

Resume Accomplishment Statements vs. Duties

Accomplishments vs. Duties

Employers like to interview candidates who can demonstrate their ability to solve problems, think critically and articulate the possession of technical, managerial and soft skills as they describe their past experiences. In other words, they want candidates to do more than merely list their job duties on their resumes. Yet why is it that so many resume writers do exactly that? Turning statements about job duties into statements about accomplishments is hard work and requires writing and rewriting. However, candidates who are able to perform this skill increase their likelihood of getting an interview which is the first step towards becoming hired.

First Steps

Begin by listing out 10 to 20 accomplishments over the course of your career. These are the moments that set you apart from other employees. Key questions to help you brainstorm your list include:

- Was I recognized by my employer for outstanding work? (This includes awards, promotions, bonuses or other forms of recognition.) Why were you recognized?
- Did I propose an initiative (which was implemented) that created revenue or cut costs?
- What projects did I take on beyond my normal job duties?
- Did I develop new processes to improve workflow?
- What made me great at my job?
- In what decision making or planning did you participate?

Review your list to and determine how your accomplishments relate to the position you are seeking. Further refine your list by following these steps

- Summarize the situation or project in one sentence.
- Identify the actions you took and with whom you interacted. Determine whether you needed to use persuasion or negotiation techniques to obtain cooperation from others.

- Describe the results of the action. The more you can identify beneficiaries of the action or quantify results the more powerful your action statement will be.
- Remember that employees show value by making money, saving money, increasing efficiency and/or serving customers.

Turning It All Into Action Statements

Use your lists to create high impact statements that begin with action verbs. Use numbers, percentages, and dollar signs to quantify your results. Use the **Problem, Action, Result (PAR)** method to draft resume bullet points.

- **P** = The problem that you helped the organization solve.
- **A** = The actions you took to solve the problem.
- **R** = The outcome of your efforts.

Example

Let's say that you were a compliance analyst reviewing 10 reports each month to determine if employees were attending training. As a result of your analysis you were able to identify groups within the organization which were more and less engaged in the training. You further spoke to members of each group to identify why they were or were not engaged in compliance training and made recommendations to your compliance manager. A duty statement would read, "Reviewed 10 monthly reports regarding employee training." However, an action statement would appear on your resume as, "Increased participation in compliance training by 10% after reviewing monthly compliance training reports and surveying participating and non-participating employees to propose a solution."