

## Short Story Technique *to Effectively Answer Interview Questions*

In order to identify and describe your strengths and prepare to discuss subtle weaknesses in an interview, the short story technique is an excellent tool. Identify specific examples in your work history that best define your strengths and minimize your weaknesses. Explain how they contributed to your job (or grade) and company (or class). You should use short stories to assist you in this explanation. The short story should be one to two minutes in length and should:

- ❖ Describe the **environment** in which you had to demonstrate use of the identified strength.
- ❖ Show how you used the strength, what **action** did you take?
- ❖ Show the positive results you **achieved**.

For example (to highlight communication skills):

### **Environment**

"Mr. Johnson, as manager of marketing for XYZ Corporation, it was my responsibility to hold seminars for distributors when new products were introduced or when existing products were modified for better performance. I held approximately six to eight seminars per year."

### **Action**

"I would notify all distributors by e-mail and telephone of the dates of the seminar and topics to be discussed, coordinate all travel arrangements and meeting facilities, prepare required material and present the seminar."

### **Achievements**

"As a result of my activities, 10 new products were successfully launched in a two-year period, and seven of these products exceeded first-year sales forecasts. I believe this illustrates my ability to communicate effectively with both individuals and groups."

*The short story technique maintains the interviewer's interest and is easier for the listener to remember. You want the interviewer to remember your qualities and abilities over those of other applicants for the same position.*

To practice on your own. Write down a strength/ability/skill that is required for the position you are seeking.

Now think of an instance in your life which illustrates this strength/ability/skill.

Describe the environment in which it took place:

Describe the action(s) you took:

Describe the results you achieved:

REMEMBER... this is the *SHORT STORY TECHNIQUE*. Keep it under two minutes.