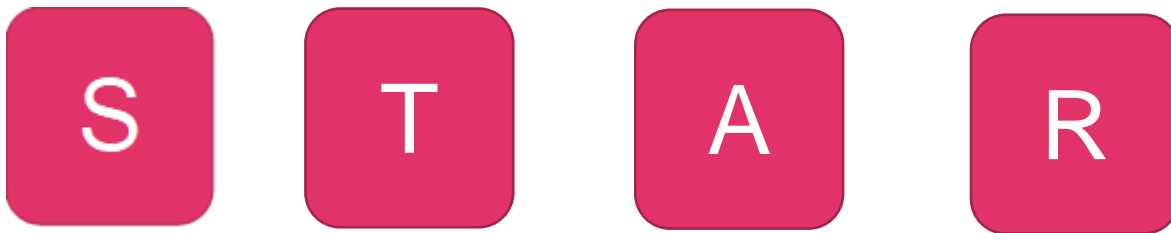


STAR Interview Tips

It is important to know your skills and be able to find positions that require those skills. An excellent guide for developing accomplishment stories that showcase your skills is called **STAR**. Your **STAR** stories put your accomplishments in a business context that an employer can understand. The STAR acronym is easy to remember and will help you organize material in interview situations.



Example:

- Describe the **Situation/Task**.
 - Supervisor needed small database set up to automate manual records and calculate costs.
- List the **Actions** you took.
 - Took online training, asked for coaching from a colleague to set up spreadsheet.
- Describe the **Results** you helped obtain and the benefits to your employer.
 - Completed and used the new database in a spreadsheet format reducing record keeping and calculation time by 80% from previous manual method

The STAR approach works because it...

- Presents a complete story, from the context through to the results.
- Is applicable outside your industry – shows your thinking process.

You should have as many as **10-20 STAR** stories ready when you go in for an interview. These stories are great for open-ended questions. Your accomplishments reflect your professional successes. These are actions that you took, that were a success, and for which you are very proud. Accomplishments are the best possible evidence that you can work effectively, and that you can and do use your skills to good advantage. An accomplishment is not necessarily something exceptional or spectacular. But it can reveal a lot about your talents and abilities.

To help you determine which activities could be considered accomplishments, ask yourself the following questions:

- Did you make major changes or facilitated the work in any way?
- Did you take the initiative of acquiring new skills or learning new technologies?
- Were you selected to participate in a special project or to sit on a committee because of your skills or experience?
- Did you successfully solve a difficult situation with a client?
- Did you resolve an emergency with little or no increase in time, energy, dollars, and people?
- Did you surpass accepted standards for quality and/or quantity of performance?
- Did you perform within standard operating procedures even when circumstances were against you?
- 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 act as a resource person for your colleagues on certain issues?
- Did you prepare any original reports, special papers or documents?
- Did you show creativity by developing and implementing a plan or a complex process?
- Did you participate in any technical improvements?
- Did you assist someone else in realizing his/her objective?
- Did your contributions enable those in charge to maintain better controls or make better decisions?
- Did you implement or participate in any sales, profits, and/or cost saving recommendations?
- Did you initiate plans to reduce errors, costs or time spent?
- Did your work enlarge the client/customer base?
- Did you receive any award or letter of commendation?

Sample Accomplishments

- Increased gross profits by 8% and reduced cost of goods sold by 25% from previous year through supplier pricing negotiations, design modifications, and change in product mix.
- Reduced supplies expenses by nearly 50% through purchase review and negotiating better pricing with our vendors.
- Improved inventory accounting 33% by developing a common method of tracking assets.
- Recovered \$1000 error by creating a Web-based corporate reporting system to automatically gather financial and operational information from various facilities.
- Increased gross profits by 8% and reduced cost of goods sold by 25% from previous year through supplier pricing negotiations, design modifications, and change in product mix.
- Reduced operating expenses by 49% through tighter expense controls in negotiating better insurance rates and more effective use of outside consultants
- Improved cash flow \$25 million and reduced inventory exposure 33% or \$10 million by developing a common method of controlling the various facilities.
- Recovered a \$1 million error and maximized cash on-hand/cash flow by creating a Web-based corporate reporting system to automatically gather financial and operational information from various facilities.
- Reduced excess and obsolete inventory \$3 million by developing new processes to monitor and track inventory levels throughout the corporation.
- Raised product market potential from \$1 million to over \$12 million per year by designing equipment and techniques for a new chemical process.
- Expanded sales 35% by increasing sales activities with new prospects and static accounts.
- Reduced the annual security operating budget 22% by developing and implementing several cost savings projects while increasing the level of security.
- Saved \$50,000 in costs annually by reorganizing and consolidating accounting, analysis and forecasting activities.
- Prepared and presented computer system training for 28 people, saving the company \$51,000 annually.
- Restructured 450 turnkey construction projects to ensure completion on time and within budgetary limitations, reducing overall cost of project by more than \$2 million.
- Researched and determined status of uncashed checks and created system to help track future unclaimed obligations, which resulted in the initial savings of \$184,000 and \$20,000 annually.

Action Verbs

accomplished	consolidated	explained	maintained	remodeled
achieved	contained	extracted	managed	repaired
acted	contracted	fabricated	marketed	represented
adapted	contributed	facilitated	mediated	researched
addressed	controlled	familiarized	moderated	restored
administered	coordinated	fashioned	monitored	restructured
advanced	corresponded	focused	motivated	retrieved
advised	counseled	forecast	negotiated	revitalized
allocated	created	formulated	operated	saved
analyzed	critiqued	founded	organized	scheduled
appraised	cut	generated	originated	schooled
approved	decreased	guided	overhauled	screened
arranged	delegated	headed up	oversaw	set
assembled	demonstrated	identified	performed	shaped
assigned	designed	illustrated	persuaded	solidified
attained	devised	improved	prepared	specified
audited	diagnosed	increased	presented	stimulated
authored	directed	indoctrinated	prioritized	streamlined
automated	dispatched	influenced	processed	strengthened
balanced	distinguished	informed	produced	summarized
budgeted	diversified	initiated	programmed	supervised
built	drafted	innovated	projected	surveyed
calculated	edited	inspected	promoted	systemized
catalogued	educated	installed	provided	tabulated
chaired	eliminated	instigated	publicized	taught
clarified	enabled	instituted	published	trained
classified	encouraged	instructed	purchased	translated
coached	engineered	integrated	recommended	traveled
collected	enlisted	interpreted	reconciled	trimmed
compiled	established	interviewed	recorded	upgraded
completed	evaluated	introduced	recruited	validated
composed	examined	invented	reduced	worked

Create your own Accomplishment Stories

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