

EVIDENCING YOUR SKILLS: PARS

In résumé screening and interviewing, employers are trying to assess how you have responded to problems and opportunities, if and how you take action, and the results of your intervention. More than rhetoric and clichés, they want demonstrable application of the skills you claim. Developing a mental Rolodex of 20 accomplishments will provide you with support for the skills in your 90-second pitch.

These stories are known as **Problem Action Result Skills** statements (PARS). PARS tell how you made a difference.

The following pages will help you come up with PARS. Use this format to help ensure that you are addressing root causes not symptoms and that your outcomes solve the problem or opportunity stated. When you convert these PARs to accomplishment statements for the résumé, you will discover that the problem becomes implicit; the action and outcome explain the problem. Skills move to the positioning statement.

Writing PARS develops a “critical mass” of examples of applications of your marketable skills. They are used to support the skills you claim. Analyzing PARS allows you to identify transferable skills even from non-analogous experience.

Your PARS will become accomplishment statements on the résumé. They are also useful for:

- ♦ Cover letters, when you need additional evidence of skills called for in an ad
- ♦ Answers to interview questions such as “Tell me about a time when ...?”

Use this list to help you come up with action verbs to best describe your responses to problems and opportunities:

Acted as liaison	Enforced	Installed	Organized	Represented	Utilized
Administered	Ensured	Instituted	Originated	Resolved	Verbalized
Analyzed	Established	Invented	Overhauled	Responded	Wrote
Arranged	Evaluated	Investigated	Persuaded	Researched	
Addressed	Executed	Led	Piloted	Resolved	
Conceptualized	Financed	Learned	Planned	Revised	
Created	Formulated	Lectured	Presented	Risked	
Coordinated	Founded	Mentored	Prepared	Shaped	
Communicated	Facilitated	Managed	Problem-solved	Streamlined	
Constructed	Guided	Maximized	Produced	Studied	
Counseled	Headed	Motivated	Promoted	Supervised	
Defined	Illustrated	Modeled	Provided	Surveyed	
Detected	Implemented	Monitored	Purchased	Trained	
Designed	Improved	Navigated	Questioned	Translated	
Devised	Influenced	Negotiated	Recommended	Troubleshoot	
Diagnosed	Initiated	Observed	Reconciled	Unified	
Diverted	Inspired	Orchestrated	Recruited	Upgraded	

EVIDENCING YOUR SKILLS: PARS

Below are suggestions for PARS sources, but feel free to draw from any of your experiences. Remember to choose the PARS that best illustrate the skills you wish to use in your next job (and that are most needed in that role).

- ♦ Your current job
- ♦ Your last performance review
- ♦ Volunteer work
- ♦ Lab experience
- ♦ Client-based project
- ♦ Internship project
- ♦ Professional moment-of-pride
- ♦ Practicum experience
- ♦ A risk you took

Here are a few examples to get you started:

(P) Problem	(A) Action	(R) Results	(S) Skills
What was the problem or opportunity you recognized?	What was the nature and level of your personal intervention? Use past participles of active verbs.	What were the measureable outcomes? How did your Action benefit the organization?	What skills and traits does this PAR demonstrate?
<i>Career Services:</i> No electronic job posting system at this school. Posting jobs required 25 hours a month of editing and typing jobs into a newsletter published biweekly and further delayed before being reformatted and uploaded to Website. Postings were stale.	Initiated search sourced major vendors, arranged for demos, evaluated products' features, performance, service, and price (ranging from no cost to school to \$35k); wrote up recommendation to purchase one.	Selected low-priced, high performance system with real time posting and is well accept by employers, students, and staff and reduced effort by 20 hours a month; 2 other divisions of the university bought the same system.	Initiative, analysis, problem solving, project management, writing, knowledge of student and employer needs and time constraints, persuasion.
<i>FEGS:</i> 16-year-old institutionalized developmentally disabled boy was throwing food and feces, alienated his family, was being shunned by staff	Conceptualized and developed a behavior modification program to help him express his need for affection in more positive ways	Within 3 months, his family started to visit him again, the caretakers spent extra time with him, and his quality of life improved	Ability to build trust with a severely impaired client; expertise in behavior modification; patience, interpersonal skills

EVIDENCING YOUR SKILLS: PARS

Here are a few more examples to help you with your PARS:

(P) Problem	(A) Action	(R) Results	(S) Skills
What was the problem or opportunity you recognized?	What was the nature and level of your personal intervention? Use past participles of active verbs.	What were the measureable outcomes? How did your Action benefit the organization?	What skills and traits does this PAR demonstrate?
<i>AIG</i> : 6-week backlog of unprocessed claims	Persuaded management that \$x of overtime would produce \$x+y of additional claims this month	Eliminated backlog within 2 weeks for a net increase in revenue of \$15K; named Employee of the Month	Initiative, persuasion, risk-taking, knowledge of claims process
<i>JP Morgan Chase</i> : trainees learning too slowly	Wrote the <i>first</i> training manual for department	Trainees' accuracy, speed increased 25% in first week; manual was <i>adopted</i> across company	Initiative, organization, writing, interpersonal skills, knowledge of successful training methods and tools

When writing PARS be sure to note:

- ◆ The ultimate outcome of your action (result).
- ◆ Firsts, or times when there was no template to follow. Your contribution is seen as more important.
- ◆ Times when the result was so positive that the organization kept your intervention, especially after you left the organization.
- ◆ Times when the result was so positive that it was shared with or copied by other divisions or organizations.

WRITE YOUR OWN PARS

Use the following space to write as many PARS as you can. There is space in the Problem column to also note the organization with which you worked. If you get stuck, look back through this handout. You can also call our office at 212. 229. 5400 x 1518 to meet with a career counselor.

(P) Problem	(S) Action	(R) Results	(S) Skills
What was the problem or opportunity you recognized?	What was the nature and level of your personal intervention? Use past participles of active verbs.	What were the measureable outcomes? How did your Action benefit the organization?	What skills and traits does this PAR demonstrate?
Organization:			
Organization:			
Organization:			

VALUE-ADDED: THE BENEFIT OF GRADUATE SCHOOL

You want to articulate the highest-level skills and fields of knowledge you can to demonstrate the value-added of your master's degree and professional experience.

Below is a partial list of the **skills*** you may have gained at The New School:

Ability to influence and persuade	Finance for Media
Alliance building	Microcredit programs and analysis
Appreciative inquiry	Needs assessment Organizational
Board development	assessment and diagnosis
Business plan development	Organizational communication
Capacity building	improvement
Client relationship management	Organizational governance
Collaboration Conceptualization	Organizational improvement Policy
Conflict resolution	analysis
Consensus building	Policy formulation
Communication	Problem solving
Community building Community	Process consultation
development Comparative	Program/Project design Program/
systems analysis Critical	Project development Program/
reasoning	Project evaluation Program/Project
Data analysis	management Program/Project
Database design	monitoring Qualitative analysis
Database management	Quantitative analysis Relationship
Data collection	building
Data Visualization	Research
Fund accounting	Social marketing
Media Programming	Social science statistical software
Grant monitoring	proficiency
Grant writing	Socioeconomic analysis Strategic
Initiative	planning
Interpersonal skills Intervention	Stakeholder analysis
Design	Survey design
Leadership	Teamwork
Media production	Writing
Media programming	

You will also have developed strengths in certain **fields of knowledge**, including:

Cities and Social Justice	Microcredit
Conflict and Security	Politics and Change
Community Development Finance	Sustainability
Economic and Workforce Development	Social Entrepreneurship
Economics	Social Poli
Food and the Environment	
Governance and Rights	
Housing and Community Development	*See your program and course
International Development Leadership	descriptions for skills specific to
and Change	your field.
Media and Culture	
Media Production	
Media Finance	

FROM PARS TO SKILL SETS

At the end of Career Intensive I, you learned how to articulate your job search goal, identify yourself as a candidate and, more importantly, how to convert your experiences into a body of accomplishments.

While writing your PARS, you may have found that certain skills repeated themselves. This suggests an area of strength for you, evidenced by the volume of examples that support that skill. Skills you can provide examples of will become the core of your written positioning statement.

Look back through your PARS and identify skills that appear frequently. Note those as a skill area in the space provided below. Then, summarize some of the PARS from which you pulled that skill. We've started you off with an example:

Skill Area: Strong writing skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Wrote recommendation to revamp The New School's sexual harassment policy◆ Recognized for writing "best-in-class" analytic paper◆ Developed and wrote proposal that won first grant for XYZ Foundation
Skill Area: <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆◆◆

Review what you've just written. Based on your accomplishments, which of these skills are your strongest? Are these skills supportive of your next job target? If not, highlight your skills that are more directly related to the job you want, or think about how these skills could be transferable. These skills will become the strengths you'll present in your positioning statement in your résumé.

FROM PARS TO ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

Accomplishment statements summarize your PARS to highlight the nature and level of your contributions.

Note that accomplishment statements:

- ♦ Are written in the first person but omit the first person pronoun
- ♦ Use the past tense of verbs when identifying the type of contribution
- ♦ Share credit when an accomplishment is the work of a team

Below is an example of how a PARS is turned into accomplishment statements:

PARS		ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENT
PROBLEM	Violence against women in Albania is very high. There were no structures at all to offer help to women victims of violence.	<p>Note: this PARS appears under writer’s employment at the Women’s Center of the Soros Foundation in Tirana, Albania, 2010-2013, so this information is not repeated in the accomplishment statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Researched different models of such centers and developed a structure that better responds to the needs of Albanian women. ♦ As part of the women’s association “Refleksione,” established the first Counseling Center for women and girls in Albania. The Center continues to operate successfully and has established two new branches outside the capital.
ACTION	As part of the women’s association “Refleksione,” I developed the project to establish the first Counseling Center for Women and Girls in Albania. I researched different models of such centers abroad and developed a structure that better responds to the needs of Albania women.	
RESULT	The center started its activity in 2010. It continues to operate successfully. It is still the only support center for victims of violence against women in Albania. It has established two new branches outside the capital.	

PARS		ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENT
PROBLEM	Organization had no sustainable systems to transfer knowledge or create consistency across programs.	<p>Note: this PARS appears under writer’s employment at Barrios Unidos, Santa Cruz California, 2016-2019, so this information is not repeated in the accomplishment statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Designed and wrote series of program guides and curriculum to allow knowledge transfer and to create consistency across programs. Three years later, they are still in use and have been used to raise over \$10,000 of grant money.
ACTION	I developed a series of program guides and curriculum for each of our programs.	
RESULT	Program guides and curriculum are still in use 3 years later and were used to bring in over \$10,000 of grant money.	

ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS: HELPFUL HINTS!

Consider the following when writing your accomplishment statements:

- ◆ There is no need to repeat the problem or opportunity in the accomplishment statement. It usually becomes implicit through either the action you took or the resulting benefit explains what the problem or opportunity was.
- ◆ Use the active voice even for recognition you cannot initiate. For example:
 - (I was-implicit-no need to write) awarded -- begin statement with "Awarded..."
 - (I was-implicit) Selected for a role for which only 2% of applicants were selected
 - (I was-implicit) Recognized for consistently delivering exceptional customer service.
- ◆ Be specific with your verbs. Those that precisely describe your contribution are going to be higher level barometers of your performance. For example, "responsible for implementing plan" has more impact when written as "conceptualized program implementation plan that cut costs by 5%." Rather than saying you were "involved in" or "participated in", you want to explain how you were involved or participated.
- ◆ Vary the sentence structure. Begin some statements with the result, followed by how you did it.
- ◆ If one sentence is too long because of the complexity of the project, put the result in a second sentence: "The result was..."
- ◆ Make sure that the result is expressed so that the reader knows the true measure. When you state a result, ask yourself, "Compared to what?" Common measures are: industry standard, historical performance, budget, plan deadline, product effectiveness; what was the expectation of time, price, and performance?
- ◆ Highlight solutions that were replicated or continue to be in use. For example: "Initiated, conceptualized, developed, and implemented a new model for analyzing program performance. The result was a reallocation of resources which increased the seed money dedicated to new programs and ultimately increased participation in the organization's programs by 25% within the first year, which was adopted by the national headquarters and rolled out nationwide.
- ◆ Make sure each accomplishment statement answers the question, "So what?"

You might find the following formula helpful in writing clear, quantifiable accomplishment statements:

adverb + verb + number + object + measure/tool = result/goal¹

¹ Adapted from Heather Krasna, *Jobs that Matter: Finding a Stable Fulfilling Career in Public Service*, 2010.

We've provided some clarifying definitions as well as two examples:

Adverb	Verb	Number	Object	Measure/Tool	Result/Goal
How well did you perform the verb?	What did you do?	How many did you do?	To what did you perform the verb?	What did you use to do your verb? Or, how much/how often did you do it?	Why did you do this? What was the end result? How was success measured?
Accurately	entered	more than 200	records	into an Access database	to more efficiently track outcomes.
Effectively	tutored	up to 20	students	per month	greatly improving their test scores.

MORE EXAMPLES

SHOWING SELECTED COURSE WORK AND ANALYTIC REPORTS

EDUCATION

Pursuing **Master of Science, Program, anticipated Month and Year**
Milano School of International Affairs, Management & Urban Policy

Selected course work:

Policy Analysis
Quantitative Methods

Economic Analysis
Management and Organizational
Behavior

Program Core
(name courses)

Electives
(name courses)

Analytic Reports:

“Improving Healthcare Benefits to New York City’s Poor Immigrant Population”
(Class name)

“The Global Economy: Its Role in Creating and Sustaining America’s Urban Poor”
(Class name)

SHOWING INTERNSHIP(S)

Unless you have dedicated a section in Internships in a specific area e.g. “Human Resources Internships” or “Internships in Urban Housing,” internships should appear under the **EDUCATION** section after *Selected course work* and *Analytic Reports*.

EDUCATION

Master of Science, Program, Graduation Month and Year
Milano School of International Affairs, Management & Urban Policy

GRADUATE INTERN

1199 National Benefit Fund, New York, NY

Fall 2020

Aided in the planning and preparation of health fairs. Assisted with efforts to follow-up on hypertension clinic patients. Attended departmental meetings and conferences.

OR

INTERNSHIPS IN URBAN HOUSING

Enterprise Social Investment Corporation, New York, NY

Summer 2019

ASSET MANAGEMENT INTERN

Conduct site visits: inspect property and apartment units, examine tenant files to insure compliance with the tax Code in preparation for HPD Audits. Review financial performance reports using the HPD budget review model. Provide technical assistance to organizations through compliance training workshops and individual training sessions. Interpret Legal Partnership Reserve Agreements and prepare reports listing all reserve payments and withdrawal procedures. Research Real Estate Taxes and Water and Sewer Charges.

PARS (if any, bullet them here)

SHOWING LAB EXPERIENCE

Can appear under the EXPERIENCE Section or under a header labeled “ANALYTIC PROJECTS.”

Partnership for the Homeless, New York, NY
Spring 2018

TEAM CONSULTANT (Laboratory in Issue Analysis)

Charged with identifying gaps in services in Tier II homeless family shelters in the Bronx, analyzing the Partnership’s planned course of action and making a recommendation based on the analysis.

- Researched community development financial institution models.
- Developed criteria for model-selection and recommendation development.
- Presented plan in an oral briefing and an analytic report.

SHOWING PDR EXPERIENCE (PROFESSIONAL DESIGN REPORT)

Where to put it: Under experience or a section Analytic Projects, with LABs and internships.

Organization Name

CONSULTANT (Advanced Seminar in [Program Name]) Semester i.e. Fall 2020

Project Description:

- Your actions
- Project Outcome

SHOWING PPQ (PAPER OF PUBLISHABLE QUALITY)

Capstone Research Project (Milano Advanced Seminar in [Program name])
Semester/Year.

Title: Description of research, findings

- a) Publication and or
- b) Selected for presentation at conference and or
- c) Awarded Best Paper in Class, 2007

Example: Winner of the 2018 Student Paper and Presentation Program of the Organization Development Network. “How Complexity Can Increase your Potential for Innovation.” Conference Presentation October 2018.

SHOWING COMMUNITY SERVICE/VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Can appear under the “Experience” Section or under a header labeled “Volunteer Service” or “Volunteer Leadership.”

Volunteer Leadership

Planning Committee, Raising Consciousness III Conference

Managed facility and catering logistics and co-developed panel on Youth Advocacy

Founder/Director, Noni Dance Ensemble

Founded a performing dance company for youth providing instruction in ballet, tap, jazz, and modern dance to youth between the ages of 4 and 15 years. Organized and staged a recital and myriad community performances. Commissioned by the Midland-Odesa Symphony Orchestra to choreograph and stage a piece for their 2020 Christmas season.

Profiled as outstanding student in Annual Giving Campaign, New School University, 2015.

National Coalition for the Homeless Speakers' Bureau, 2013 to Present, N.E. *Regional Representative*.

Muslim Student Association, UMASS, 2018 *Administrative Secretary*.

Yale Hunger and Homelessness Action project, 2017, *Technical Advisor*.

OR

SHOWING RESEARCH

Can appear under the EXPERIENCE Section or under a header labeled "RESEARCH EXPERIENCE."

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Paper or Thesis

(Date)

Thesis Advisors: Esther Kanipe, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, and
Vivyan Adair, Ph.D., University of Washington

"An Analysis of the Intersection between Immigration Status and Domestic Service"

- The research investigated the phenomenon of immigrant domestic servitude, intricately woven in the relations with race, class, gender - framing it as a relationship that results from an unequal power and authority structure.

SHOWING CONSULTING EXPERIENCE/CLIENT-BASED PROJECTS

CONSULTANT

2017 to Present

Consulted to not-for-profit organizations on workshop development, strategic planning, and RFP development.

Representative projects:

- ◆ For a large social services agency in Brooklyn, designed a series of workshops to prepare adults to enter the workforce upon expiration of eligibility for welfare. Pilot workshop design used to support successful proposal for a NYC contract to serve 5,000 adults annually.
- ◆ For an economic development corporation in the Bronx, co-wrote a business plan for a project to bring 200 sustainable jobs into the borough. Funding proposal was accepted; rollout June 2017.
- ◆ For a Port Authority of New York and New Jersey task force charged with increasing vendor revenues at all NYC airports, conducted passenger surveys. Analyzed data and made recommendations on pricing, hours, product offerings, and prospective vendors to increase store traffic/revenue/fees to Port Authority, which adopted them.

Anthropology

Skills (transferable and specific) derived from your study of Anthropology:	
Interpersonal / Cross-Cultural Skills*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding group dynamics • Recognizing cultural differences and similarities • Interviewing different populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observing human interactions Identifying value systems • Adapting to other culture
Research / Analytical Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering and organizing data, compiling ethnographies, conducting field studies • Applying nonintrusive methods • Utilizing statistical applications, examining data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading critically • Surveying and sampling using a variety of methods: conducting field studies, face-to-face, observational, survey • Reaching new conclusions through comparative study
Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-developed writing skills • Communicating across cultures/languages • Can make oral presentations and explain complex information clearly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading/interpreting/summarizing relevant reports/statements • Writing reports/articles/information briefs • Ability to render reports that are clear and informative
Organizational and Management Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning long-term projects • Recruiting/coordinating research subjects • Maintaining careful records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can synthesize, systematize, and summarize large quantities of information/material • Writing grant proposals • Assessing results
Technological:	Languages:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer literate – software (fill in software you can use: MS Office, etc.) • Social media savvy (list as appropriate to you) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a second language? (read; intermediate speaking); • employers value high functioning foreign language¹

¹ “While employers valued multiple dimensions of cultural capital, they were in highest agreement that a candidate’s ability to work with a range of cultures was essential to their organization.” In general, the larger the workplace setting (in terms of #'s of employees), the more highly valued the skill. Career Services and the Collegiate Employment Research Institute. Brief 8: Feedback from Respondents. Recruiting Trends 2015–2016 (Michigan: Michigan State University, 2015): 2