



## **Preparing for Your Job Search...Your Accomplishments Exercise**

By taking a close look at the things that you have achieved during your life and career, you can begin to get an idea of the kinds of things you might want to do in the future. Knowing and expressing what you can do well will help you.

- building self-confidence, a key to success
- locating the position that fits you best
- communicating effectively in interviews and meetings

An accomplishment is an activity that gives you pleasure, fulfillment and a feeling of pride and success. It can be large or small in scope; it can be routine or extraordinary; frequent or only once, work related or personal. **The key is how you felt about it -- not how it was judged by others.** These accomplishments represent you functioning at your best, sometimes overcoming difficulties, and believing in yourself and your ideas. While you may understand the necessity of this exercise, you may also be feeling somewhat uncomfortable with it. The following page addresses these barriers.

## **Seven Common Barriers to “Blowing Your Own Horn”**

- You’ve been taught that nice people don’t.
- You don’t want to be seen as “hogging credit”... “I truly did not do it alone – others helped.”
- You feel that your business is no one’s concern but yours... “I know that I am capable, so why should I have to convince others?”
- You come from a company culture that emphasizes teamwork and discourages employees from taking credit for individual performance.
- You have not had to do it very often.
- You don’t take credit for the many things you have really accomplished... “It’s all in a day’s work”...It is just my job.”
- You are not sure how to do it without sounding egotistical.
- There is a lot of difference between empty bragging and the confidence that comes from knowing your skills and being optimistic about your future. After reviewing your accomplishments you will probably feel a natural sense of your own worth and have a positive outlook toward your ability to contribute in the future.

## **A Checklist to Help Jog Your Memory about Your Accomplishments**

- **Have you:**

- Accomplished more with the same/fewer resources? (How? Results?)
- Received awards(s), special recognition, etc. (What? Why?)
- Increased efficiency? (How? Results?)
- Solved difficult problem(s) (How? Results?)
- Accomplished something for the first time? (What? Result?)
- Developed, created, designed or invented something? (What? Why important?)
- Prepared original papers, reports, articles? (What? Why important?)
- Managed work group, department? (Who? How many? Results?)
- Saved the company money? (How? How much?)
- Supervised, managed or trained employees? (Where? How many? Results?)
- Increased sales? (How? By how much?)
- Been promoted or upgraded? (When? Why important?)
- Increased production? (How? Results?)
- Identified problem(s) others did not see? (What? Results?)
- Developed or implemented a new system or procedure? (What? Benefit?)
- Reduced downtime? (How? How much? Result?)
- Established safety record? (What? Result?)
- Managed budget? (How much? Result?)
- Repaired equipment? (Which? Result?)
- Met company standards under unusual/difficult circumstances (What? How?)

## **Accomplishment List**

Reviewing what you have done in your life, please briefly describe ten contributions or achievements -- at least six should be from your work experience.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

## Next, Describe Your Accomplishments

For each accomplishment, describe:

### Challenge:

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What you needed to do, why you needed to do it, and the type of difficulties you confronted.

### Actions:

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What you did --- use active verbs (such as “saved”, or “redirected”).

### Results

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What you obtained – use quantifiable or measurable terms (e.g., dollars saved or earned, percentage improvement, or decrease, numbers involved, etc.). Even if figures are not applicable in some instances, describe the results in tangible or measurable terms.

This is called the CAR concept!

## Example 1

**Short Title:** Contract Negotiations  
**Date and Place:** 1996 - Sun Bright Corporation

### Challenge:

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At a time when the company was losing money, it was involved in negotiations with two unions. It badly needed some concessions from the unions. As chief labor negotiator, I needed to develop a bargaining strategy that would enable us to reduce labor costs.

### Actions:

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Surveyed common practices with regard to compensation and benefit levels in the industry. Studied concession bargaining strategies, activities and outcomes. Developed a negotiating strategy based on ranking needed concessions and establishing priorities.

### Results

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Reduced labor 30% through contract negotiations.

## Example 2

**Short Title:** Automated Office Operations  
**Date and Place:** 1997, West Coast Corporation

### **Challenge:**

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Within two months, needed to automate department operations to respond to a large increase in business. Also, the department had to maintain its productivity standards.

### **Actions:**

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Researched possible software packages. Obtained input from department employees on which software would best meet their processing needs. Negotiated a discounted price on the software, installation and training costs. Coordinated transfer of data from paper records to new software. Supervised the installation of software over a weekend.

### **Results**

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At the end of the year, department saved \$80,000 and two people were assigned to different projects.

# **Accomplishment No. 1**

**Short title:**

**Date and Place:**

**Challenge:**

**Actions:**

**Results:**

## **Accomplishment No. 2**

**Short title:**

**Date and Place:**

**Challenge:**

**Actions:**

**Results:**

## **Accomplishment No. 3**

**Short title:**

**Date and Place:**

**Challenge:**

**Actions:**

**Results:**

## **Accomplishment No. 4**

**Short title:**

**Date and Place:**

**Challenge:**

**Actions:**

**Results:**

## **Accomplishment No. 5**

**Short title:**

**Date and Place:**

**Challenge:**

**Actions:**

**Results:**

## **Accomplishment No. 6**

**Short title:**

**Date and Place:**

**Challenge:**

**Actions:**

**Results:**

## **Accomplishment No. 7**

**Short title:**

**Date and Place:**

**Challenge:**

**Actions:**

**Results:**

## **Accomplishment No. 8**

**Short title:**

**Date and Place:**

**Challenge:**

**Actions:**

**Results:**

## The Next Steps in Your Career

1. List at least five activities, functions or responsibilities you would like in an ideal position (including self-employment), even if you are not aware of the existence of such a position.
2. List activities, functions, responsibilities, or other factors you would NOT like as significant parts of your next position:
3. Describe your ideal position.
4. Are you aware of anything that would prevent your obtaining or performing well in the position you have described?

## Interest Analysis: Your Ideal Position

1. To assist you in formulating an ideal position, bold the specific words or phrases (activities) in each line that have the greatest appeal or interest.
2. Then place an “x” in the ten categories that hold the greatest appeal or interest for you.

Category	Activities
Research	research, observe, investigate, study, perceive, sense, measure, test, inspect, examine
Analysis	analyze, compare, extract, correlate, derive, evaluate, differentiate, identify
Interpretation	interpret, explain, understand, portray, advise
Problem-Solving	solve, trouble-shoot, improve, critique, re-direct, redesign, restructure
Systematizing	systematize, coordinate, organize, develop procedures
Planning	plan long-term, plan short-term, forecast, strategize, set goals
Management	manage, supervise, control, direct, budget, administer, delegate
Leadership	lead, show the way, govern, inspire, motivate, assert, decide, advise
Decision-making	decide, judge, select, decide under pressure, arbitrate
Follow-through	persist, persevere, show tenacity, tie up all loose ends, bring to closure
Mentoring	mentor, teach, coach, counsel constructively, help others to grow professionally and personally
Innovative	innovate, invent, change, develop, devise, break with convention
Imagination	imagine, visualize, conceptualize, fantasize
Vision	ask “what if?” or “why not?” then act to find the answer; “see” the future clearly
Synthesis	synthesize, adapt, bring together with imagination
Artistry	create, draw, sketch, sculpt, perform with originality
Sympathy	console, help others, be friendly and attentive
Empathy	empathize, understand needs/feelings of others, relate to issues/concerns of others
Listening	listen actively, understand the message others are delivering
Written Presentation	write clearly, concisely and effectively; eye for grammatical errors; editorial ability
Verbal Presentation	speak clearly, concisely and effectively; use the spoken word to get results
Persuasion	persuade, convince, influence, overcome opposition, sell
Negotiation	negotiate, mediate, intervene, resolve differences, arbitrate
Initiative	take the initiative, be among the first to do or try
Flexibility	be flexible, adapt easily to change, be “politically” aware
Team Player	work well with a team, be a team player when necessary
Assembly	Assemble, build, prepare, fabricate, rebuild, fashion
Installing	install, fit, tailor, customize, test
Operating	operate, run, maintain, fix, set up

Add your top 10 categories to the table below.

### Top 10 Interests

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

## Defining Your Abilities

The Ability Analysis Grid will help you define your areas of capability as you identify your options for a satisfying “next career.” The results will begin to indicate (or verify) your “best fit” job or career. Please follow the directions carefully:

1. Start with your first accomplishment (please refer to Personal Survey Part 1). Read through the entire list of descriptors to see which of them applied to this accomplishment. If any descriptor applies, make an “x” in the box in column one for that category.
2. Review all the ability categories that have “x’s”. Choose the six stronger abilities you demonstrated and make a second “x” in each of those boxes.
3. Select from among these stronger abilities the one ability that you most strongly demonstrated, and make a third “x” in that box.

When you have finished steps 1-3 for your first accomplishments, go on to your second accomplishment and do the same. Follow this procedure for each of your eight accomplishments.

Once you complete this procedure for all of your accomplishments, add your “x’s” for each category now horizontally, and write the total number of “x’s” in the T (total) column.



# Ability Analysis Grid

Descriptive Actions	Accomplishments										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total		
research, observe, investigate, study, perceive, sense, measure, test, inspect, examine										Research	Analysis
analyze, compare, extract, correlate, derive, evaluate, differentiate, identify										Analysis	
interpret, explain, understand, portray, advise										Interpretation	
solve, trouble-shoot, improve, critique, re-direct, redesign, restructure										Problem-solving	
systematize, coordinate, organize, develop procedures										Systematizing	Management
plan long-term, plan short-term, forecast, strategize, set goals										Planning	
manage, supervise, control, direct, budget, administer, delegate										Management	
lead, show the way, govern, inspire, motivate, assert, decide, advise										Leadership	
decide, judge, select, decide under pressure, arbitrate										Decision-making	
persist, persevere, show tenacity, tie up all loose ends, bring to closure										Follow-through	
mentor, teach, coach, counsel constructively, help others to grow professionally and personally										Mentoring	Creativity
innovate, invent, change, develop, devise, break with convention										Innovation	
imagine, visualize, conceptualize, fantasize										Imagination	
ask "what if?" or "why not?" then act to find the answer; "see" the future clearly										Vision	
synthesize, adapt, bring together with imagination										Synthesis	
create, draw, sketch, sculpt, perform with originality										Artistry	Communication
console, help others, be friendly and attentive										Sympathy	
empathize, understand needs/feelings of others, relate to issues/concerns of others										Empathy	
listen actively, understand the message others are delivering										Listening	
write clearly, concisely and effectively; eye for grammatical errors; editorial ability										Written Presentation	
speak clearly, concisely and effectively; use the spoken word to get results										Verbal Presentation	
persuade, convince, influence, overcome opposition, sell										Persuasion	
negotiate, mediate, intervene, resolve differences, arbitrate										Negotiation	
take the initiative, be among the first to do or try										Initiative	Personal
be flexible, adapt easily to change, be "politically" aware										Flexibility	
work well with a team, be a team player when necessary										Team Player	
Assemble, build, prepare, fabricate, rebuild, fashion										Assembly	Mechanical
install, fit, tailor, customize, test										Installing	
operate, run, maintain, fix, set up										Operating	
Use the line below to list additional actions specific to your achievements i.e. programming											

Add your top 10 categories to the table below.

**Top 10 Abilities**

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

## **What is a Strength?**

We have defined ability as something you do well – a competence, a talent, a capacity. Not every ability, however, is supported by an interest; some of the things you do well, you may do for survival reasons, or simply because you have to. These abilities might include balancing a checkbook, fixing your child’s bicycle, cleaning the garage or drawing up a budget.

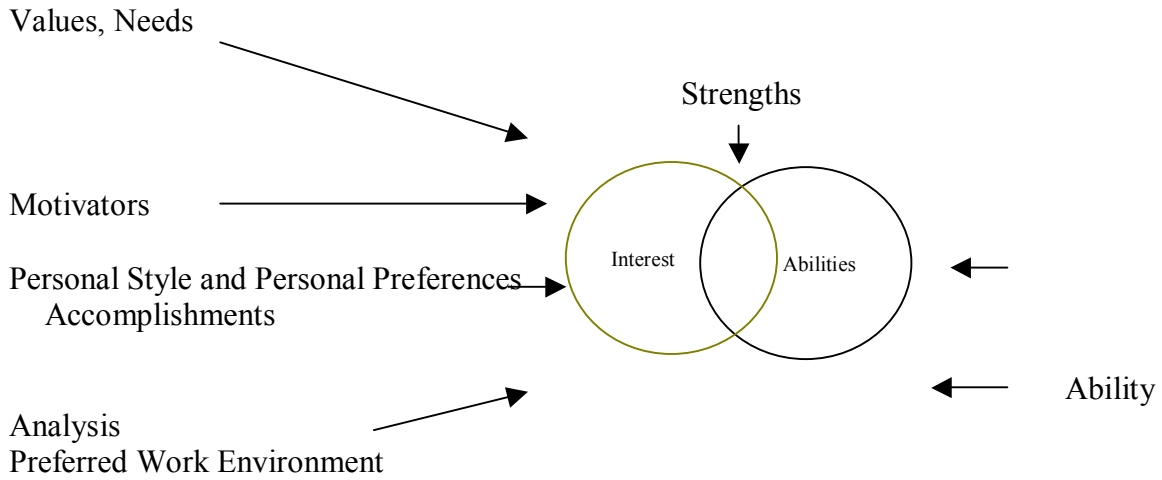
An interest, of course, is something that intrigues you or motivates you positively. Not every interest is supported by talent or ability. You may wish you could play the organ or windsurf, but lack the skill to do so.

Like everyone else, you have some abilities that match your areas of interest. These are your strengths. By determining your greatest strengths, confirmed by your accomplishments, you can define the functions you will perform best and most happily in your next position.

You will want to define your job or career objective in terms of these strengths rather than in terms of a specific job title. There may be many jobs that can use your strengths to good advantage, so it would be unwise to limit your prospects to a single job title.

You want to be sure that you cannot only cite your strengths, but give examples of your strengths in action. It will be up to you to explain to those that you meet just how your strengths can relate to their business requirements.

# What is a Strength?



Your job or career goal is

- to get someone to pay you competitively
- to do what you're good at and like to do
- in an environment where you can be yourself

## Identifying your Strengths

You have just identified your interests and those abilities that have made the greatest contribution to your accomplishments. List your top 10 interests and top 10 scoring abilities below. Then place an “x” next to those that appear on both lists.

Interests (from page 17)	Abilities (from page 20)
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

## Identifying Your Strengths

Based on the comparison between your Interests and your Abilities, select four to six abilities which you believe rise to the level of personal strengths. Note: while your strengths should ideally appear on both lists, your judgment may tell you that certain abilities are strengths even though you did not initially select them as interests.

### Strengths

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

*Next, identify your qualities from the Quality List below. Add the top 10 qualities that best describe you to the list below. We encourage you to add other qualities which apply to you.*

### Qualities List

adaptable	cooperative	independent
efficient	inquisitive	open-minded
friendly	big thinker	sensible
responsible	quick thinker	eager
pioneering	diplomatic	common sense
creative	reliable	helpful
logical	flexible	innovative
sociable	organized	persistent
time-conscious	consistent	predictable
passionate	determined	accurate
empathetic	optimistic	

### Top Ten Qualities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

## Strength Statement

Now write a brief personal definition of each of the four to six strengths that you listed on the previous page. Consider how you will use the strength, including the qualities you manifest while employing these strengths.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

After you have reviewed your HBDI Profile, compare it with your strength statement. There should be marked similarities.