STAR Stories Bank — AbbVie Interview Prep

> *Structured Situation → Task → Action → Result responses Tailored for Building Automation Controls Engineer role*

STAR 1: "Tell me about a time you managed a critical system under pressure"

Target Interviewer: John Walters (project delivery) / Michael Ester (reliability)

Situation: At CyrusOne's 2.1 million square-foot data center campus in Chicago, I was the console operator responsible for monitoring the Siemens Apogee and Insight BAS across 18 data halls — covering 63 chillers, 48 AHUs, and 135 CRAHs.

Task: During a severe summer heat event, outdoor temperatures exceeded the design threshold. Multiple chiller alarms triggered simultaneously across several data halls, and the BAS was showing temperature exceedances approaching customer SLA limits.

Action: I immediately triaged the alarms through the Siemens Insight console, identifying which data halls were most critical based on customer tier. I coordinated with the mechanical team to manually override chiller staging sequences via the BAS, redirected chilled water flow to the highest-priority halls, and simultaneously opened MCIM tickets to document every action taken in real time for compliance.

Result: We maintained all Tier 1 customer SLAs. Zero downtime tickets issued. My documented response sequence was later adopted as the standard MOP for heat event escalation across the campus. This kind of disciplined, BAS-driven emergency response is exactly what a pharmaceutical facility needs.

STAR 2: "Describe a situation where you quickly learned a new system or technology"

Target Interviewer: Gino Pisano (technical depth) / Michael Ester (learning legacy)

Situation: When I joined CyrusOne, their facility ran multiple BAS platforms — Siemens Apogee and Insight were the primaries, but some areas also used Delta Controls EnteliWEB and TAC/IA Enterprise Server.

Task: I needed to become proficient on all four platforms to effectively monitor and respond to alarms campus-wide. There was no single operator manual — each system had its own interface, alarm logic, and nomenclature.

Action: I created my own cross-reference guide mapping alarm types across platforms, shadowed senior technicians on each system, and volunteered for night shifts where I could practice navigating each interface under real conditions without the pressure of peak operations. I also enrolled in the Pneumatic & Digital Controls course at Triton College through Local 399 to strengthen my technical foundation.

Result: Within 3 months I was cleared as a solo console operator on all four platforms. My cross-reference guide was eventually shared with new hires as part of onboarding. This multi-platform fluency is directly relevant here — if AbbVie is transitioning from Insight to Desigo CC, I've been through platform migrations before and I know how to operate in a mixed-system environment.

STAR 3: "Give an example of how you ensured documentation and compliance"

Target Interviewer: John Walters (process) / All (pharma = GxP compliance)

Situation: At Microsoft's data center, every maintenance activity required a Method of Procedure (MOP) to be written, reviewed, and approved before any work could begin — even for routine filter changes on AHUs.

Task: As an L4 Critical Environment Technician, I was responsible for both writing MOPs for my own work and reviewing MOPs submitted by third-party vendors before they could enter the facility.

Action: I developed a personal checklist system for MOP review that verified: scope of work, safety isolation points, rollback procedures, estimated duration, and impacted systems. For my own MOPs, I included detailed step-by-step procedures with clear decision trees for contingencies. I also maintained our Corrigo ticketing system with real-time status updates so the operations manager always had visibility into active work.

Result: Over my tenure, I maintained a 100% MOP compliance rate with zero unapproved changes. Two of my MOP templates were adopted as team standards. In a pharmaceutical GxP environment like AbbVie, this kind of documentation discipline isn't just good practice — it's regulatory requirement. I'm already wired to operate that way.

STAR 4: "Tell me about a time you worked effectively with a team"

Target Interviewer: John Walters (team fit) / Michael Ester (respect for tenure)

Situation: At the Palmer House Hilton, a historic hotel in downtown Chicago, I was on a small building engineering team responsible for maintaining all mechanical systems — HVAC, plumbing, electrical, fire safety — in a 1,600+ room property running 24/7.

Task: The chief engineer needed someone to take ownership of the BAS interface and become the team's go-to person for automated system monitoring, while also maintaining strong working relationships with the senior engineers who had decades of experience with the building.

Action: Rather than coming in and trying to change established workflows, I focused on earning trust first. I volunteered for the toughest shifts, asked the senior engineers to walk me through the building's quirks and legacy systems, and positioned my BAS knowledge as a complement to — not a replacement for — their institutional knowledge. When I identified optimization opportunities through the BAS, I presented them as suggestions to the team rather than directives.

Result: Within 6 months, the senior engineers were proactively coming to me with BAS-related questions and requests. We improved response time to comfort complaints by 40% through proactive monitoring. I earned the trust of a tenured team, which is exactly the approach I'd take with Michael Ester and the controls team at AbbVie — respect the institutional knowledge and add value through my BAS fluency.

STAR 5: "How do you handle working as a contractor and ramping up quickly?"

Target Interviewer: Matthew Connelly (Sterling) / John Walters (ramp-up)

Situation: Through Insight Global, I was placed at the Microsoft data center as an L4 Critical Environment Technician — a high-security, high-stakes contract environment.

Task: I needed to get badged, clear security protocols, learn Microsoft's proprietary procedures, and become operationally productive within my first two weeks — all while navigating a new CMMS platform (MCIM) and a large campus with multiple buildings.

Action: I created a personal 30-day ramp plan. Week 1: complete all safety training, get facility orientation, shadow every shift at least once. Week 2: begin independent rounds with check-ins, learn MCIM ticketing workflow. Week 3-4: take ownership of assigned zones, begin writing my own MOPs. I also identified the most experienced team members and built relationships early to accelerate my learning.

Result: I was fully independent by week 3 — ahead of the typical 4-6 week ramp. My manager noted it was one of the fastest contractor integrations on the team. I carried that same approach to CyrusOne. For this role, Sterling and AbbVie can expect the same rapid ramp-up — especially since I already know the Siemens platforms at the core of their operation.

Quick-Pull Cheat Sheet

Story	Best For	Key Phrase
Heat Event (CyrusOne)	Pressure, critical systems	"63 chillers, zero SLA breaches"
Multi-Platform (CyrusOne)	Learning speed, adaptability	"Solo operator on 4 platforms in 3 months"
MOP Discipline (Microsoft)	Documentation, compliance	"100% MOP compliance, templates adopted"
Team Trust (Palmer House)	Culture fit, collaboration	"Earned senior engineers' trust in 6 months"
Contractor Ramp (Microsoft)	Contract work, fast start	"Fully independent by week 3"