Accomplishment statements

Purpose

Developing accomplishment statements sets you apart from your competition.

Successful marketing involves packaging your skills and experiences to demonstrate your strengths to a potential employer. Accomplishment statements are not descriptions of your job duties; they are specific contributions you have made to your organization, either individually or as part of a team. Accomplishment statements can include special projects you have worked on and assignments you have completed, whether through paid work or volunteer experiences. You may find it helpful to review your performance appraisals for specific examples of your accomplishments.

Guidelines

You will increase your effectiveness by using the following formula to write your Accomplishment Statements:

Action Verb + Situation/Task + Action + Results

- **Action verb:** Planned, initiated, coordinated, etc.
- **Situation/Task:** Planned a meeting, initiated a program, etc.
- **Action:** Interesting detail (e.g., who you did it for, number of people, size of budget, size of caseload, type of issues/population).
- **Results:** The bottom-line effect of your effort (e.g., saved time or money, exceeded sales goals, reduced errors, increased staff retention. Quantify the results in numerical or percentage terms whenever possible and appropriate (e.g., How much? How many? What time period?)

Sentences with this structure create a scenario and emphasize what you did, not what you were required to do. This is the time to "toot your own horn." Recognize your skills and what you have achieved.

Remember, highlight one primary action and result for each statement.

Example

Planned a meeting for over 100 staff to educate them on changes to Cornell's Benefit Plans, which resulted in a decrease in phone calls to the front desk.

Developing statements

Look at position descriptions, performance appraisals and awards or achievements to help you develop accomplishment statements. What can you say about your performance?

For example:

- How many people did you supervise?
- What size budget did you manage?
- How many workshops did you lead?
- What skills did you develop?
- What was your biggest accomplishment?
- Did you design or modify a system or procedure?

- Have you dealt with difficult employees, vendors or clients?
- Have you increased revenue/sales/donations?
- Have you improved productivity?
- Did you enhance employee relations?
- Did you implement a new management strategy?
- Have you saved your department/organization time or money?
- Have you successfully supervised or trained others?
- Have you successfully managed a project? What was the complexity of the project? What were the results?
- Have you served on a committee or worked as a team member?

Don't forget to include information about team or group involvement, and balance the information to include technical and interpersonal skills.

Examples

- Designed departmental policy and procedures to handle customer complaints. Reduced complaints by 50%.
- Streamlined application process of paper driven tuition scholarship program to a web-based application system saving resources and time.
- Monitored budgets of $600,000 - $650,000 monthly for eight years, reconciling discrepancies and preparing financial reports for management.
- Completed $2.5 million project three months ahead of schedule and 4% under budget.
- Reviewed demographic data and labor market projections to establish program goals.
- Organized and maintained complex database of over 5,000 accounts.
- Maintained an excellent departmental safety record during twenty years of employment with Cornell.
- Developed and managed facility renovation projects with a $1.5 million budget.
- Developed an orientation program for all incoming freshmen that increased knowledge of campus resources.

Your turn

Consider developing some accomplishment statements of your own. The more you develop now, the better prepared you will be for conducting an informational interview or writing a resume and presenting yourself in a job interview.