

# ***Achievements in Your Resume –***

***By John K. Brubaker***

---

This exercise is intended to give us some great content for your resume – and has the added benefit of beginning your interview preparation – right now.

Probably the biggest mistake made in home-made resumes is a focus on “responsibilities” – feeling as though if you tell the reader all of the details of the job – he or she will be convinced that you are the person. This misses the perspective of the reader. The reality is that since they are recruiting for a position, if they see on your resume that they did a similar position for another company, they know 80% of what you did. That is NOT why they will hire you. They will hire you because of the DIFFERENCE YOU MADE in your work.

Possibly the most important thing that you can understand to bring your ability to market yourself to potential employers is this. **Everyone’s career – no matter how long or short, what field you might be in – can and at some point will be boiled down to its essence – and its essence is between three and six stories which you can tell which illustrate your unique ability to provide value to an employer.** The purpose of this exercise is to help you focus in on getting those stories – or the raw information – to us so we can help you craft these stories.

To illustrate this, I will share two stories with you – get it?

## **“Must Airs”**

In 1985, I co-authored the book “The Aids Epidemic: How You Can Protect Yourself and Your Family – Why You Must” – published by Warner Books. It was the first book written by an American doctor on the AIDS Epidemic - and eventually was published in five languages and sold worldwide. My co-author, Dr. James Slaff and I – went on tour – doing radio and television appearances all over the country.

Very shortly after starting we realized that in many cases we would only get a short amount of time – five minutes on a morning tv talk show, for example – and because of the poorly focused questions we were often asked, unless we were very prepared – we ended up off on tangents and the time blew by.

I came up with “Must Airs” – three 30-45 second “sound bites” that represented the distillation of the message we wanted to get out. And we disciplined ourselves to incorporate these into the first three answers on any program. They became the heart of our informational, educational marketing program.

So, ask yourself as you engage in a job search – what are **your** “must airs”? What are the three best examples you could give of why you’d be a great employee. Is it an award you won? Was it a moment of heroic problem-solving? Was it the long-term loyalty you showed to a company which went through good and bad times?

This is part of what you can prepare for us. It doesn't have to be beautifully written out – just the facts. But start thinking about this – and it will get your mind in the right groove.

### **My Near-Interview with A Big Hollywood Person**

Some of you know that I was recently selected to co-author a book which has significant potential historic value. It is a long story as to how that came about (involves Linked-In!). For the purposes of this discussion, a critical point came when I was waiting to potentially get grilled on my credentials and credibility by a big time Hollywood person – who was going to call me and possibly put me through the ringer to impress him, justify my selection on a project of this magnitude, etc.

What did I do to prep for that call? I got down to the fundamentals. And realized that the same principle which I had been preaching for years to clients – storytelling and examples – was the essence of what I needed. From the stories came the points. Not the other way around.

So I got it down to just a couple of really great, relevant stories I was all ready to share. Never turned out to need them. But the prep was so valuable.

So, begin thinking through how you are going to shine in the interview – what examples you will use. This exercise will help us help you prep for that.

Here are some things you can do to either prepare for an interview for your resume – or in providing a resume writer with some additional content that he or she can use to make your background come to life. For the purposes of this exercise we are going to focus entirely on achievements.

So, if achievements and stories are at the heart of your value, how can we make sure your resume has a very strong mix of them, here are some ways to get at your achievements. The last of them will be “anecdotes” which are “stories”. But there are some other important categories other than stories.

As you go through these I recommend you take this file, and type in notes – in red highlighting – that you can share with me or one of our interviewers. Have fun!!! This is one of the most “high leverage” activities you can get involved in for your job search. Great content, great research, great interview prep.

Through this document I will highlight in red those places where you can do some thinking in terms of giving us content. If you want to jot notes down within the document – you can. At the end of the document those questions and categories will be listed for you – and I ask you to go ahead and type in the answers – then either cut and paste that material into an email, or save just that portion as a separate document and send that.

One other thing. Part of all of this is not just recalling the facts but also RECONNECTING WITH THE EMOTION. You are going to really put together a “highlight reel” of your greatest career moments. Get enthused! Get emotional and positive!! Recall the triumphant feelings!!! All of this can be part of what you send us – and can begin to prep you for when the rubber meets the road in an interview situation.

**Thanks and Have Fun!!!!**

# **Categories of Achievement**

## **Quantifiable**

The most obvious category of achievements is **something that is quantifiable**. Such as:

- Increased sales (best to be as specific as possible – grew business by 30%, from \$2.0 million to \$2.6 million).
- Saved costs
- Improved any measurable “metric” in the business.

You can think of all the categories businesses have and how they want the “needle moved” – sales (up), service (up), quality (up), productivity (up), costs (down), errors (down), etc. And then think of either something you did by yourself or contributed to.

### **Assignment Question 1:**

**What quantitative or statistical measurements do you have from your career?**

Help me find a job

Resume templates

What is a resume

Cover Letter

## **The Story of Your Career**

Next, if you had a long period at a company, think of the “story of your career”. What was the company liked when you showed up? What was it at its height? What did you do to grow? What did you do to help the company grow?

### **Assignment Question 2:**

**Where you feel it might help – write a paragraph about your progression within your major employment relationships. What was it like when you showed up? What happened?**

## **Other Categories**

Other categories to consider:

- Awards - in this case don't just list the award, but the details of what it is given for. So, instead of saying “Member Presidents’ Club (2005).” Say “Member, President’s Club, the company’s highest annual sales award, given to the top 10% of a 1,500 person sales force”

- Promotions
- Special Projects
- Integrating new technology
- Responding to or preventing a crisis
- Helping in a competitive situation – your company vs. others

**Assignment Question 3:**

***Give us a list of all your achievements in any of these areas. Where possible, list not only the achievement, but please give us the details which would enable any reader to understand.***

***Example – instead of writing “2<sup>nd</sup> Place District Sales Contest – First Quarter 2004” – please write “2<sup>nd</sup> Place District Sales Contest for New Account Acquisition – Acquired 14 new accounts – finished #2 out of 22 in the district”.***

***Anecdotes – STAR***

The final, and in some ways the most powerful way, is through anecdotes – a story in which you are at the center – creating value – telling a story.

Think of it this way. Imagine that instead of a resume document we were creating a television program on your career – a 30 minute show. 24 minutes of content. Now think about the various “sets” (employers) and “scenes” (how you would illustrate your positive value).

A simple way to think of this is the use of the “STAR” method:

**Situation** – What was the situation you encountered?

**Task** – How did you define the task?

**Action** – What action was taken?

**Results** – What results were achieved.

Here is an exercise which was done by my brother, Chris, which we translated into resume material. He had a spectacularly successful search (ended in March 2012) and generously agreed to share this with you (he referred to them as “vignettes”). These may not fit your situation exactly, but it is a great example of how to do this. This is one of the highest impact things you can do in a search – because it is not only resume writing – but also interview preparation.

Chris Brubaker Career Vignette's

## **1. Approval for an \$8 million dollar re-implementation of HR back office systems**

Beginning in June 2010 I was asked to develop a business case for the replacement of the existing HR back office system for Raymond James.

Situation - Raymond James had an aging HR back office system (PeopleSoft v8.8) that was going to lose overall product support (security patches, ongoing functional development) from Oracle as well as the federal regulatory updates (tax tables, regulatory compliance updates like Obama care changes etc). There were 75 competing IT projects on the table for the Executive committee to prioritize for execution/implementation.

Task - Develop a business case and needs analysis to present to the CEO to request \$8 million dollars of expenditure to replace the system.

Action - I developed several iterative presentations to present to a steering committee that led to a final presentation for the CEO in January 2011 to request the expenditure and green light to move forward with the project.

Result - Green light approval received from the CEO to go forward with the implementation including bringing in IBM consulting to execute the project.

## **2. Assume responsibility for and develop overall strategy for HRMS department at Raymond James**

Situation - Beginning in 2010 I assumed the role of Head of HRMS at Raymond James. The department had previously been run by one person that had responsibility for HRMS, Benefits, and Compensation and had not had any specific knowledge of HRMS in their previous work history so the department was not properly staffed or executing in a efficient manner for the tasks needed to support Raymond James HR system processes and needs.

Task - Revamp the entire structure and role of the HRMS function; develop an overall strategy for the function and evaluate and replace skill sets.

Action - I re-organized the department into a day to day processing group (HR Records); a process evaluation and development group (HR Process Development) and a functional reporting and system administrative group (HRMS). I replaced 5 of the 7 positions that were budgeted for the department within the first 9 months and increased the skill set to properly support 3 of the primary systems (Peoplesoft HCM, Taleo Recruitment, and Success Factors Performance management) that were needed for HR support of Raymond James. Additionally I've proposed a 5 year strategic plan to move to a fully functional Service Center model to handle overall processing and support needs for Raymond James & Associates.

Result - Increased efficiency of the daily processing of HR changes needed within the organization; automated systematic replacement of manual processes to handle paperwork and organizational changes; improved user experience with onboarding activities for newly hired employee's; delivery of improved metrics to Senior Leaders of HR information related to headcount, turnover, etc.

### **3. Developed strategy to move to a consolidated Service Center functionality for HR processing.**

Situation - Raymond James has several administrative functions that exist throughout the business units of the company that handle processing activities for their specific business units. The processing is both manual and labor intensive and needs to be automated and to allow for efficiency and protection of personally identifiable information (PII).

Task - Develop a strategy to consolidate processing of personnel information in an automated fashion and centralize the effort needed to approve and process changes needed to support the overall HR function at Raymond James.

Action - Researched and developed a 3 year strategy to:

- Move from paper processing to online automation of information needed to make employee changes;
- Consolidate processing and expertise of Personnel to execute changes
- Develop Knowledge Center and Help Desk functionality for execution of all HR processes

Result - Development of 3 year plan and currently working with Business Units to get adoption for consolidation of activities.

Finally – you can look through the segment of the “Sarah Sample Resume” on the next two pages, which shows examples of many of these different types of achievements. With regards to how you are going to get us the information, it is entirely up to whatever is the best way for you. I enjoy writing, so I would write this stuff out – but don’t feel the pressure to make it “perfect”. Just make it factual – like Chris did (each of those was condensed into a two or three line “bullet point”.) Alternately, you can write out notes – or type up notes. Just “get in the zone” and recreate the feelings and memories. We want to get it as vivid as possible.

#### ***Assignment Question 4:***

***Write out a couple of your best STAR examples. Really zero in on those moments in your career where you added unique value – solved a major problem – helped the company or a customer significantly. You can write this out any way you want. Many clients have found the actual S-T-A-R formula. If you simply aren’t a writer and get blocked – just make notes and we will handle this via a phone call – or in a personal meeting.***

---

## PROFILE

*Accomplished, Award-Winning Administrative Professional seeking a position as an Executive Assistant.*

### *Career Overview*

Background features a record of consistent productivity, professionalism and performance in positions requiring initiative, self-motivation and strong business skills. Proven ability to impact complex organizational issues and produce results. Record of designing and implementing numerous turnaround efforts, resulting in measurable performance improvements and millions of dollars of enhanced profitability. Managed staffs of up to 50 and multi-million dollar budgets.

### *Core Competencies*

- Business Planning
- Account Management
- Training & Development
- Microsoft Word
- Executive Secretary
- Staff Supervision
- Benefits Administration
- Microsoft Excel
- Scheduling
- Customer Service
- Accounting
- Microsoft Outlook

---

## EXPERIENCE

WESLEYAN COLLEGE – Middletown, Connecticut 2005-Present  
*A Private Liberal Arts College Respected Nationally for Academic Excellence*

### *Administrative Assistant to Librarian and IT Director*

Provide comprehensive administrative support to two managers in three areas at this private college: the library, a campus building and the computer center. Monitor budget. Oversee scheduling and building operations. Control costs. Communicate with art collectors worldwide. Make executive travel arrangements. Organize and promote lectures and lecture series. Prepare for Board of Trustee meetings.

- *Helped initiate and co-manage a café. Selected products, pricing and vendors. Café is making a profit in its second year.*
- *Within first two years of employment, identified and implemented \$30,000 of cost savings.*

NEW ENGLAND INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATES, LLC – West Hartford, Connecticut 2001-2005  
*A Nationally Respected Industrial Consulting Firm*

**National Account Manager** - Performed duties similar to those described below (Oakleaf Waste Management) with one of its competitors. Conducted contract negotiations for vendors and clients.

- *Took over a number of national accounts and restored credibility and good relations with them.*

NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL CONSULTANTS, INC. – Simsbury, Connecticut 1999-2001  
*A Nationally Respected Industrial Consulting Firm*

**Accounting Manager** - Directed a 50+ person staff which handled all billing and accounting functions for this rapid-growth waste management firm. Assisted the Chief Executive Officer in contract negotiations.

- *At time of hire, the department was behind six months on average monthly billings of \$400,000. Developed and executed a plan which cleared up the backlog of work and collected \$3 million+ for the company.*
- *Received unsolicited customer numerous letters of praise for "above and beyond" performance.*
- *Organized and maintained an MS Access client and vendor database which utilized data mining techniques to improve sales, strengthen vendor relations, and reduce costs.*

COMPUTER SCIENCE CORPORATION – Hartford, Connecticut  
*A Nationally Respected Information Technology Consulting Firm*

1997-1999

**Senior Branch Administrator** (1998-1999) **Branch Administrator** (1997-1998) **Assistant Branch Administrator** (1997)

Rapidly promoted through three levels of responsibility with this dynamic information technology consulting firm. Assisted a consulting staff of 560 in reassignment, relocation and benefits. Performed accounting functions: G/L reconciliation; A/P; A/R; Profit & Loss; and Payroll

- *Initially assigned to Rocky Hill, which was the largest branch in the country for Keane. Utilizing concepts and principles developed earlier in career, successfully implemented a turnaround within the branch.*
- *Promoted and then given assignment to effect the same result by directing twelve administrative staff members at three branch offices.*
- *Personally represented Keane with Pfizer, Fleet Bank, IBM and other clients on multi-million dollar Y2K billing issues. Brought order and focus to a chaotic billing system which had the company running months behind and losing hundreds of thousands of dollars of revenue.*
- *Initiated employee training programs. Organized and published a “Best Practices Manual”.*
- *At the request of senior management, relocated to Utah and Colorado for a three month period to implement training programs at two other locations, one of which was a recently acquired company.*

AMS, INC. – Windsor, Connecticut

1995-1997

*The nation’s leading provider of Customer Relationship Management software, automation and related consulting services to property and casualty insurance agencies. AMS serves 40,000+ independent insurance agencies nationwide.*

**Senior National Accounts Administrator** - Facilitated complex customer and employee problems and performed IT troubleshooting for an industry-leading software, automation and services firm. Delivered world class service to major insurance corporations as well as the company’s 12,000 national accounts.

- *Identified and analyzed a performance shortcoming with a major national client. Established a new process which helped AMS facilitate its contractual obligation and received praise from the client’s management structure.*
- *Brought energy and professionalism which helped rejuvenate a department which had performance and morale issues. Established strong, collaborative, cooperative working relationships between programmers, production, personnel, accounting and company management.*
- *Organized and coordinated Training Manual and Training Procedures for the National Account Department.*
- *Flew around the country to deliver training programs on installation, system utilization and Total Quality Management. Trained the Chicago support desk of a major insurance corporation. Developed and implemented a plan which within five days successfully trained five employees with no prior customer service or insurance industry background.*

---

## EDUCATION

ALBERTUS MAGNUS COLLEGE - New Haven, Connecticut

**Bachelor of Science, Business Administration, 2005**

Coursework includes study at Manchester Community College