

Trigger questions for identifying Career Achievements:

(Ensure you have tangible metrics where possible.)

<i>Did you develop something new?</i>	What was its purpose and what value did it provide?
<i>Was there a problem you solved?</i>	Which issues were resolved and how did this improve things?
<i>Did you come up with a new idea that improved things?</i>	What did you come up with and what was the benefit?
<i>Did you contribute to important task or key project?</i>	What was achieved and what benefit was gained by the organisation?
<i>Have you won an award or been recognized for something important?</i>	What did you do that was recognized as valuable?
<i>Did you receive positive feedback from your manager(s) during a performance review?</i>	What did you do that was recognised by your employer?
<i>Did you stand out in something you did?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Did you used initiative to achieve a positive outcome? – Work in two roles at the same time? – Were you promoted quickly?
<i>Did you save the business money?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How did you do this? – Did you renegotiate contracts? Did you monitor budgets by developing new processes? – Identify alternative supplier at a lower cost? – How much did you save (in %, annually in \$s, or the length of the contract)?
<i>Did you improve service delivery?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How? Did you provide new training? – Improve customer support through better solutions? – What was the result? (Increased revenue / customer loyalty / improved customer experience). By how much?
<i>Did you improve quality?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How? What results did you gain?
<i>Did you improve workplace health and safety?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How? – Did you improve safety systems, processes, training? – What results did you obtain?
<i>Did you enhance administration processing time or improve records management systems?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How did you do this? – What were the results you achieved?
<i>Did you improve productivity of the workplace?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How did you do this? – What steps did you put in place? – What results did you achieve?
<i>Did you increase company profits?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How did you do this? – What did you have to put in place? – What results did you achieve?
<i>What changes were you part of?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How did you manage change in the workplace?
<i>For Students: How did you perform academically?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What did you do to excel? – Were you a team or project leader? – Did you take other activities in addition to your academic work? – Did you win an award?

Skills Category examples:	
<i>Adaptability/Flexibility/Managing Multiple Priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What achievement(s) illustrate(s) your ability to manage multiple assignments, tasks and set priorities? – How have you demonstrated your ability to adapt to changing conditions and work assignments? – How have you positively impacted people in your previous roles? – What achievements would not have been possible without your ability to relate to your co-workers? – When has your ability to inspire others been critical to achieving results? – What achievements resulted from your ability to mitigate conflict with co-workers? – In what ways have you boosted employee or co-worker morale? – Describe how your approachability has paid off for you in achieving successful outcomes.
<i>Analytical and Research</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How have you demonstrated your ability to assess a situation? – What accomplishments have resulted from seeking multiple perspectives, and gathering more information? – How have you shown your ability to identify key issues that need to be addressed?
<i>Communications Skills (listening, verbal, written)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How have you made a difference through your ability to listen? – Can you give examples of how your ability to write has distinguished you? – What have you been able to achieve as a result of your skill with speaking effectively? – What special successes have you had with presentations or pitches?
<i>Computer/Technical Literacy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Most workers are experienced with computer hardware and software, but what have you done beyond the standard to stand out? – What achievements have resulted from your expertise in specialized applications such as SAS, SPSS, or SAP software, etc?
<i>Leadership/Management Skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How has your management of employees produced results? – What did your direct reports achieve under your leadership? – How did your management approach contribute to the organization's bottom line? – How have you empowered and motivated direct reports? What resulted? – What is your leadership style? Describe how you've applied it to attain a successful outcome. – How have you inspired loyalty to the organization?
<i>Multicultural Sensitivity/Awareness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How have you succeeded in demonstrating sensitivity and awareness to other people and cultures?
<i>Planning/Organizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How have you demonstrated your ability to design, plan, organize, and implement projects and tasks within a specific timeframe? – What achievements have resulted from your goal-setting abilities?

Skills Category examples:	
<p><i>Problem-Solving/Reasoning/Creativity:</i> <i>Consider specific problems in each of your roles.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What were the problems or challenges that you or the organization faced? – What did you do to overcome the problems? – What were the results of your efforts? – Did you turn plummeting sales around? Did you fix weak financials? – Did you raise brand awareness? – Did you launch a new product? – Did you penetrate the market? – Did you improve a process? – Have you found a better method to do something? – What successes have resulted from your creativity? – When have you successfully handled a crisis or emergency?
<p><i>Risk-Taking</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What successes have resulted when you have taken risks? – In what ways has stepping outside your comfort zone paid off in positive outcomes?
<p><i>Strategy</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Describe accomplishment(s) that had strategic impact. – What was the initial problem/challenge? – What was the result? – How did you make it happen?
<p><i>Teamwork</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How have you excelled through your ability to work with team members in a professional manner while attempting to achieve a common goal? (Be sure to make your role on the team clear and don't give all the credit for achieving the goal to the team; give yourself adequate credit.)
Achievements that Illustrate Values	
<p><i>Adaptability/Flexibility</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What results have you attained by being receptive and open to new ideas and concepts? – What successes have resulted from your willingness to both work independently and as part of a team? – What achievements have sprung from your ability to carry out multiple tasks or projects?
<p><i>Dedication/Hard-Working/Work Ethic/Tenacity</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What successes have you achieved because you love what you do and work hard at it? – What result would not have been attained if you had not been determined to persist at a problem until you solved it and got the job done?
<p><i>Honesty/Integrity/Morality</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What have you achieved that exemplifies your personal integrity and ethics? – In what ways have employers placed their trust in you to positive effect?
<p><i>Loyalty</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What successes can you attribute to loyalty to your employer? – Have you ever achieved a positive outcome after your loyalty was tested?

Skills Category examples:	
Positive Attitude/Motivation/Energy/Passion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What achievements do you associate with your drive and passion? – What outcomes have resulted from demonstrating enthusiasm through words and actions? – What excites you most about your work or makes you the happiest? What do you get the greatest charge out of accomplishing? – Do you love what you do? Give an example of how that passion for your work has motivated you to go the extra mile. – How have you shown that you continually want to improve in your job? – How have you actually improved your performance? – How have you handled situations in such a way that your professionalism made a difference in the outcome?
<p>Self-Confidence. <i>Remember, if you don't believe in yourself, in your unique mix of skills, education, and abilities, why should a prospective employer? Be confident in yourself and what you can offer employers.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What have you accomplished as a result of your maturity and self-confidence?
Self-Motivation/Ability to work with little or No Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Describe a situation in which you showed you were a self-starter. – Recall a time in which you excelled without supervision, perhaps a situation in which supervision would normally have been expected.
Willingness to Learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How have you succeeded as a result of your willingness to learn a new skill or technique? (Note: achievements demonstrating this willingness can be especially helpful for mature workers.)
Achievements that Demonstrate Experience:	
What achievement are you most proud of in each of your roles?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What role did you play in executing the organisation's mission, goals, and objectives? – How have you contributed to customer satisfaction? How have you excelled in serving customers? What positive feedback have you received from customers or clients? – What have been your bottom-line contributions and the interim contributions that led up to them? Consider describing your contributions in each of these areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ strategic ○ financial ○ market impact ○ shareholder/stakeholder value – Describe a time where your ability to complete projects quickly resulted in positive outcomes. What strategies have you used to win bids for your organisation? – Specifically, how did you attain the successes that have made the greatest contributions to your employer? What makes you successful? – In what ways have you contributed to a positive corporate image?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What successes have you achieved in helping organizations attain brand recognition? - In what ways have you improved quality, of products, process, people, or other aspects of your organization? - How have you demonstrated your innovative abilities? What innovations have you introduced? - What have you done to improve sales effectiveness? - What have you done to help an organization manage rapid growth?
<p><i>What increases and improvements have you contributed to?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What have you increased? - What have you improved? - Identify something negative that was avoided because of your efforts. - Identify something negative that you helped suppress or prevent. - What have you maintained in the face of adversity? - What have been your proudest accomplishments as a member of professional organisations/associations?
<p><i>What projects have finished on time or ahead of time where you were a major contributor?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyse each project you were involved with using the SMART framework. In project management and other fields, these components are also known as Key Performance Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Specific</i> task, challenge, project, or problem. o <i>Measurable</i>: What metrics apply to your performance? o <i>Action</i>: What specific action did you take? Be clear about your role. (In some versions of this framework, A stands for "Attainable," as in: What steps did you take to attain your goal?) o <i>Result</i>: What outcome resulted from your action? o <i>Timeframe</i>: How long did it take for you to successfully complete the project? - What projects in which you've played a major role have finished on schedule, or even ahead of schedule? - What projects in which you've played a major role have finished within budget or even under budget?

Achievements that Enable Employers to Visualize the Results you Achieved for Your Past Employer into Your Future Roles

- How has the organisation benefited from your performance?
- In what ways did you/will you leave this employer better off than before you worked for them?
- What critical strategy components did you identify to propel the organization to a better position?
- How did you contribute to this employer's profitability, such as through sales-increase percentages? How have you helped your employer to make money?
- How did you contribute to the organisation's Return on Investment (ROI)?
- How did you contribute to operational efficiency in each job, such as through cost-reduction percentages?
- How did you help this employer or a part of the organization to save money, save time, or make work easier?

<p><i>How has the organisation benefited from your performance?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what ways have you streamlined or automated processes/operations? - How did you contribute to or influence productivity? (For example, through successfully motivating your team) - What did you do to improve your organization's competitive advantage? - What did you do to foster relationships inside and outside the organization? What was the result? - What was your role in bringing in new customers and satisfying the existing customer base? - What role did you play in business growth? - In what ways have you helped your organization handle market volatility? - What accomplishment best illustrates your ability to lead, facilitate, or handle change? - Did you initiate mergers, acquisitions, partnerships, or operating agreements? - How have you made your manager's job easier? - How have you contributed to your manager's goals? - In what ways have you helped the organization reach its goals? - How have you served as a catalyst for positive change? - Have you helped your organization overcome negative publicity? - In what ways have you turned around obstacle-laden situations that could have resulted in lost profits?
<p><i>Learned technical skills and how quickly you mastered them.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How you changed and evolved as a result of the project. - What you would do differently if you had to do it again. - Components of the project you truly appreciated. - Components of the project you did not find enjoyable. - How the project compared to the plan. - How you developed the plan. - How you motivated and influenced others (provide specific examples). - How you handled conflict (provide specific examples). - Anything else you felt was important to the project's success.
<p>Achievements that demonstrate Subject-Matter Expertise/Knowledge</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How have you used current information about your industry to increase performance in your role? - How have you applied knowledge from another job or another area of your life into your most recent position? - Describe a situation from a past or current job and apply your knowledge to address that situation. - Describe a time you successfully used specific subject-matter expertise/knowledge to solve a problem you were facing. - 	

Achievements that indicate others recognised your value and contributions

- What special things did you do to impress your manager (or a manager) for a promotion?
- And were you promoted? (Rapid and/or frequent promotions can be especially significant.)
- For what qualities and contributions have managers complimented you?
- Check your annual performance reviews for each job. Identify glowing or complimentary quotes from your reviews. Did you consistently receive high ratings?
- Have you received any complimentary memos or letters from employers or customers? Find quotes from these communications that support your achievements.
- If someone asked your manager from each job to identify your most significant contribution in that job, what would your manager say?
- How have you been recognized for your contributions?

Achievements that distinguish you and show your uniqueness

- In each job, what special things did you do to set yourself apart?
- How did you do the job better than anyone else did or than anyone else could have done?
- How have your unique abilities made the jobs of others easier?
- What did you do to make each job your own? How did you take the initiative?
- How did you go above and beyond what was asked of you in your job description?
- To what extent did you take on additional roles or functions? Did you do the jobs of more than one person, perhaps in the absence of the incumbent? Did you see a functional gap and step in to fill it?

In each job, what special things did you do to set yourself apart?

- What did you do that was new to your job function to improve what was there before?
- What do you do in general that was better than anyone else? Give examples.
- What does the "best in your field" look like? Give examples of ways you've demonstrated you meet that standard.
- For each job you've had, describe why you were the candidate hired. You can also do the same for each project role or assignment for which you've been selected and each promotion you've attained. Why you over everyone else?
- How have you modified deliverables to be better meet the needs of their consumers?
- What positive business results and profitability does your work produce?
- To what extent have you ever changed your way of working to achieve a better business result?
- How have you removed complexity from your work, made things simpler?
- How have you responded to a changing market in a way that yielded positive results?
- How have you responded to changes inside your own organization in a way that generated successful outcomes?
- How have you helped customers respond to change?
- How have you evolved in your job to address changing business needs, and what successes have resulted?

<i>How have you helped your organisation grow?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– How have you helped your organization grow?– Describe a project or accomplishment that truly showcases your unique skill set.– What's the one work accomplishment you will always be remembered for?– What have you always been known for?– How have you helped your organization or people within it succeed through sharing your knowledge?– How have you trained co-workers to be more effective or efficient?– How have you guided or mentored someone in your organization to step into a larger role?– How have you helped someone in your organization believe in himself or herself?
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Proof of Performance: Tangible evidence of Achievements

- What have you developed, created, or built?
- What publications have you produced that provide evidence of accomplishment?
- With what Websites have you been associated – as a designer, developer, programmer, content provider, site manager, or other function? What was special about your role?
- What software apps or programs have you produced or played a key role in producing?
- What products have you developed or played a significant role in developing?
- What new technologies have your introduced at your organization, and how have they impacted the operation?