

# MARKETING YOUR ATHLETIC SKILLS: HOW PLAYING COLLEGIATE SPORTS CAN HELP YOU LAND A JOB

As an athlete, you spend a great deal of time on your sport. Do you ever wonder how this effort might actually help you land a job? Many of the traits you possess are the very attributes employers are looking for in the people they hire. Find out how you can market your athletic skills to aid in your job search process.

## So you're a WPI Student-Athlete...

### The Bad News:

- Only 1% of college athletes go pro.
- College athletes are at a disadvantage when it comes to job hunting because you do not have as much time to devote to searching for jobs or internships due to your time commitment to sports.
- The idea of ending one's competitive athletic career can be heartbreaking but is often a reality upon graduation.

### The Good News:

- As a student athlete, you possess dozens of traits that are transferable as skills in the workplace.
- Employers are interested in hiring you.
- There is a website entirely devoted to helping college student athletes find jobs called [careerathletes.com](http://careerathletes.com).
- The success you experienced in athletics can also be enjoyed in your career. It will not be the same as the rush of a game, but you will find fulfillment in a career that is suitable for you.

- The Career Development Center is here to help you with the process of finding a job, from creating a resume and cover letter and honing interview techniques to reviewing job offers.

## Marketing Your Athletic Skills

### Twenty-Five Traits of an Athlete

Athletics is one of the most unforgettable and formative experiences in which students can be involved on campus. Through years of training and head-to-head competition, student athletes develop many characteristics that are predictors of future success, including:

- Results-oriented
- Focused
- Competitive nature
- Understands value of teamwork
- Handles pressure well
- Always striving to improve
- Coachable and willing to learn
- Knows how to execute a game plan
- Assertive
- Understands time management
- Confident
- Great discipline
- Strong work ethic
- Can overcome adversity
- Understands how to prepare
- Mentally tough
- High energy level



- Goal oriented
- Strong character
- Self-motivated
- Able to multitask
- Can make high pressure decisions
- Handles constructive criticism
- Understands accountability
- Seeks and loves a challenge

3. Consider talking about these traits using concrete examples from sports in your cover letter or in an interview.

**Traits Application Analysis: Translating Your Traits into Transferable Skills in the Workplace**

Utilize a “Day in the Life Of” experience to sell yourself during a job interview. The idea is to capture real-life examples demonstrating how personal traits are instrumental in satisfying the demands of your everyday life and how those traits will help you in your new career.

Here is an example of the Traits Applications Analysis process:

**Personal Traits Exercise**

Use the above list of 25 Traits of an Athlete to complete the brief exercise below:

1. Put a check mark beside each characteristic that strongly describes you.
2. Circle the top five characteristics that describe your greatest strengths.

| Traits          | Example   | Relate to your Career   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Time Management | I spend 30 hours a week in my sport and 3 hours a night to get everything done, meaning I have to prioritize requirements and juggle multiple tasks to get it all done. | When organizations reorganize or downsize or cut the budget, employees have to do their work “and then some.” Organizations like to have employees who can handle multiple tasks and manage time effectively. |
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## Examples of Transferable Traits and How to Communicate Them

- **Competition:** learned healthy and rewarding aspects of competition, such as discipline, sacrifice, preparation, learning from mistakes, and staying focused
- **People and Team Dynamics:** played with and against people from all walks of life, nationalities, socio-economics, academic backgrounds, and personalities; learned to put personal interests aside to work as a team while also competing against teammates for positions (e.g. team captain)
- **Physical Training and Conditioning:** coaches pushed us to do more than we thought we could
- **Discipline, Sacrifice:** became mentally tough, which led to developing confidence
- **Strategy, Preparation, and Game Plans:** learned the importance of preparation and execution as well as being held accountable for consequences of not meeting goals
- **Setting High Goals and Aspirations:** taught to be held accountable individually and collectively for achieving shared goals
- **Making Decisions under Pressure:** learned that the key to having confidence was to be prepared; taught not to dwell on mistakes but to learn from them and move on
- **Dealing with Adversity:** when faced with a loss, learned to take a step back and analyze what could have been done differently instead of pointing fingers or creating excuses
- **Being Coachable:** developed a willingness to learn and constantly strive for improvement; learned not to be afraid of leaving comfort zone

- **Results Achieved:** accustomed to being evaluated based on quantitative measurement of wins/losses
- **Managing Time:** learned self-discipline and the importance of prioritizing time to meet academic demands; had to compete in the classroom with people who had more hours to prepare.

## Communicating How Your Traits Can Benefit a Company

"I am not a member of your organization, but I do know..."

- "Competition is just as fierce in organizations as in athletics."
- **Diversity:** "Your organization is probably made up of a diverse group of people who work together as a team to achieve the company's objectives (while competing with each other for positions and promotions at the same time)."
- **Discipline, Sacrifice, Confidence, and Mental Toughness:** "Your organization is looking for people who are disciplined, know how to sacrifice, are confident, and are mentally tough."
- **Accountability:** "Employees need to understand the importance of executing a plan and being held accountable for their actions and effort."
- **Goal Oriented:** "Your organization is looking for people who are goal oriented and comfortable being held to high expectations."
- **Overcoming Adversity:** "As good as your organization is, sometimes you fail. You need to have people who will respond to that adversity, learn from it, and get right back into the next battle. You cannot have finger pointers and people who always have excuses."



- **Results Oriented:** “Without a doubt, your organization clearly needs people who are results oriented, even though you want to have fun and enjoy what you do. Athletes are judged on results during competition.”
- **Coachable:** “In organizations today, you need people who are coachable, do not resist change, and are willing to leave their comfort zones.”
- **Time Management:** “In today’s fast-paced environment, organizations need people who know how to juggle multiple tasks, prioritize, and successfully manage their time.”

## Resume Tips and Bullets

As a student athlete, you can indicate your athletic participation and achievements on your resume in a few different ways, as shown in the following examples.

### Activities

**Varsity Football Team**, WPI, August 2014-present

**Varsity Basketball Team**, WPI, October 2014-present

**WPI Varsity Volleyball Team**, August 2013-present

**Ultimate Frisbee Team**, WPI, January-May 2015

### Leadership Activities

**Captain**, Varsity Field Hockey Team, WPI, August 2015-Present

- Organized formal and informal meetings to facilitate and improve communication among team members

**Captain**, Varsity Football Team, WPI, August 2015-Present

- Provided leadership to team by organizing captain’s practices
- Served as liaison between coach and players
- Mentored incoming freshmen to adapt to college life

**Manager**, Varsity Swim Team, WPI, August 2014-Present

- Compiled statistics and submitted to coaches weekly to optimize and target training needs
- Organized weekly team meetings and facilitated purchase of suits and swim gear

### Sample Action Verbs for Bullet Descriptions:

- Achieved
- Collaborated
- Created
- Directed
- Established
- Influenced
- Initiated
- Led
- Mentored
- Motivated
- Oversaw
- Reinforced
- Replaced
- Revamped
- Reviewed
- Saved



## Handshake: A Job Search Database Tool Exclusive to WPI Students

**Handshake** is an online system that connects employers and students. It includes on-campus recruiting, full-time and part-time jobs, summer internships, co-op, general job postings, and access to other resources described below.

### Handshake To-Do List

1. Log onto your **Handshake** account
2. Update your existing Handshake Profile.
3. Write your resume, have someone at the CDC critique it, and upload it to Handshake.
4. Begin your search.
5. Keep abreast of upcoming CDC events and try to attend them if your schedule permits.
6. Make it a point to attend one of our career fairs (September/February/March).

## Other Resources Accessible through Handshake

- **CareerShift:** One-stop job search engine that provides job and internship searches all over the country, contact searches, and company searches

- **GoinGlobal:** Resource that provides an H1B Database of companies, job and internship searches all over the world, and country and city guides providing guidance on culture, cost of living, and interview and resume tips

## The Career Development Center is located in the lower level of Project Center

**Hours:** Monday – Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm  
**cdc@wpi.edu**  
508-831-5260  
**wpi.edu/+CDC**

## Make an Appointment through your Handshake Account

Visit the CDC to discuss anything related to job search strategies, changing or choosing your major, interview techniques, the graduate school application process, or a more in-depth review or critique of your resume or cover letter.

## Stop By for Drop-Ins

You may stop by during **drop in hours** for a 15-minute resume or cover letter critique, or quick questions related to internships, co-ops, or jobs. Bring a hard copy of your resume or cover letter.

**Career Development Center**  
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