**Log Your Experiences & Strengths**



*A quick, keyword-brainstorming tool, to help identify & articulate your valuable strengths. Instructions follow.*

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| **What Have I Done?**  ***Projects, Jobs, Service, Initiatives, Life Challenges*** | **What Strengths Did It Take?**  ***Skills, Qualities, Expertise*** |
| Barista/Cashier  *Note: This example is presented on purpose:*  *you can mine any experience for valuable skills, qualities, and expertise.* | * Teamwork & Customer service * Performing under pressure * Multi-tasking & Time Management * Problem solving * Organizational Skills |
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Logging your accomplishments regularly will help you remember and articulate them in context.

Use the **P. A. R.** formula (**Problem**, **Action**, **Result)** to describe your accomplishments: Recruiters look for that structure  
 in response to behavioral interview questions (e.g., “Tell me about a time when you dealt with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ challenge.”).

**INSTRUCTIONS ON QUICKLY IDENTIFYING YOUR STRENGTHS FROM YOUR EXPERIENCES**

This log enables you to record, articulate, and even discover your actual strengths more fully. After all, they   
are supported by your experience (left column items), so you have the evidence.

1. **Left Column: *What Have I Done?*** (Projects, Jobs, Service, Initiatives, Life Challenges)  ***(1 minute)***
   * Quickly list (in any order and with any words that come to your mind) all the projects, jobs, initiatives, service, and even life challenges. One per row.
2. **Right Column: *What Did It Take***? Skills, Qualities, Expertise  ***(2 minutes)***
   * Choose a left-row item, and quickly brainstorm key-word bullets of what it took for you to perform well in that experience: your skills, qualities, and expertise. (Wherever you didn’t feel all that successful, what did you learn? Employers value hearing that as well.)
3. **Continue brainstorming more experience items and brainstorm quick bullets *(in 3 minute shifts)*** and plan on updating your log with new experiences to inform your resumes/cover letters, interviews, and negotiation.

**How this log will serve you**

* **The log can inform your resume, cover letters, interviews, and negotiations.**
* **You are simply capturing** the skills, qualities, and expertise you demonstrated to get things done well and handle challenges. (Otherwise you may forget them!) No need to take lots of time to think, or to write out more than key words.
* **The “Barista” example given is unconventional on purpose,** to show that you can mine *any* experience to support skills or qualities that may qualify you for future opportunities. (Employers don’t care where you developed those strengths; they just care that you can bring them to their organization. They ask for  *actual stories of how you’ve demonstrated* the strengths, and your log documents those.)
* **Maintain the log:** Otherwise you may forget many of your accomplishments.

**Articulating your accomplishments: Start with *impact* verbs**  
Show your specific contributions and results; i.e. the *value* you contributed. Starting with “impact verbs” helps.

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| ***Non-Impact Verbs*** | ***Why Not?*** |
| In charge of/Responsible for | *Doesn’t show how effectively you performed* |
| Worked on … | *Doesn’t suggest an accomplishment, or anything specific Recruiters often scan the first key word in your bullet, and if they don’t see ‘value’ they likely don’t read across.* |
| Studied, Analyzed, Participated, Researched | *These are tasks, not accomplishments. What was the result of that activity? What was the benefit?* |

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| ***Sample Impact Verbs*** | | |
| Designed | Developed | Built |
| Discovered  Identified | Adapted (complex devices to new tasks) | Led/Managed (process, people, project, communication) |
| Implemented | Proposed | Initiated |
| Solved | Enhanced | Streamlined |
| Modeled | Simulated | Visualized |
| Invented | Saved x costs/time | Presented |
| Systematized | Tested | Calculated/Computed |
| Mentored/Trained | Engaged | Collaborated |
| Drafted/Edited | Created | Wrote (instructions, SOP, report) |