

ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS VS. RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENTS

Employers know you were responsible for certain tasks and activities through your work experiences. What they want to know is not so much **what** you have done but **how well** you have done it. There is a difference between writing a check off list of tasks and creating powerful statements that demonstrate the results of your actions. These are called **accomplishment statements** and can make the difference in securing a job with a potential employer.

In addition, keeping track of your academic, personal and professional accomplishments hints at your strengths and areas of high performance. Furthermore, highlighting your areas of strength can help you make career decisions or choose between two job opportunities.

SHOW 'EM WHAT YOU CAN DO

Adapted from "Don't just sound great; show 'em what you can do" (Andrea Kay in Asbury Park Press, 12/5/2010)

Some examples of achievements and accomplishments:

- Corrected an internal problem
- Expanded or improved something
- Made something look better
- Increased business or membership
- Reduced error rates
- Obtained more information
- Raised profile of companies or events
- Cut down time
- Made someone look good
- Consistently met/exceeded standards
- Devised or streamlined a system/SOP
- Avoided problems
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Raised conformance ratings

Make a habit of keeping track of your accomplishments in an electronic format, such as your phone, notebook, etc. This will help you develop tangible accomplishments whenever you need to update your resume or prepare for an interview. Try to add 4 -6 accomplishments to your list annually.

NEXT START WRITING ACCOMPLISHMENT STYLE STATEMENTS

To start your lists of accomplishments, use the space below to brainstorm areas in which you have been a high performer:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Now, try developing an *Accomplishment Statement* for each achievement listed above. Below is a before and after example of a strong accomplishment statement. Adapted from *Resume Magic*, Susan Britton Whitcomb 2010:

***Before:** Implemented preventative maintenance program that improved downtime.

***After:** Improved production 19% and reduced assembly-line downtime from 7 to x5 hours per week through implementation of preventative-maintenance program.

INCORPORATING ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS INTO YOUR RESUME

<i>Responsibility-focused job description</i>	<i>Accomplishments-focused job description</i>
<p>Trembling Pines Nursing Home, Baltimore, MD</p> <p>March 2012-May 2015</p> <p>Business Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for maintaining daily operations of facility's administrative office Coordinated and managed the health benefits for all employees Wrote grants and served on various committees, including the activities committee 	<p>Trembling Pines Nursing Home, Baltimore, MD</p> <p>March 2012 – May 2015</p> <p>Business Manager</p> <p>Managed finance and administration of retirement community with a \$22 million budget and 550 residents</p> <p>Accomplishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saved \$200,000 in costs for the 2008-2009 fiscal year by implementing new employee benefits plan Created and managed bid process for transportation and food service contracts, saving the facility \$50,000 Successfully secured a \$2 million grant for technology improvements Increased productivity by 15% in office with implementation of new computer software and training

RESPONSIBILITIES VS. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

When adding accomplishment statements to your resume, it is important to avoid writing responsibility statements. Take a look at the statements below to see the difference between a job duty and a personal accomplishment:

Responsibility	Accomplishment
Responsible for sales in Eastern region	Increased sales profit margin by 87% in Western region
As HR manager, was responsible for saving money on corporate benefits	Researched long-term disability insurance and found package that saved company 10% over previous plan

Quantify or Qualify your statements with FACTS if possible (concrete evidence)

Before	After
Completed team project ahead of schedule and under budget	As lead member of project management development team, successfully completed performance appraisal ahead of schedule and \$25,000 under budget.
Assumed manager duties	Supervised a staff of 7 employees and increased morale and productivity with monthly professional development initiatives.
Input customer orders into database	Input 40 customer orders on daily basis , consistently exceeding the average by 60%

ACCOMPLISHMENT WORKSHEET

Now, it is your turn to brainstorm accomplishments from your own personal experiences. Many job-seekers have difficulty pinpointing their accomplishments, so this worksheet is designed to help get you thinking.

Not all of the questions below will pertain to your experiences and career fields. Respond to as many of the questions as you can for each career experience. Current students or new graduates should remember that professional experience also entails internships, volunteer work, campus activities and academic accomplishments.

Try to list accomplishments that are specific and measurable:

- Quantify whenever possible. (Examples: Increased sales by 50 percent over the previous year, supervised staff of 23; Served a customer base of 150; the largest in the firm's customer-service team.)
- Use superlatives and "firsts". Use words such as "first", "only," "best," "most," and "highest".
- Consider the "so-what factor." For every accomplishment you list, ask yourself, "so what?" Does the item you've listed truly characterize your abilities and your potential for contributing to your next employer's success?

YOUR CURRENT OR MOST RECENT JOB

1. In this job, what special things did you do to set yourself apart? How did you do the job better than anyone else or than anyone else could have done?
2. What did you do to make this job your own? How did you take initiative? How did you go above and beyond what was asked of you in your job description?
3. What special things did you do to impress your boss so that you might be promoted?
 - a. Were you promoted? Rapid and/or frequent promotions can be especially noteworthy.

4. How has the organization benefited from your performance? How did you/will you leave this employer better off than before you worked there?
5. List any awards you won, such as Employee of the Month, President's Club, etc.
6. What are you most proud of in this job?
7. Check your annual performance reviews for this job. Provide any glowing or even complimentary quotes from your reviews. Did you consistently receive high ratings?
8. Have you received any complimentary memos or letters from employers or customers? Provide quotes from these letters that support your accomplishments.
9. What tangible evidence do you have of accomplishments – publications you have produced, products you have developed, software applications you have written?
10. How did you contribute to this employer's profitability, such as through sales increase percentages? How have you helped your employer to make money?
11. How did you contribute to operational efficiency in this job? How did you help this employer or a part of the organization to save money, save time, or make work easier?
12. How did you contribute to productivity, such as through successfully motivating your team?
13. How did you build relationships or image with internal and/or external constituencies? How did you attract new customers or retain existing ones?
14. How did you expand the business?
15. How did you help the organization fulfill its mission statement?
16. How did you solve one or more specific problems in this job? What were the problems or challenges that you or the organization faced? What did you do to overcome the problem?