DEVELOP-Your 3A's-#2 Accomplishments (SOAR Stories)

The interview allows the job seeker to illustrate how they will deliver value by solving the customers' problems.

To prepare, the job seeker should create SOAR Stories. SOAR Stories provide the framework for structuring accomplishment statements. Not only are SOAR stories an excellent tool for your interview but also have a role in building your resume content. Each letter in the acronym SOAR depicts one aspect of the problem.

Situation – The "before" picture of what was happening "at the time of the situation".

Obstacle or Opportunity - Articulate the issues to overcome or define the problem.

Action - The action you took to resolve the situation.

Result - Skill demonstrated or Outcome of your action, also may include the Benefit received.

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Interviews focus on all four aspects of the problem:
Situation, Obstacle/Opportunity, Action, and Result.
Resumes focus primarily on the Action and Result.

Here is an example of one of my SOAR Stories:
Question: Tell me about a time you created something to solve a problem.

My Answer:

Situation: The corporate R&D Library sought a data driven budgeting process to forecast their spending on subscription services consisting of printed periodicals and online access to e-databases.

Obstacle: There was no data to determine past usage for those periodicals and e-database access to establish a baseline for previous spending.

Action: I built a SurveyMonkey® to send to colleagues with a history of using library resources.

Result: I collected 700+ survey responses. I entered the responses into Excel. I established correlations between the questions that indicated the relative value of each resource. That value was measured along a continuum from low to high usage to determine the viability of renewing the subscription. Savings the first year was $400K.

NOW it is time to try your hand at creating your own SOAR Stories.

- Create and memorize 6-8 SOAR Stories pulled from a variety of your resume experiences. Then there will be less hesitation and more confidence when answering the behavioral interview questions.

- Focus on
    - Stories that cover a full range of accomplishments: cost savings, process improvement, team building/leading, technology refresh, resolving

conflict, overcoming barriers, dealing with difficult peer/manager, creative or out-of-the-box problem solving are just a few categories. Depending upon your specialty, business or industry, your list will be different.

- o Showcasing your strengths, therefore, look to those accomplishments you like doing, you did well, and you would like to do again.

- Behavioral interview questions are

  "Examples of specific situations where candidates use certain skills. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, the answers 'should provide verifiable, concrete evidence as to how a candidate has dealt with issues in the past.' It is a way to let your past work performance prove that you're capable of doing in the future for this potential employer."

Sources:
https://www.themuse.com/advice/30-behavioral-interview-questions-you-should-be-ready-to-answer
https://bit.ly/3dOJpKa

- Behavioral interview questions usually start with "Tell me about when…."
  - o One of your key team members quit the project, how did you fill the void and keep the project on track.
  - o You were feeling constrained by project funding, how did you resolve it?
  - o You experienced difficulties with a co-worker, how did you deal with that?
  - o You were overloaded with work and unsure of meeting deadlines.

Memorizing SOAR stories prior to your interview, will enable you to be responsive, articulate, and concise when answering behavioral interview questions.

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Meet Brad L.

My employment ended six weeks ago. The situation at work had changed and was going to require more traveling, resulting in less time spent with my young family. Since leaving my job, I applied to dozens of places with not much luck with call backs and interviews. I took the advice of my trusted leaders and sought outside guidance and career assistance to get me back on track. --- Brad L.