Center at Binghamton University, State University of New York*
Excellent reference tool to assist students understand meaning of “global competency” and how their experience abroad translates on a resume, in cover letter and during a job interview.
[*The Other Side of Education Abroad: Same City, Different Results*](http://www.nafsa.org/publication.sec/periodicals/international_educator_1/ie_nov_dec_2007/web_extra_other_side/)
*Sheila Curran*
An essay depicting different outcomes in a job interview which were a result of two different approaches to the same study abroad experience.

[Coming Home: Relationships, Roots and Unpacking](http://www.abroadview.org/return/citron_mendelson.htm)
*James L. Citron and Vija G. Mendelson*
*Abroad View Magazine*
Essay on the challenges and opportunities of re-adjusting upon returning to campus.
 [Help Employers See the Value of Your Study Abroad Experience](http://studentbranding.com/help-employers-see-the-value-of-your-study-abroad-experience/)
*Kelly Cuene*
*Student Branding Blog*
How to avoid study abroad misconceptions.

Read more: <http://www.studyabroad.com/articles/effective-marketing-of-your-study-abroad-experience-to-employers.aspx#ixzz3M8cciJWL>