

Using your Resume to Tell a Story

The Situation-Action-Result Framework

We tend to mark the progress in our jobs by the items we can check off our to-do lists. And, oftentimes, this is how our resume turns out as well:

- ❖ Oversaw budgets
- ❖ Coordinated marketing campaign
- ❖ Managed teams

However, does this list really show what you've done? If 10 recruiters read this list, they would probably come up with 10 different definitions of what you had actually done in your job. They would also have to guess about how successful you had been.

Use your resume to show a complete picture of your work. After reading your resume, a recruiter should be able to picture exactly what you've done and how you measured the success of your actions. This will enable them to picture how you'd match up to the job they are looking to fill.

The Situation-Action-Result Framework gives you a method to think through everything you've done, select the most relevant parts and write a compelling resume bullet point to convey your experience.

The Situation gives context and scope to the projects you've done. What are the necessary facts that will help someone understand your actions? What details will show the breadth and depth of your work?

The Action is what steps you specifically took to execute on a project or task. These actions should be specific and describe what YOU did—not your team.

The Result is how successful you were in the actions you took. In a perfect world, your results will be quantifiable. However, it's not a perfect world. To that end, results might be indirectly related to the action you took or they could be more qualitative in nature.



Let's go through some examples

Before: Oversaw Budget

Situation: You run a \$10M budget that funds your department operations.

Action: As part of managing the budget, you set the budget each year, approve expenditures and also make sure the budget is met each year.

Result: You always meet your budget and fund your department appropriately.

After: Managed \$10M department operations budget. This included setting the annual budget, approving team expenditures and ensuring that budget goals were met annually.

Of Note: Although this example still uses a broad verb like “manage,” it goes into more detail by listing out some examples of what “manage” means. Also: “ensuring that budget goals were met annually” is both an action and a result. If your results aren’t quantifiable, then think other ways to measure the success of your actions. In this case, staying within the budget meant success.

Before: Coordinated marketing campaigns

Situation: You work on the marketing team for a bakery. The company wants to increase sales among the local clientele.

Action: The entire team worked on the campaign, but social media was your responsibility. You created the social media strategy aimed at gaining more followers and traction on Twitter and Facebook. You also executed on the strategy by writing and posting content, reaching out on social media and monitoring conversations.

Result: As a result of the overall campaign, sales increased by 10%. At the same time, you increased the social media engagement by 25%.

After: Created social media strategy as part of overall marketing campaign, which increased local sales by 10%. Strategy utilized Twitter and Facebook channels to engage and increase social media conversations about the bakery.

Wrote social media content, monitored conversations and connected with other organizations’ social media channels, gaining a 25% increase in engaged participants on Twitter and Facebook.

Of Note: Here, you ended up with two resume bullet points. The first one emphasized creating a strategy, which was part of the campaign that led to the 10% increase. The second one emphasized the execution of the strategy. While this was also tied to the 10% increase, social media engagement was the more direct result of this action.

