



# Pueo Job Series 1. Don't let them see a one-trick pony

## Pueo Job Series

According to Glassdoor, only 2% of job applicants will ever be called to interview for the average job opening. In the *Pueo Job Series*, we summarize the most desirable attributes for any applicant to not just get the interview, but also land the job! In this series, our panel of expert contributors impart the considerations, techniques, AND free tools for your success.



*Job applicants who will ever be called to interview for the average job opening.  
Source: Glassdoor*

## The One-Trick Pony

Whether you have decades or just a few years of experience under your belt, chances are you have a go-to project that tends to creep into any job interview or application question. And why shouldn't you? It was the pinnacle of your career, you put your heart and soul into it, and you earned all the accolades in the world. So why waste time on less meaningful career activities? The reality is, hiring managers probably weren't there to share the enthusiasm over your go-to project, nor were they there to observe the projects you consider less impactful – meaning each can convey equally, if described properly. Placing too much emphasis on one work experience alone is not only risky, but also a missed opportunity to put forth the breadth of your accomplishments and demonstrate all you have to offer.

*Whether reviewing applications or conducting interviews, nothing is more frustrating than the candidate who responds to every interview question, using the same job experience as evidence. Such responses leave doubt in the candidate's ability to tackle diverse problem sets, and scream "I can only perform if placed in that exact same role."*

## Telling Your WHOLE Story

Job application and interview questions are opportunities to tell chapters of your story – your objective is to use each to tell your entire memoir (as described by your biggest fan – you). The success formula we will describe has been formulated, refined, and proven over years, across various industries.

- **Guess The Questions:** In a job application, you have the benefit of responding to questions that are provided in advance. But even in an interview, with ~90% certainty, you already know 2 questions... the first is generally an open-ended "Tell us about yourself" type of question, and the last is "Do you have questions for us?" Do your best to guess the remaining ~5 question categories (e.g., leadership, problem solving, technical) and guess 3-5 actual questions for each category.
- **Structure Your Career Chapters:** Each career experience is a chapter in your career. Each chapter provides opportunities to answer the expected questions AND tell your story. Aim to list as many career chapters as questions you anticipate (~7). This may mean dissecting experience into sub-activities or grouping experiences more generally. For each chapter, list the context, action, impact, and result.

	EXPERIENCE 1	EXP ...
	Context: ... Action: ... Impact: ... Result: ...	
<b>CATEGORY 1: OPEN SUMMARY</b> "Tell us about yourself." "Why do you want this job?" "Give us your background."	<i>Tip: Exhaust all resources, including mentors, research, and study to guess the potential interview questions.</i>	
<b>CATEGORY...</b>		

*Telling your whole story starts with structuring your experiences, to apply against anticipated questions.*

- **Optimize Your Responses:** In a table, start by scoring each experience's relevance to each question (recommend high, med, low, using colors for visual guides). Once complete, pick the best experience for each question to (1) maximize your overall "high" responses, and (2) avoid experience re-use. This can be done by hand, or using Pueo's *Job Experience Optimizer* (visit Pueo.com for [free](#) downloads).

*Tip: Conduct this exercise to identify gaps well in advance of your job application, and seek out roles to fill them.*

- **Practice, Practice, Practice:** Invest the time to get familiar with your responses. Have your family and friends randomly ask you questions and practice applying your experiences as planned. Your practice should include (1) interpreting question fit within your guessed question categories, (2) answering the question AND telling your story within 3-4 minutes, and (3) keeping a mental note of chapters checked off your list throughout the interview.

- **Keep Mental Note:** As you answer each question, keep track of each Experience Chapter that is checked off your list. You will seek to insert those left unused into your final interview opportunity... questions for the panel. Prepare in advance to disguise your experience in the form of a question (i.e., "In my prior role where I served as..., we struggled to...and I implemented...to overcome those challenges, resulting in... Will I be afforded authority to implement similar solutions?").

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7
Q1	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green
Q2	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Q3	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Q4	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Q5	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Q6	Red	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Q7	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow

  

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7
Q1	Green						
Q2					Green		
Q3			Green				
Q4						Green	
Q5							Green
Q6		Green					
Q7				Green			

*Tip: Replace High and Med scores from Table 1 with a check mark to build a compliance matrix, for a differentiating feature to your job application.*

E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7
✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Experiences To Hit in Wrap Up</b>					E2, E6	

*Tip: Most interviews allow you to take notes. Prepare this table in advance to keep track of your responses.*

## Pueo Job Series 1 Summary

With these techniques and advanced preparation, you can be sure that your job application and/or interview will avoid the one-trick pony pitfalls, while telling your whole story in the most compelling manner. Don't miss the rest of Pueo's Job Series instructions to help you tell your story, get the interview, and land the job.



The Pueo Job Series is a small part of our service objective to help members of disadvantaged communities achieve positions in National Security.

The deliberate, systematic, and data-driven approach applied in this Job Series mirrors the problem-solving techniques we apply to our customers' most complex challenges. Through our portfolio of pre-made tools, like the free *Job Experience Optimizer*, we deliver customer value without additional costs, license constraints, or accreditation delays.

Our experts maintain deep mission experience across the National Security arena for contextualized *AI/ML*, *Business Intelligence*, *Cyber+Physical Security*, and *IT* solutions.



**CAGE Code:** 7QR11  
**Designations:** 8(a), HUBZone, SDVOSB  
**Facility Clearance:** Top Secret

## Pueo Job Series Contributors

Our contributors have served as hiring managers across diverse mission areas and have conducted countless interviews.



**Nick Andersen:** Pueo Consultant. State CISO; Former National Security & IT Senior Executive; Former CIO for both Navy and USCG Intelligence.  
[nick@pueo.com](mailto:nick@pueo.com)



**Greg Palmertree:** Pueo Consultant. Former DoD Senior Executive – Lead for Insider Threat Mitigation Cell; Oversaw DIA IT Infrastructure activities.  
[greg@pueo.com](mailto:greg@pueo.com)



**Randy Meyer:** Pueo Consultant. Former GG15 lead for DIA Officer Development; Led all business operations, force management, and performance for DIA's Operations Directorate.  
[randy@pueo.com](mailto:randy@pueo.com)



**Micah Mossman:** Pueo Consultant and Johns Hopkins Adjunct Professor. Former DoD Senior Executive – CFO for DoD Intelligence Information Systems.  
[micah@pueo.com](mailto:micah@pueo.com)