

# Defining your Achievements

Thinking about your career achievements is an important aspect of your job search – achievements indicate the following:

1. How successful you have been in your job roles;
2. How good you are at your job;
3. Your uniqueness and how you stand out from other candidates with similar skills and qualifications; and
4. Your specific contributions to your former employers to assist them in their growth and, therefore, the value you could add to the market and other clients.

Achievements indicate one or more skills in action, sometimes combined with the ideal personal characteristics. Once you identify your top skills, you can start to pull together a statement of your value to the market. This is your “value proposition”.

The first step in fleshing out your value proposition is to identify your achievements.

## Questions to ask yourself to define some of your achievements

- Did you take the initiative of acquiring new skills or learning new technologies?
- Did you successfully solve a difficult situation with a client?
- Did you surpass accepted standards for quality and/or quantity of performance?
- 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 prepare business plans, strategy documents, or board reports?
- Did you implement complex processes or improve upon existing processes?
- Did you participate in any technical improvements?
- Did you train or mentor other colleagues to become better at what they do, or did you put training plans into place?
- Did you implement or participate in any sales, profits and/or cost saving recommendations?
- Did you initiate techniques to reduce errors, costs or time spent?
- Did your work enlarge the client / customer base?
- Did you receive any awards?

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The next step in defining your achievements is to develop achievement statements. Achievement statements prove that you have demonstrated the desired qualifications by clearly stating a series of factual accomplishments, rather than statements of responsibility.

While responsibility statements are important, most candidates applying for the same role will probably have similar resumes, having carried out the same responsibilities and bringing with them similar skillsets and qualifications.

## Achievement Statements on your resume

In your resume, you should outline bulleted achievement statements under each employment position. These achievement statements distinguish you from all other candidates applying and, as such, these should come before your responsibility statements.

Achievement statements should briefly and succinctly state what you achieved while in each role. These statements will demonstrate the measurable impact you had on an organisation.

Highlighting your achievements on your resume in clear statements also creates an opportunity for Hiring Managers to ask questions around these achievements and further the conversation about your skillset.

### Examples of Achievement Statements you could include on your resume:

- **Streamlined & Improved Processes.** Designed and implemented standard Financial Model that assured data integrity, eliminated analytical and data inconsistencies, and reduced workload by two days.
- **Improved Customer Satisfaction.** Coordinated, resolved and responded to 500 consumer letters in a five-day turnaround, measurably improving customer satisfaction.
- **Cost Savings.** Prepared and presented training on new computer system for 28 people, saving \$51,000 annually.
- **Increased Efficiency.** Established office policies and procedures, record storage systems, and a safety program which significantly increased office efficiency.
- **Taking Initiative & Cost Savings.** Researched and determined status of uncashed cheques and created system to help track future unclaimed obligations, which resulted in a savings of \$184,000 initially, and then \$20,000 annually.
- **Improved Profitability.** Planned and implemented the launch of the company into the Northern Territory market, which increased market share from 30% to 40%.
- **Enhanced Safety.** Implemented a formal system allowing all employees to contribute to safety improvement in their areas, which resulted in a 50% reduction in lost time injuries.
- **Increased Efficiency & Improved Outcomes.** Installed new equipment valued at over \$10M, which resulted in a 50% reduction in labour and an 80% reduction in injuries.
- **Interpersonal Skills.** Developed strong working relationships with independent contractors and technicians to ensure all aspects of projects were completed.

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## Achievement Statements in interviews

In your interviews, you will want to tell a more detailed story about each achievement to show the interviewer how you have used your skills on the job to achieve great outcomes for business. You should have as many as 10 achievement statements ready when you go in to an interview. These stories also allow Hiring Managers to ask open-ended, competency-based and behavioural questions.

The best way to develop and describe your achievements is by using the STAR technique.

S – Situation

T – Task

A – Action

R – Result

This technique is commonly used in interviewing and serves storytelling well.

**Situation** – The interviewer wants you to present a recent challenge / situation in which you found yourself.

**Task** – What were you required to achieve? The interview will be looking to see what was expected of you in the situation.

**Action** – What did you do? The interviewer will be looking to see what you achieved in the situation.

**Result** – What was the outcome of your actions? What did you achieve through your actions and did you meet your objectives?

## Examples of Achievement Statements presented in the STAR format:

**Situation** – Supervisor wants you to automate manual records and calculate costs. You need to set up a spreadsheet to do this, but you have a lack of Excel knowledge.

**Task** – To set up a spreadsheet with limited Excel knowledge.

**Action** – Engaged in online training, and asked for coaching from a colleague to set up spreadsheet.

**Result** – Designed a new spreadsheet that reduced recordkeeping and calculation time by 70% from the previous manual method.

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## List of action verbs to assist you in forming your achievement statements

(Source: The Daily Muse Editor)

### You Led a Project

If you were in charge of a project or initiative from start to finish, skip 'led' and instead try:

Chaired	Controlled	Coordinated	Executed	Headed	Operated
Orchestrated	Organised	Oversaw	Planned	Produced	Programmed

### You Envisioned and Brought a Project to Life

And if you actually developed, created or introduced that project into your company? Try:

Administered	Built	Created	Designed	Developed	Engineered
Established	Founded	Implemented	Launched	Pioneered	Spearheaded

### You Saved the Company Time or Money

Hiring managers love candidates who have helped a team operate more efficiently or cost-effectively. To show just how much time or money you saved, try:

Conserved	Consolidated	Decreased
Deducted	Diagnosed	Lessened
Reconciled	Reduced	Yielded

### You Increased Efficiency, Sales, Revenue, or Customer Satisfaction

Along similar lines, if you can show that your work boosted the company's numbers in some way, you're bound to impress. In these cases, consider:

Accelerated	Achieved	Advanced	Boosted	Capitalised	Enhanced
Expanded	Furthered	Generated	Maximised	Stimulated	Sustained

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### You Changed or Improved Something

So, you brought your department's invoicing system out of the Stone Age and onto the internet? Talk about the amazing changes you made at your office with these words:

Centralised	Clarified	Converted	Influenced	Integrated	Merged
Overhauled	Redesigned	Refined	Restructured	Standardised	Transformed

### You Managed a Team

Instead of reciting your management duties, like "Led a team..." or "Managed employees...", show what an inspirational leader you were with terms like:

Cultivated	Directed	Facilitated	Guided	Inspired	Mentored
Mobilised	Motivated	Shaped	Supervised	Trained	Unified

### You Brought in Partners, Funding, or Resources

Were you "responsible for" a great new partner, sponsor, or source of funding? Try:

Acquired	Forged	Navigated	Negotiated	Partnered	Secured
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### You Supported Customers

Because manning the phones or answering questions really means you're advising customers and meeting their needs, use:

Advised	Advocated	Coached	Consulted	Educated	Informed
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### You Were a Research Machine

Did your job include research, analysis, or fact-finding? Mix up your verbiage with these words:

Analysed	Assessed	Audited	Calculated	Discovered	Evaluated
Examined	Explored	Forecasted	Interpreted	Investigated	Mapped
Measured	Qualified	Quantified	Surveyed	Tested	Tracked

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(Source: The Daily Muse Editor)

### You Wrote or Communicated

Was writing, speaking, lobbying, or otherwise communicating part of your gig? You can explain just how compelling you were with words like:

Authored	Briefed	Campaigned	Composed	Conveyed	Convinced
Corresponded	Counselled	Critiqued	Defined	Documented	Edited
Illustrated	Lobbied	Persuaded	Promoted	Publicised	Reviewed

### You Oversaw or Regulated

Whether you enforced protocol or managed your department's requests, describe what you really did, better, with these words:

Authorised	Blocked	Delegated	Dispatched	Enforced	Ensured
Inspected	Itemised	Monitored	Screened	Scrutinised	Verified

### You Achieved Something

Did you hit your goals? Win a coveted department award? Don't forget to include that on your resume, with words like:

Attained	Awarded	Completed	Demonstrated	Earned	Exceeded
Outperformed	Reached	Showcased	Succeeded	Surpassed	Targeted

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