

5 STEPS TO RESUME SUCCESS

Supporting resources at waubonsee.edu/careerdevelopment



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SOAR Story Formula for Resume Success



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What is the SOAR Story Formula?

Process for identifying unique details

- Step-by-step how to decide what to include in your bullet points
- Writing out the story of what you accomplished at your job, which uncovers important details that often get left off a resume when focusing on format (or length) instead of focusing on quality content

Interview prep

- You can answer interview questions using the stories you write
- Stories contain what interviewers want: real examples of what you did and the results



Purpose of A Resume

- Job seekers use resumes to LAND an interview
- Hiring managers use resumes to SCREEN candidates to interview

Resumes should communicate how you:

- Meet job requirements by incorporating verbiage from the job description into your resume content
- Are **unique** from others who also meet job requirements



What did I do in my work, volunteer,
or life experiences that was

UNIQUE?



Not Unique Bullets

- Bussed tables
- Helped customers
- Trained new hires
- Answered phones and greeted customers
- Used Facebook to market events

Why are these not unique? None of the bullets above describe *how well* you did the task or what the *outcomes* were. Bullets need to address these 4 outcome areas: **quality, quantity, productivity** and **cost/revenue**.



The SOAR Formula

S = Situation

O = Obstacle (Task, Problem)

A = Action

R = Results

Using the story format shown here, begin describing different tasks or challenges you have encountered (at work, volunteering, etc.).

Whenever possible, use the keywords and phrases found in the job description.

Capture: What preceded the problem (**SO**), what action you took to resolve the problem (**A**), and what results your actions prompted (**R**).



The next series of slides will walk you step-by-step through:

- What to write a story about
- Incorporating phrases from a job description
- Questions to ask yourself about your stories
- The process of converting a narrative into a bulleted accomplishment statement



Converting a Story Into A Bullet on Your Resume

Step 1

Write a story using the SOAR Formula

For our example, we will use the “not unique” bullet:

- Used Facebook to market events



SOAR Formula Example: Telling A Story

S = The number of youth at community events was low and we needed to find ways to make them aware of the events so they could attend (*Situation*)

T = I was asked to help with marketing and promotion of the events (*Task*)

A = Created a Facebook page and got participants to start RSVP-ing and talking and sharing about the events on their own Facebook pages (*Action*)

R = Increased attendance at events by 60% since 2011 (*Results*)



Converting a Story Into A Bullet on Your Resume

Step 2

Once you have written a story, go back and circle all the skill words you wrote down. (See next slide for example)

Step 3

Decide which one of the skills you circled is the one you want to emphasize or demonstrate in your bullet. Not sure? Use the job description to guide your decision.

(For this example, 'Created' will be the skill chosen as the action verb to begin the bullet)



Converting a Story Into A Bullet on Your Resume

S = The number of youth at community events was low and we needed to find ways to make them aware of the events so they could attend
(Situation)

T = I was asked to help with marketing and promotion of the events (Task)

A = Created a Facebook page and got participants to start RSVP-ing and talking and sharing about the events on their own Facebook pages
(Action)

R = Increased attendance at events by 60% since 2011 (Results)



Choosing Strong Action Verbs

After writing your first story, you may find you circled informal verbs such as:

- Worked together
- Helped
- Made

Keeping Applicant Tracking Systems in mind, there may be words that better reflects your skills, such as:

- Collaborated
- Guided
- Designed

View the [Action Verbs](#) list. Try to begin each bullet point with a different action verb.



Converting a Story Into A Bullet on Your Resume

Step 4

Go back to your story and underline key phrases, including the results/outcome, that are **important to the story*** and support your skill/action verb.

****What is important to the story?*** Skills, results, and keywords that are relevant to the position you are writing your resume for. Did you use keywords and phrases from the job description?



Converting a Story Into A Bullet on Your Resume

S = The number of youth at community programming events was low and we needed to find ways to make them aware of the events so they can attend (Situation)

T = I was asked to help with marketing and promotion of the events (Task)

A = Created a Facebook page and got participants to start RSVP-ing and talking and sharing about the events on their own Facebook pages (Action)

R = Increased attendance at events by 60% since 2011 (Results)



Converting a Story Into A Bullet on Your Resume

Step 5

Assemble words and phrases from your story/the job description to form the bulleted accomplishment statement for your resume.

number of youth was low	Facebook page
community programming events	Increased attendance
marketing and promotion of the events	by 60% since 2011
participants start RSVP-ing, talking and sharing	

Bullet on resume:

- **Created the Youth Programming department's Facebook page and began promoting events which increased RSVP's and attendance by 60% since 2011**



Before

Used Facebook to market events

AFTER

Created the Youth Programming department's Facebook page and began promoting events which increased RSVP's and attendance by 60% since 2011.



Now it's your turn!



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Getting Started on Step 1 – Writing the SOAR Story

Choose one of the following to write about:

- A highlighted section from the job description
- A highlighted task from an O*NET Job Summary
- A keyword identified using Jobscan.co
- A task, problem you solved, or accomplishment that you are proud of

If you get stuck on your story, ask yourself questions from the “*Questions to Ask*” slides that follow.



Questions to Ask: Situation

Describe the main purpose, setting or situation of a particular work incident or responsibility.

- What is happening before and after the opportunity/task/problem?
- Why can't this opportunity/task/problem be ignored?
- How does this impact other tasks, goals, or needs of the organization, department, customer?



Questions to Ask: Obstacle (Task/Problem)

1. What was I trying to solve or remedy?
2. Was there a deadline to meet or a project that needed to be completed?
3. Was someone upset or confused or needing assistance?

Tip! If your prior/current job(s) did not have many obstacles or problems, replace “obstacle” with a “task” you accomplished successfully. Alternate question: What outcomes does this task contribute to (quality, quantity, productivity, cost/revenue)?



Questions to Ask: Action

Tell about the steps you took to solve the problem (or complete the task) in the required timeframe or specifications.

1. What soft skills did I use?
2. What technology, tools, software did I use?
3. How often? How many? How much?
4. How did I know what to do: make decisions, follow directions or procedure?
Both?
5. What ability, skill, or knowledge did I demonstrate with this action?
6. Did I do things alone or with others? If with others, how many people/departments/businesses/etc. did I work with to accomplish a task?



Questions to Ask: Results

Try to be specific in terms of one or more of the following: quantity, quality, cost/revenue, productivity.

1. What good thing happened for the company, coworkers, or customers/clients because I did this well?
2. What bad things would have happened if I didn't do this well? (You helped to ensure this didn't happen!)
3. How many people or products (etc.) were affected by your actions?
4. Are there any ratings/scores/dollar amounts associated with your actions?



Questions to Ask: Results (cont.)

What do **quality**, **quantity**, **productivity** and **cost/revenue** look like in your line of work?



Need Verbiage Help?

Step 2: Power Up Your Resume Content details how to use the following sources for verbiage:

www.onetonline.org

www.waubonseecareernetwork.com

www.indeed.com

Can't find the right verb? Look for it in our [Action Verbs](#) list.



Finishing Up

When you have the following completed, you are ready to begin Step 4 – Make or Break Format:

- 3 – 5 bullet points per position (work, volunteer, etc.) that include at least 1 unique detail or outcome
- Each bullet point within a position begins with a different action verb
- No personal pronouns: I, my, their, them, we, our
- No “etc.”
- No abbreviations (that do not appear in the job description)
- Present tense verbs use for current roles, past tense for previous roles
- You have double checked that your phrasing uses job description keywords whenever possible





NACE Career Readiness Competencies

Congratulations! During the Handy Bullet Formula process you have strengthened the bolded competencies:

Oral/Written Communications

Global/Intercultural Fluency

Digital Technology

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving

Career Management

Teamwork/Collaboration

Leadership

Professionalism/Work Ethic

