

Writing Your Aligned, Success Statements for Federal, Electronic Applications: PARS
1A – Introduction & Concepts; Script Version of Friday, August 10, 2007

Writing Your
Aligned, Success Statements
for Federal, Electronic Applications
Part 1A: Introduction & Concepts

Courtesy of the
Employment Readiness Program
Army Community Service
U.S. Army Garrison
Rock Island Arsenal, IL



Slide 1A1

Hello. My name is Jon Cook, and you may refer to me as your “Uncle Jon,” your writing and interviewing coach. I am a contractor at Army Community Service at the Army Garrison of Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois. I have been teaching classes and coaching clients for over 10 years in the federal, electronic, application process. Welcome to this video-clip lesson in aligning your success statements to your targeted audience: an employer, which happens to be a federal agency.

This first part focuses on introducing key concepts for your use and your three, federal target audiences. My focus is the Army’s Civilian Personnel On Line (nicknamed “CPOL”) website and other electronic applications specifically, but also for job search and career development writing and interviewing in general.

Have you ever seen Scooby – Doo? What expression does Scooby get on his face when he sees something he doesn’t understand? (a Scooby “Hurrah?”). You may have a few “Scooby Doo” moments as you go through these lessons – which is good! You need some new, enhanced skills for your career development.

A federal electronic application should be treated like an interview that you are not at. The federal government is a world-class employer, hiring world-class employees, world-wide. They know they cannot bring in every applicant for the initial screening interview like the private sector – so they don’t. They interview the applicants by what they write - and send in electronically via the web.

Your electronic application is a five – page script for a hiring event you are not at. They don’t invite you initially to come talk. You are invited to send in a five-page electronic application for your three target audiences to read while they make up their minds on the few they want to interview or to make a job offer to their one, star candidate (and I hope it is you).

Your Three Target Audiences

For Federal, Electronic Applications

1. Software Screening

2. Personnel Staffing Specialist

3. Selecting Official (or Team)

Slide 1A2

Who are the three target audiences?

The first target-audience is the software that screens for the “key words”; the verb-noun sets, or skills. It is an interview; if you answered the questions, you paralleled the language in the vacancy announcement. If the announcement reads, “incumbent will answer phones,” have you answered phones? If you have, then answer the question: “Yes, I have answered phones.” You paralleled the duty description in your answer. If the vacancy announcement states, “review budgets,” have you reviewed budgets? If you have, your answer might read, “I have reviewed budgets.” Again you used the language in the announcement to answer the interview questions derived from the duties, about the position and qualifications blocks.

Your second audience is the Personnel Staffing Specialist in the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (or CPAC) who first figures out if you are really qualified in that federal title, series and grade by your skills, accomplishments and examples over time, and second figures out if you are really a worthy candidate to be placed on the referral list as you are answering (“writing about”) the interview questions derived from the vacancy announcement. They want to know “how long” and “how well” you actually did.

Your third target audience is the selecting official or team. They only know what they read. So what did you want them to read? Will discuss that in the next lesson. Please feel free to review this video lesson again so that you can learn all of its lessons. So long for now. And I’ll see you in the next lessons.

Writing Your Aligned, Success Statements for Federal, Electronic Applications: PARS
1B – Answering the Interview Questions; Script Version of Friday, August 10, 2007

**Writing Your
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Part 1B: Answering the Interview Questions

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Slide 1B1

This is Uncle Jon back again with Part Two of the lesson on writing your aligned, success statements for Federal, Electronic Applications, using PARS, your Problem > Action > Results > Statements format. In this second lesson, I will discuss treating the vacancy announcement as interview questions, and then answering with aligned and connected statements related to the vacancy announcement. In the third lesson I will discuss writing the actual success statement.

**Their Over-arching
Interview Questions**

- Are you good at the skills that will solve our problems?
- What else do you have for us?
- Do you want to do the job for us?

Slide 1B2

What are your answers to their overarching questions:

“Are you good at the skills that will solve our problems, as stated in the vacancy announcement?”

“What else do you have for us beyond the announcement that none of the other candidates has?”

“Do you want to do the job?” There is a big difference between “I can,” and “I want to.” How do you want to let your attitude and willingness to show through in your electronic applications – “the interviews”?

≧ P A R S ≦

(Their) Problem

(Your) Action

& Results

Statements

Slide 183

How do you answer the questions derived from the vacancy announcement, your research, and your personal experience, training and education? With PARS: Problem, Actions, Results, Statements. PARS is a two – part process you can use to put sparkle into your career development writing and interviewing. PARS translates to an action verb in the past tense, a noun, both related to the announcement, and then add your numbers, especially time, plus results and examples.

Start by *aligning* or *connecting* what you are writing – this is the P in PARS, which means “their problems.” Their problems are spelled out in the vacancy announcement’s duties, about the position, and qualifications blocks. You can derive the key words, or skills, which are verb-noun sets, by reading the announcement. You can drop the subject, “I” as it should be you that you are talking about. State the verb and the object of the verb: “drive trucks”; “make parts”; “manage budgets”; “brief generals.” For instance the duty description for a forklift driver is going to have “operate forklifts,” and you can turn it into a question: “have you operated a forklift?” If you have truthfully operated a forklift, you can write the past tense verb “operated” and then the noun “forklift” – operated forklifts. If the vacancy announcement’s duties for a Supply Manager read “conduct inventories,” you can translate the phrase into a question: “have you conducted inventories?” If you have done the work and been trained in inventories, you could write, “conducted inventories.” It is an interview – so answer the questions.

I’ll see you in the third lesson where we can learn more about writing PARS, your success statements. Please feel free to re-view this video lesson so that you can learn all of its lessons.

Writing Your Aligned, Success Statements for Federal, Electronic Applications: PARS
1C – PARS; Script Version of Friday, August 10, 2007

Writing Your
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for Federal, Electronic Applications

Part 1C: PARS

Courtesy of the
Employment Readiness Program
Army Community Service
U.S. Army Garrison
Rock Island Arsenal, IL



Slide 1C1

I am back again with Part Three of the lesson on writing your aligned, success statements for Federal, Electronic Applications, using PARS, your Problem > Action > Results > Statements format. In this third lesson, I will present techniques for writing the actual success statement.

Remember now, write only what you have actually done or learned about – always tell the truth.

The second part of PARS is the Actions (verb-noun sets) and Results. Remember their overarching question: “are you good at the skills that will solve our problems?” They did not ask if you did it – they asked, “are you good at it?”

How Well?

Are you **good**

at the skills

that will solve our problems?

Slide 1C2

Say, these two words out loud “how well.” Say them again “How Well?” Don’t forget these two words – you will need them the rest of your life. It is in the “how well” results that the bosses make their decisions.

Let me give to you a “feeling” of what it is like for a selecting official making a selection by doing three examples. You be the boss, the selecting official. I will provide to you some candidates. Pick the one you think is most suited for the job – but note, boss, how you automatically gravitate to the person who tells you their “how well” results. Here we go.

Truck Driver Interviews

How Well?

#1: I drive big trucks.

#2: I drive big trucks *safely*.

Slide 1C3

First, choose between these two truck drivers. Number one states, “I drive big trucks.” Number two states, “I drive big trucks *safely*.” Who did you pick, boss? The one that stated “safely” – see, you went for the how well - result.

Secretary Interviews

How Well?

#1: I type letters.

#2: I type letters *correctly*.

Slide 1C4

Try it again for two secretarial candidates. Number one states, “I type letters.” Number two states “I type letters *correctly*.” Who did you pick? You went for number two because they stated the how well of “correctly.”

Manager Interviews

How Well?

#1: I type 40 words per minute.

#2: I have managed teams for the last 2 years.

#3: I have successfully managed teams of up to 8 people for the last 18 months, resulting in on-time, high quality work.

Slide 1C5

One more time: chose a manager from these three candidates. Remember, this is for a management position. Number one says, “I type 40 words per minute.” Number two says, “I have managed teams for the last 2 years.” Number three says, “I have successfully managed teams of up to 8 people for the last 18 months, resulting in on-time, high quality work.” Boss, who did you pick? Number three, right? What’s wrong with number one? They were not relevant – you have to use the connected, aligned verb – noun sets. What’s wrong with number two? You couldn’t make up your mind, as you did not know their “how well” results. If you want a decision maker to make a decision, they need decision information. Use PARS; and this translates to aligned and connected skills, verb – noun sets, and add your numbers, results and examples.

Use Examples !

I have successfully managed teams of up to 8 people for the last 18 months, resulting in on-time, high quality work.

An example is - because of my training and coaching, for the last 5 months we have received the monthly, corporate team award for on-time submission of reports, and have great reviews from over 100 customers.

Slide 1C6

Examples are critical additions to your application as they explain to staffing specialist and hiring officials that you are the right choice. Here is manager candidate number three again but with an example: "Successfully managed teams of up to 8 people the last 18 months, resulting in on-time, high quality work. An example is because of my training and coaching, for the last 5 months we have received the corporate team award for on time submission of reports and have great high reviews from over 100 customers."

You too can successfully fill out your federal, electronic application using PARS: aligned, success statements of verb-noun sets connected to the announcement, and then add your numbers, especially time, plus your results and examples. You are more than welcome to vary up the pattern of your actual success statements so they are easier to read.

Bottom Line Up Front:

Write the results first

Received excellent remarks in my annual performance review of 2007 because I accurately input data into the report spreadsheets weekly for the entire year.

Slide 1C7

One pattern is called "bottom line up front" where you list the result first, and then give the other information on the skills and numbers. An example would be: "Received excellent remarks in my annual performance review of 2007 because I accurately input data into the report spreadsheets weekly for the entire year."

I hope you have found these video clips of some value. There are other lessons for you to use as you learn your, new skills for your career development. Thank you for spending this time with me.

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