

## Tips for Writing Your Summary of Accomplishment (SOA)

### What is a summary of accomplishments?

The SOA is a narrative description of your accomplishments as it relates to your job responsibilities, competencies, goals, objectives, and other factors.

The SOA invites you to be part of a discussion about your performance over the past year. Your SOA will help you reflect on your performance in the past year and to document: contributions and accomplishments; major challenges, obstacles, and unanticipated developments; career aspirations and requested professional development; future goals for next review cycle; and speak to progress made towards previous goals and objectives.

Your supervisor may take your feedback into consideration prior to finalizing the appraisal form. In addition, your feedback can help clarify any gaps between your understanding of job expectations, goals, and standards, from those of your supervisor.

### Major Contributions and Accomplishments:

- Use specific examples. Specific examples add credibility. Although words like outstanding, dependable, and creative are positive, they do not always paint a convincing picture. Instead of stating you “always maintain good customer relations,” cite customer-satisfaction surveys, letters of commendation, and the absence of any customer complaints about you.
- Use numbers or metrics, if appropriate. Numbers are concrete. If you are in charge of a large staff, budget, or region, use numbers to show how large it is.
- Do not exaggerate, even a tiny bit. Your SOA should make you feel proud and help you speak confidently in a performance discussion. Exaggerations or misstatements will not give you confidence.
- Give relevant information. Align your feedback to specific core competencies, e.g., communication. Be sure the examples match the category; otherwise, they lose power.
- Be factual, specific and concise. The SOA does not need to be lengthy, but highlight what matter most during the performance cycle.
- Explain value. Be sure to tie results to organizational goals. For example, as the new ethics coordinator at your organization, you may have conducted 40 ethics briefings in your first three months. The number sounds impressive, but what does it mean? Is there a correlation between your briefings and a reduction in violations or incidents? Whenever possible, translate your hard work into results your reader will value. Consider “negative data” to illustrate your effectiveness- information such as the absence of on-the-job violations, lawsuits, and grievances.

**Major Challenges, Obstacles, and Unanticipated Developments:**

- Note the challenges you faced and how you responded to those challenges. Overcoming challenges is an important part of the overall performance rating. Challenges may be technical or interpersonal in nature. They may also involve the ability to succeed despite limited resources or difficult circumstances.

**Career Aspirations and Requested Professional Development:**

- Always try to relate your aspirations to your current duties or to how your aspirations will help the employer. This is called "goal alignment." If you aspire to complete your master's degree, remind your employer that your advanced knowledge will help you make better decisions or enhance your customers' experience, for example. Finally, if you need help reaching your goal, state how your employer can help -- within reason. Ask for a more flexible schedule, sponsorship to attend a new training, or other support that can benefit you while benefiting the company at the same time.