

EFFECTIVE METHOD TO ANSWER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

We recommend that you use Situation, Action and Result (SAR) Stories

SAR stories are the key to identifying your accomplishments, qualities and skills. They can help you organize things you have done in the past into a means of demonstrating what you can bring to an employer. They are stories built by describing a previous experience at work of which you are proud, and breaking it down into *situation, action & result*.

Situation

Situation involves the circumstances surrounding the accomplishment. This involves what was happening that you had to deal with, what problem you had to solve, and what events brought about the issue. Remember you are telling a story, so without being too long-winded, do try to set the scene in a way which draws the interest of the listener

Action

This is the part where you shine. Here you tell how you dealt with the situation, usually put into clear steps, like “first, I prioritized what had to happen, then taking each in order I went through the list. I called all our suppliers to explain the situation, got each of them to agree to the changes, and then followed up with a letter outlining what they agreed to do.” In the action part you draw out the different skills and qualities you put into place in order to solve the problem

Result

This is the key to a good SAR story. No one will care how brilliant you were if the result was not positive. So, you must identify clearly the positive outcome. “The customer wrote my manager a letter saying that due to my intervention she would be remaining a loyal customer”, or “all the parts were received in time for manufacturing to start on schedule”, or “the computer virus was cleared and none of the data was lost”.

Examples:

“A customer came in to the store very irate because someone had left the security tag on the shirt she had purchased. She had to drive back from out of town to have it removed, and was clearly upset. I apologized and gave her a store credit for \$20 for her trouble. As she left she thanked me for helping her, apologized for being short with me, and left much happier than she came in.”

“When I was working for the computer repair shop a student from UWO came in, because she had accidentally deleted her dissertation from her hard drive, and she couldn’t get the computer to read the backup disk she had made. She was scheduled to take the completed file to the printer the next day and still had a few changes. I had 2 other projects I needed to complete that day, but because this was such an important paper I decided I would fit her in. It turned out that her CD ROM was faulty and when I changed it she could read the disk, but it turned out the backup was a couple versions old. So I did some research online and I found an undelete program that I was able to install and found her deleted document and restored it. I then made 2 additional copies of it on disk. I had to stay an hour later that day to complete the other projects, but I got everything done. The woman came in a week later with a box of candy for me as a thank-you, because she had gotten her paper handed in on time. That felt great.”