

## EXAMPLES OF ACCOMPLISHMENT RECORD NARRATIVES

The following examples illustrate good accomplishment record narratives for Senior Executive Service candidates being certified under Criterion A, demonstrated executive experience. The examples feature the Challenge-Context-Action-Result model with verification. Candidates should keep the CCAR model in mind as they write their narratives but it is not necessary or even advisable to annotate these statements with “Challenge,” “Context,” “Action,” or “Result.” However, for purposes of illustration, one of these four words appears after select sentences in the examples below to show how the model works.

These examples, from actual Qualifications Review Board cases, have been modified to protect the privacy of the SES candidates.

### ECQ 1 Leading Change

Example Competency: Resilience - Deals effectively with pressure; remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks.

As a corporate officer for the past 6 years, I am held accountable for all aspects of my business area. I must produce results -- delivering against a business plan and ensuring continued growth of the business. I also must consistently exceed client expectations. In 2006, as a Division Manager at the Brown Corporation, my division was executing a major contract in support of a U.S. Army customer. It was a period of expansive growth for the division and I had placed program management of this contract in our Army Financial Management Program area. Brown Corporation held the contract for several years and grown comfortable in supporting this client. As part of my management oversight process, I had regularly received reports from the Program Manager that work was progressing satisfactorily. Then one day, through another source, I began to hear rumors that there was some client dissatisfaction. (Challenge) Unexpectedly, a few days later, I was requested to meet immediately with our senior SES Army client. Despite that program execution of this contract was organizationally two levels under me, it clearly had become my problem and my responsibility as the accountable corporate officer. I adjusted my schedule to ensure that I met with him in the most responsive fashion possible. In the 24 hours before the meeting, I undertook a series of steps – first and foremost to inform my bosses that a major issue was brewing – bad news in business certainly doesn’t get better with time. (Context) Fortunately, because of my relationship with my boss and his confidence in me, he knew I accepted full responsibility for the problem, but more importantly he knew I would fix it to the best of my ability.

To prepare for the meeting, I began a full range of probing discussions with every member of the team as well as a very direct discussion with the Program Manager. It became clear that issues had been known at the staff level but not communicated to senior leadership. During the meeting the next day with the Army executive, it appeared even worse – they were considering terminating our contract and not exercising the option for the next year. Based on our discussion, it was clear that his dissatisfaction was justified. I responded that we, the company and I, accepted responsibility for the mistakes but were absolutely committed to regain their confidence. I replaced the Program Manager immediately, met with the team multiple times to discuss what we needed to do to meet the client’s expectations, and provided weekly reports to the client on our progress. I also began more direct engagement with the Army executive. (Action)

While this consumed a fair amount of time over the ensuing 3 months, the fact that I reacted quickly, was decisive on changes needed, and proactively managed it resulted in restoring the client’s confidence. Brown Corporation was awarded the option year contract. (Result)

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## ECQ 2 Leading People

Example Competency: Team Building - Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride, and trust. Facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish group goals.

Throughout my 30 year career, I have been consistently been in positions that required either being part of a team or leading a team. I am the Director of a 500 person unit that was in a dire state of chaos before my arrival. There had been a series of Acting Directors, who had managed to create an atmosphere of distrust towards management and serious morale issues. I saw the challenges before me. (Challenge) Relationships with the bargaining unit representatives had deteriorated to an all time low and we were being picketed, and we also had the distinction of having the highest number of EEO complaints of any division in the entire country. (Context)

To confront the challenges I drew up a comprehensive list of strategic actions to bring about organizational change. As I tried to implement change, I saw that communication was a huge factor in preventing everyone from being successful, along with a lack of trust and teamwork. I fostered team commitment within my management team by conducting staff meetings three times a week with the focus of imparting a sense of team, ownership and pride, and increasing their understanding of our organizational priorities, goals and direction. As a direct result of my efforts to rebuild the confidence of the management team and respect and trust of subordinate employees, the union representatives have withdrawn every demand to bargain they filed since my arrival and have acknowledged there is no need for picketing and EEO complaints. (Action) Each of two recent national review teams independently reported there was a marked improvement in the demeanor and professionalism of employees and managers. (Result)

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## ECQ 3 Results Driven

Example Competency: Accountability - Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with established control systems and rules.

During my career, I have gained extensive experience in successfully leading results driven organizations. My position as Regional Director for Williams Enterprises exemplifies my commitment to accountability for results. Upon assuming leadership of the Midwestern Region, I conducted a review of our structure and staffing. I had serious doubts about our capacity to provide adequate internal oversight and support given the financial, logistical, and policy challenges facing us. My review also revealed that there was no consistency on how things were accomplished throughout my offices in Michigan and Ohio. (Challenge) During this time, Williams Enterprises was in its formative years and regional growth was critical to its success. (Context)

Beginning in June 2008 and continuing through 2009, I instituted fundamental changes to the structure of the office. I consolidated all the administrative support staff which had been spread out among different groups into one entity, the Mission Support Group. I also clarified the roles and responsibilities for the Group. Many of the duties that had been previously handled as collateral duties by employees throughout the office were placed with Group personnel to ensure consistency and allow for greater oversight and accountability through specific chains of command. To ensure consistency in procedures, I had a series of in-depth internal standard operating procedures (SOPs) created and issued to all personnel covering a variety of key areas such as procurement, travel, and property. (Action) These SOPs helped to ensure that our personnel understood their obligations in handling funds and property. They also helped to close loopholes and address issues left silent by national policies. For example, repairs to company vehicles are funded nationally through the use of the employee's assigned fleet card. Any employee could charge purchases up to \$2,500.00 on the card just by presenting it to a merchant, and there was no process in place

to ensure that the purchases were first reviewed or justified. My SOP on procurement set clear rules and internal controls to ensure that expenses were appropriately reviewed and that all charges were in the best interests of the company. These actions helped employees understand their responsibilities and took confusion out of the procurement process. It also helped ensure the accountability of corporate funds during a time of significant budget restraints. Six months after implementation of the SOPs for fleet card use, my region reduced vehicle expenses by over \$500,000. The SOPs continue to be a key management tool today. I received the “Regional Director of the Year” award for my efforts and the SOPs have been adopted by other regional offices. (Result)

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#### ECQ 4 Business Acumen

Example Competency: Financial Management - Understands the organization’s financial processes. Prepares, justifies, and administers the program budget. Oversees procurement and contracting to achieve desired results. Monitors expenditures and uses cost-benefit thinking to set priorities.

During the last 5 years in my Division Chief position at Smith Systems, I have successfully managed the firm’s largest budget. During 2006, one of the operating divisions was underperforming and I was asked to contribute by increasing profit from my division.

(Challenge)

This occurred during a time of increased scrutiny from the Board of Directors. The Board was considering placing the underperforming divisions up for sale.

(Context)

My first action was to complete a detailed analysis of labor costs against our contracts. Through the use of some short-term personnel substitutions, I was able to generate increased margins without compromising the quality of our client services. I next turned to other costs, keeping in mind the need to continually balance investments in people and business growth. I did not want to mortgage our future business for near-term profit and I wanted to ensure we were continuing to develop our staff. I conducted tradeoff analyses of spending on new business and focused expenditures on the most lucrative near-term targets. I reduced a range of overhead costs through consolidation of functions. From these activities, I generated a new operating budget for our overhead costs and executed it as planned.

(Action)

Because of that I was able to generate an additional 2% profit before taxes from an approximate 8% planned to 10% executed. This contributed significantly to the firm meeting its profit goals for the year. I was recognized for my contribution and received an unprecedented 5% increase in division funding the next year.

(Result)

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#### ECQ 5 Building Coalitions

Example Competency: Partnering - Develops networks and builds alliances, collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.

In my more than 15 years with Jackson Technologies, I have had positions both as a line manager and as a senior staff member. It is in these later positions I have had to most effectively exercise partnering and negotiating skills to gain cooperation and successfully complete assignments.

From 2005 to 2008, I held a newly created senior position entitled Site Coordinator. During this time, the headquarters offices of Jackson Technologies were organized by operating function – information

technology, finance, and facilities. Within each of these offices were lower tier offices for the regional sites. Thus, a Site Manager reported to three different headquarters program offices. (Challenge) I recognized this was causing multiple avenues of communication, conflicting guidance and direction, duplication of efforts, and inefficiencies. (Context) I recommended that an Office of Site Coordination be established to provide a one stop shop for each site to deal with headquarters programs and coordinate headquarters activities for that site. Not surprisingly, my recommendation was met with initial resistance by those who did not see the benefit and were perhaps averse to change. By demonstrating the benefits the new office would provide, I convinced them it was a good idea and received their buy-in. My recommendation to create the new office was accepted and I was selected as the Atlanta Site Coordinator. By establishing relationships with the Atlanta Site Manager and the headquarters programs Office Directors and by demonstrating the benefits of cooperation, I succeeded in creating an integrated unit. (Action) I lead the unit in conducting an unprecedented multi-program year end review for the Atlanta site. The review was successful and used as a model by other Site Coordinators. Additionally, the review led to the cooperative development of a budget for the Atlanta site which eliminated inefficiencies and included cost savings of over \$15 million. (Result)

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