**Your Accomplishments**

In today’s job market, it is important to know your skills and be able to find positions that require those skills. An excellent guide for developing accomplishment stories that showcase your skills is called SOAR. Your SOAR stories put your accomplishments in a business context that an employer can understand. The SOAR acronym is easy to remember and will help you organize material in interview situations.



*Example:*

# Describe the Situation.

Supervisor needed small database set up to automate manual records and calculate costs.

# Describe the Obstacles you faced.

Lack of knowledge in spreadsheet or database applications.

# List the Actions you took.

Took online training, asked for coaching from a colleague to set up spreadsheet.

1. **Describe the Results you helped obtain and the benefits to your employer.** Completed and used the new database in a spreadsheet format reducing record keeping and calculation time by 80% from previous manual method.

The SOAR approach works because it…

* Presents a complete story, from the context through to the results.
* Is applicable outside your industry – shows your thinking process.

You should have as many as 10-20 SOAR stories ready when you go in for an interview.

These stories are great for open-ended questions. Your accomplishments reflect your professional successes. These are actions that you took, that were a success, and for which you are very proud. Accomplishments are the best possible evidence that you can work effectively, and that you can and do use your skills to good advantage. An accomplishment is not necessarily something exceptional or spectacular. But it can reveal a lot about your talents and abilities.

To help you determine which activities could be considered accomplishments, ask yourself the following questions:

* Did you make major changes or facilitated the work in any way?
* Did you take the initiative of acquiring new skills or learning new technologies?
* Were you selected to participate in a special project or to sit on a committee because of your skills or experience?
* Did you successfully solve a difficult situation with a client?
* Did you resolve an emergency situation with little or no increase in time, energy, dollars, and people?
* Did you surpass accepted standards for quality and/or quantity of performance?
* Did you perform within standard operating procedures even when circumstances were against you?
* Did your ideas or suggestions help increase the performance of individuals or machines?
* Did you take the initiative of solving a problem that others had been ignoring?
* Did you identify a need and satisfy it?
* Did you act as a resource person for your colleagues on certain issues?
* Did you prepare any original reports, special papers or documents?
* Did you show creativity by developing and implementing a plan or a complex process?
* Did you participate in any technical improvements?
* Did you assist someone else in realizing his/her objective?
* Did your contributions enable those in charge to maintain better controls or make better decisions?
* Did you implement or participate in any sales, profits, and/or cost saving recommendations?
* Did you initiate plans to reduce errors, costs or time spent?
* Did your work enlarge the client/customer base?
* Did you receive any award or letter of commendation?

**Sample Accomplishments**

* Increased gross profits by 8% and reduced cost of goods sold by 25% from previous year through supplier pricing negotiations, design modifications, and change in product mix.
* Reduced supplies expenses by nearly 50% through purchase review and negotiating better pricing with our vendors.
* Improved inventory accounting 33% by developing a common method of tracking assets.
* Recovered $1000 error by creating a Web-based corporate reporting system to automatically gather financial and operational information from various facilities.
* Increased gross profits by 8% and reduced cost of goods sold by 25% from previous year through supplier pricing negotiations, design modifications, and change in product mix.
* Reduced operating expenses by 49% through tighter expense controls in negotiating better insurance rates and more effective use of outside consultants.

**Sample Accomplishments**

* Improved cash flow $25 million and reduced inventory exposure 33% or $10 million by developing a common method of controlling the various facilities.
* Recovered a $1 million error and maximized cash on-hand/cash flow by creating a Web-based corporate reporting system to automatically gather financial and operational information from various facilities.
* Reduced excess and obsolete inventory $3 million by developing new processes to monitor and track inventory levels throughout the corporation.
* Raised product market potential from $1 million to over $12 million per year by designing equipment and techniques for a new chemical process.
* Expanded sales 35% by increasing sales activities with new prospects and static accounts.
* Reduced the annual security operating budget 22% by developing and implementing several cost savings projects while increasing the level of security.
* Saved $50,000 in costs annually by reorganizing and consolidating accounting, analysis and forecasting activities.
* Prepared and presented computer system training for 28 people, saving the company $51,000 annually.
* Restructured 450 turnkey construction projects to ensure completion on time and within budgetary limitations, reducing overall cost of project by more than $2 million.
* Researched and determined status of uncashed checks and created system to help track future unclaimed obligations, which resulted in the initial savings of $184,000 and $20,000 annually.
* Implemented policy and procedure for auditing reports, increasing accuracy rate from 65% to 90%.

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| **Action Verbs** |  |
| accomplished | consolidated | explained | maintained | remodeled |
| achieved | contained | extracted | managed | repaired |
| acted | contracted | fabricated | marketed | represented |
| adapted | contributed | facilitated | mediated | researched |
| addressed | controlled | familiarized | moderated | restored |
| administered | coordinated | fashioned | monitored | restructured |
| advanced | corresponded | focused | motivated | retrieved |
| advised | counseled | forecast | negotiated | revitalized |
| allocated | created | formulated | operated | saved |
| analyzed | critiqued | founded | organized | scheduled |
| appraised | cut | generated | originated | schooled |
| approved | decreased | guided | overhauled | screened |
| arranged | delegated | headed up | oversaw | set |
| assembled | demonstrated | identified | performed | shaped |
| assigned | designed | illustrated | persuaded | solidified |
| attained | devised | improved | prepared | specified |
| audited | diagnosed | increased | presented | stimulated |
| authored | directed | indoctrinated | prioritized | streamlined |
| automated | dispatched | influenced | processed | strengthened |
| balanced | distinguished | informed | produced | summarized |
| budgeted | diversified | initiated | programmed | supervised |
| built | drafted | innovated | projected | surveyed |
| calculated | edited | inspected | promoted | systemized |
| catalogued | educated | installed | provided | tabulated |
| chaired | eliminated | instigated | publicized | taught |
| clarified | enabled | instituted | published | trained |
| classified | encouraged | instructed | purchased | translated |
| coached | engineered | integrated | recommended | traveled |
| collected | enlisted | interpreted | reconciled | trimmed |
| compiled | established | interviewed | recorded | upgraded |
| completed | evaluated | introduced | recruited | validated |
| composed | examined | invented | reduced | worked |
| computed | executed | launched | referred | wrote |
| conceptualized | expanded | lectured | regulated |  |
| conducted | expedited | led | rehabilitated |  |

**Create your own Accomplishment Stories**