

STEP 1

IDENTIFYING YOUR MARKETABLE SKILLS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Every person is valuable to his or her employer and plays a critical role in his or her respective position. Identifying your talents and what makes you unique is the first step in writing an effective resume. This is true whether you want to advance in your current field or get a position in another industry. Writing a resume is no time to be modest. It's the time to highlight your value to previous employers so others can understand what you could contribute to their organizations. It's critical that your resume shows you possess the skills required in the position you're pursuing.

Many people sell themselves short by underestimating their skills. The **Skills Inventory** on pages 2-11 lists the skills and characteristics typically associated with a variety of careers and provides examples of how these skills could be described in a resume. Review this section so you can begin to identify your own marketable skills and talents.

Now turn to Worksheet One entitled *My Job History and Skills I've Acquired*, on pages 111-113.

This exercise will help you identify the skills you currently possess, many of which may be transferable to other industries if you'd like to move in a new direction.

If you're like many people, you may be considering making a career change but feel uncertain

about how to do it. The secret to writing a resume that will be valuable in launching a new career is to find a way to present your experience in a new light. By examining the **Skills Inventory** carefully, you'll notice that many of your existing skills are transferable and probably overlap with those required in many jobs you might be interested in but have never held. Perhaps you gained skills from volunteering or other nonwork-related activities. Skills gained outside the workplace can be extremely valuable, so don't discount them. Jobs that require these skills may very well be ones you should pursue. Seek out information about the skills required for the positions that interest you. If possible, speak to people in the jobs you want to secure or consult career guides that list the skills and qualifications required for the jobs you really want.

If your job or career is no longer appealing or challenging to you, there's no reason you must continue in it. Remember, all change begins with a desire and a willingness to take action. Don't be afraid to think big and to take some risks, and don't limit yourself by limiting your thoughts. Completing Worksheet Two, ***New Careers I'm Considering and the Skills They Require***, on pages 114-116, is an excellent first step toward making a career change. And if you've identified your skills carefully, you'll probably find that you're better prepared to make a career change than you thought you were.