

STAR Method in Your Resume & Interview

Your resume is a quick summary of who you are and what you've done in your career. It identifies and articulates your strengths and key accomplishments – which in turn will help you communicate your value confidently to a new company. It isn't enough to say you are a leader, an effective communicator, a team-player and so on; you need to show it.

In a traditional resume, you would probably itemize your job description, detailing what was expected of you in each role. However, this approach tells an employer nothing about you as an individual.

An accomplishment-based resume, on the other hand, gives an employer more accurate information by describing how you made a difference in that role, as opposed to anyone else that might have held that position. Moreover, it tells an employer that you are somebody who gets things done and therefore, would potentially bring value to the job or internship.

One of the most effective ways for you to communicate your accomplishments is by using a brief narrative structure that includes a targeted beginning, a short explanatory middle, and a strong ending that illustrates clearly what you can do for an employer.

STAR TECHNIQUE

1.) SITUATION:

- Define the general context.
- Who/What/When
- Mention the problem you had to overcome.

2.) TASK:

- Identify the key objective and issue that you have addressed.

3.) ACTION:

- Describe the action you took or initiated, emphasizing the skills you used to complete the task.

4.) RESULTS:

- Summarize the outcome in business terms.

Remember: It is very important to include your results. This is a common mistake. Your statement will be more effective if you can summarize the outcome.

USING THE STAR METHOD DURING AN INTERVIEW:

Sample Question: Have you ever led a team before?

SITUATION: “Yes; a relevant example being at my last company, where I was initially a software developer, in a team of 6 developing a new finance module for our core accounting product.”

TASK: “The project was critical as launch dates had been set with a lot of sales and marketing investments riding on the product being ready. However the project was behind schedule, when our team leader unfortunately became ill and had to leave.”

ACTION: “I had been sports team captain at school, where I loved the challenge and responsibility of leadership. So I volunteered to stand in and used my technical analysis skills to spot a few small mistakes made in the initial coding that were causing the sporadic errors and slowing us down. I then negotiated with our product director, a small bonus incentive for the team and budget for two pizza evenings, so we could pull a couple of late night shifts to correct the coding and catch up with the critical project landmarks.”

RESULTS: “Though this took us 1.5% over budget the software was delivered on time with a better than target fault tolerance. The project was seen as a great success as the additional project cost was minimal compared to the costs of delaying the launch and the negative effect on our product branding. The team were delighted with the extra bonus and I have now been officially promoted to team leader as a result.

METHOD SAMPLE WORKSHEET

Develop 3-4 STAR examples for each position you’ve held. These statements can also add value to your elevator pitch, cover letter and interviews. Depending on your targeted position during your career search, you may want to revise these statements to make them more relevant.



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1 SITUATION: (General context, where, when, who was involved, problem, etc.)

2 TASK: (One specific issue that was addressed)

3 ACTION: (What steps did you take to solve the problem?)

4 RESULTS: (Your end result was...)