



TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR CAREER

# Accomplishment Stories

Your Most Powerful Tool to Get the Job Offer



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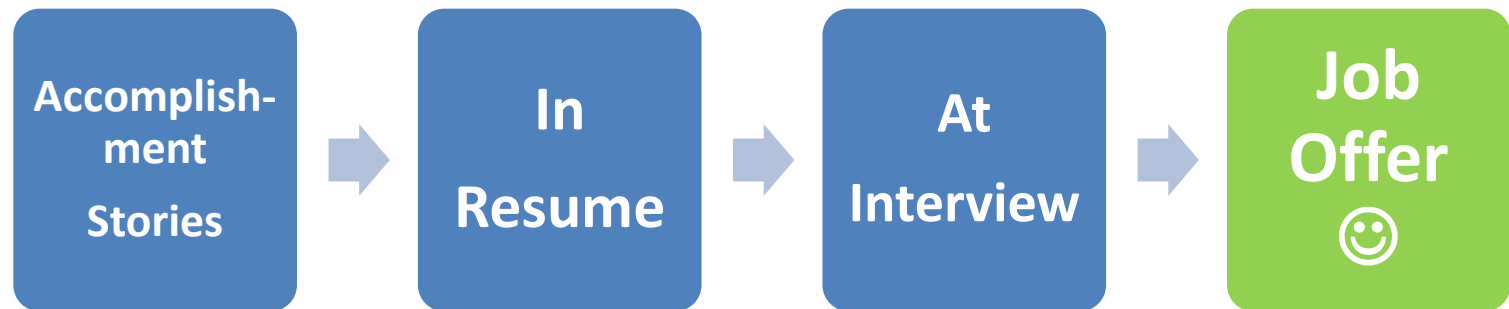
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Remember a story that you heard  
that made a lasting impression ...

**TAKE A MOMENT NOW AND REMEMBER  
SOME DETAILS OF THAT STORY.**

- ✓ How would you summarize the story?
- ✓ If you had to give that story a title, what would it be?
- ✓ What made that story so compelling or memorable?
- ✓ What made the storyteller effective?
- ✓ What characteristics does a great storyteller possess?

# How Are Accomplishment Stories Used in a Job Search?



# What Are YOUR Accomplishment Stories?

Facts Tell; Stories Sell

HOW THEY WORK	WHY THEY WORK
Differentiates your resume	More memorable than facts and figures
Shows how you resolved problems or contributed to the company	Everyone enjoys drama and a good story
Demonstrates your skills and strengths	Listeners can relate and find themselves in the stories
Helps the interviewer appreciate your background and experience	A good story resonates with listeners

# What is an Accomplishment?



***A work-related event with a positive outcome.  
It should satisfy at least 2-3 of the following criteria:***

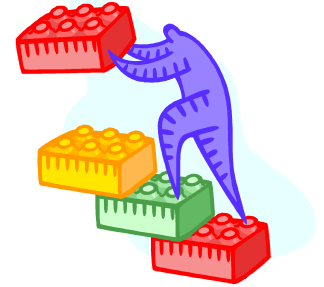
1. A work-related task or event about which you feel **proud**
2. A situation where you went “**above and beyond**” the job’s responsibilities
3. An example of taking **personal initiative**
4. A time when you may have received **special recognition or praise**
5. A situation that had a **successful outcome**

# Accomplishment Stories – Memory Joggers

## ***Have You .....***

- **SOLVED A DIFFICULT PROBLEM** for a customer, manager, co-worker, etc.?
- **RECEIVED SPECIAL RECOGNITION/AWARDS?**
- **ASSUMED MORE RESPONSIBILITY?**
- **TRAINED CO-WORKERS** or new employees?
- **SAVED THE COMPANY MONEY?**
- **REDUCED DOWNTIME** or reduced waste?
- **REORGANIZED** office space/warehouse to improve efficiency?
- **SAVED TIME** on a particular job or improved efficiency?
- **BEEN PROMOTED** or received a raise? Why?
- **INVENTED SOMETHING** – developed, created, designed a product?
- **ORGANIZED AN EVENT?** (What? Why Important?)
- **REPAIRED EQUIPMENT?** (Which? Result?)
- **SUPERVISED** or managed a work group or employees?
- **INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY?**

# Constructing Your Accomplishment Stories



What was the problem, need or challenge?

What did you do about it? (Not the team or department – YOU)

How did you do it, specifically?

What positive, tangible results did you produce? (Quantify, if possible)

What skills did you demonstrate?\* (List 3-4 skill words) \*Management, Observation, Communication, Leadership, Presentation, Persuasion, Analysis, Innovation, Team-Building, Problem-Solving, Follow-Through, Organization

# Accomplishment Story Example

Title: Maltoni Food Brand Re-Launch

## **What was the problem, need or challenge?**

The Maltoni food business was acquired by a private equity firm. The acquisition was highly-leveraged and the business needed to be turned around in order to create the cash flow necessary to cover debt payments. If this didn't happen, the new owners would have been forced to sell the company at a terrible loss, and hundreds of employees would have been laid-off.

## **What did you do about it?**

After analyzing the business for opportunities, I developed an action plan that re-positioned the business in the minds of our distributors and improved brand relevance among our consumer base.

## **How did you do it, specifically?**

I established new pricing strategies for all products and sub-brands, and re-launched two product lines (canned soup and seasonal candy). I initiated and implemented the first consumer promotion in the company's history. Finally, I created sales aids and trained distributors on new initiatives

## **What positive, tangible results did you produce?**

I achieved revenue and profit targets of +18% based on improved consumer take-away, and reduced expenses related to food product returns. These results led to better relations with our distributors, serviced our debt, and allowed the private equity firm to acquire other well-known food brands. No employees were let go. Maltoni Foods was able to remain in business, and the company is thriving to this day.

## **What skills did you demonstrate?**

Analysis, persuasion and management.



# Accomplishment Story Template

Short Title:

**What was the problem, need or challenge?**

**What did you do about it?**

**How did you do it, specifically?**

**What positive, tangible results did you produce?**

**What skills did you demonstrate?**

# Draft Your Own Accomplishment Story

## (Exercise)

Select one work-related event from any time in your career, and answer the following questions to complete the stories. Give a short title to each story. (You should create a total of 8-10 stories on your own.)

What was the problem, need or challenge?

What did you do about it? (Not the team or department – YOU)

How did you do it, specifically?

What positive, tangible results did you produce? (Quantify, if possible)

What skills did you demonstrate?

# PRACTICE TELLING YOUR STORY

## Role Play Exercise



# Accomplishment Stories Grid (“Cheat Sheet”)

**Accomplishment Stories Grid**  
**Interview “Cheat Sheet” Example**

Story Title	Problem	What I did	How I did It	Results	Skills
Designed system saving \$30,000 per year	Disorganization left company exposed to legal action, resulting in possible closure	Focused on the most crucial processes	Created a database, including account receivables for better analysis	Legal protection, organizational process in place, embezzler exposed	Organization Analysis Problem-Solving
Reduced risk and retail investment cost by 50%	Find results-oriented product with great ROI, customer appeal and exclusivity to protect customer base and ensure survival	Researched private label companies and test marketed products with clients and service professionals	Found pharmaceutical grade formulas, hired a graphic designer and trademarked new brand	Cut investment in half, strong ROI (300% mark-up), built reputation; awarded Best New Product at Entrepreneur Expo	Innovation Analysis Problem-Solving Presentation
Achieved rapid training of staff for over-burdened client	Emergency training needed to maintain contract of a multi-million dollar client	Compartmentalized elements of training and identified the strongest employees to assist	Trained assistants, and designed a written and hands-on program that put trainees 1-on-1 with experienced staff	Cut training time in half, metrics were met, and the client negotiated a new contract for an additional source	Leadership Communication Management Presentation

## Accomplishment Examples in the Resume

- **Territory Sales Representative**: Landed company's largest account in history; generated first year revenue of \$1 million.
- **Facilities Manager**: Reduced backlog of 300+ work orders within one month.
- **Internet Sales**: Grew business from 40 books in basement to mega warehouse operation with \$750K in product sales.
- **IT Support**: Trained more than 2,000 users on new application.
- **Retail Customer Service**: Received "Shining Star" award for processing 66 complex credit applications in 2013.
- **Applications Engineer**: Created new product demo system for Sales Department, resulting in a 200% increase in demo closing.
- **Warehouse Operations Manager**: Reorganized two warehouses to optimize space and real-time inventory, saving \$21,000 in merchandise recovery.

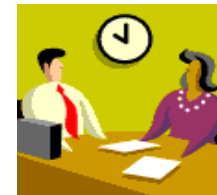
# Accomplishments in the Resume

## **Expert Communications, Media, PA 2006 – 2014** ***Network Engineer***

Designed and deployed fiber optic networks to meet the specific requirements. Consulted with clients on a pre-sale basis, performed needs assessment, and managed system installation. Developed and tracked budgets, requested funding, and reported variances for projects.

- Re-engineered a complex project, resulting in \$500,000 savings and secured a major client's business worth \$2.2 million annually.
- Managed and facilitated new installation of \$3.5 million for the City of Philadelphia with 17 sites under aggressive timeline-driven and changing requirements.
- Initiated analysis and redesign of departmental expense budget, resulting in a 5% or \$168,000 savings to department. Received formal recognition from four managers.
- Orchestrated installation of time-critical project, reducing delivery time by 75% and saving team \$200,000.
- Assigned and consistently managed 30% more projects than colleagues.

# Using Your Accomplishment Stories in the Job Interview



Sample Interview Questions	Responses
I need someone who can really take charge and lead this department.	Tell relevant accomp. story
What are your greatest strengths?	Tell relevant accomp. story
Tell me about a time when you had to “go the extra mile” to satisfy a customer?	Tell relevant accomp. story
Is there anything else you would like me to know about your work?	Tell relevant accomp. story
Why should I select you over the other people I am interviewing?	Tell relevant accomp. story
Are you a team player?	Tell relevant accomp. story
Tell me about a time when you solved a major problem at work?	Tell relevant accomp. story

# **YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS**

## **PUTTING YOUR STORIES TO WORK AT THE INTERVIEW**

1. Ask probing questions to uncover the “pain points” or biggest problems facing the company, manager, or department.
2. Listen for key themes and “strength words.”
3. Confirm your understanding.
4. Ask to tell Accomplishment Stories related to their problems, needs and challenges.



# **YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS**

## **ZERO-IN ON THEIR PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES**

### **A Few Examples ...**

- **What are the most challenging aspects of this job, in your opinion?**
- **What have you done to resolve these issues? What has worked / not worked?**
- **What are some of your longer-term business issues?**
- **How often has this position been filled in the past five years? (Why so often?)**
- **What major challenges have you been working on, without much success?**
- **What solutions have you tried so far, and why do you think they haven't helped?**
- **During my first 30 days, what would be the biggest priorities for me to focus on?**
- **What is the worst thing that has happened to the company in the past year?**
- **What two or three problems, if solved, would make the biggest difference?**
- **What is most important to your boss? To the CEO?**
- **What "drives you crazy" here at the company, or "keeps you up at night?"**
- **Which competitor do you worry about most? Why?**

## **AND HERE'S HOW IT GOES ...**

**YOU:** “Ms. Smith, it sounds like you have a challenge in this department with leadership – is that right?”

**MS. SMITH:** “Yes.”

**YOU:** “I have very strong leadership skills. In fact, I’d like to share a story about a time when I leveraged my leadership skills at my last employer, to produce very positive business results. Would you like to hear it?”

**MS. SMITH:** “Yes, I would.”

**YOU:** Tell your relevant Accomplishment Story in the five-part sequence (as written). Then end with: “As you can tell, Ms. Smith, the skills I demonstrated in this example included analysis, problem-solving – and most importantly, leadership!”

**MS. SMITH:** “It sounds like you’ve got exactly what we need! When can you start?”

# Thank You!

**"THOSE WHO  
TELL STORIES  
RULE THE  
WORLD."  
- PLATO**



# ADDITIONAL CAREER RESOURCES

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