PhD Transferable Skills

Sometimes it's difficult for PhD's to identify what skills they have since the academic experience is not necessarily focused on articulating skill sets. We also often find that PhD's struggle, understandably, to present the transferability of their academic experiences to non-academic contexts. Here are examples of PhD skill sets and ways to describe them.

Analysis & Problem-Solving
- Define a problem and identify possible causes
- Comprehend large amounts of information
- Form and defend independent conclusions
- Design an experiment, plan, or model that defines a problem, tests potential resolutions and implements a solution

Interpersonal & Leadership Skills
- Facilitate group discussions or conduct meetings
- Motivate others to complete projects (group or individual)
- Respond appropriately to positive or negative feedback
- Effectively mentor subordinates and/or peers
- Collaborate on projects
- Teach skills or concepts to others
- Navigate complex bureaucratic environments

Project Management & Organization
- Manage a project or projects from beginning to end
- Identify goals and/or tasks to be accomplished and a realistic timeline for completion
- Prioritize tasks while anticipating potential problems
- Maintain flexibility in the face of changing circumstances

Research & Information Management
- Identify sources of information applicable to a given problem
- Understand and synthesize large quantities of data
- Design and analyze surveys
- Develop organizing principles to effectively sort and evaluate data

Self-Management & Work Habits
- Work effectively under pressure and to meet deadlines
- Comprehend new material and subject matter quickly
- Work effectively with limited supervision

Written & Oral Communication
- Prepare concise and logically-written materials
- Organize and communicate ideas effectively in oral presentations to small and large groups
- Write at all levels — brief abstract to book-length manuscript
- Debate issues in a collegial manner and participate in group discussions
- Use logical argument to persuade others
- Explain complex or difficult concepts in basic terms and language
- Write effective grant proposals