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Big Achievements Can Be Bad News on Your Resume

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Like any other type of sales campaign, your job search requires a careful balance of self-promotion and proof. When you've got a great new position in your sights, the line between self-confidence and exaggeration can blur, and even the most ethical candidate may find himself overstating qualifications in an effort to please and impress the hiring manager.

Especially in this age of applicant tracking systems programmed to identify discrepancies and Web-fueled background checks that can surface every facet of your professional history, it's essential your claims are appropriate to the situation.

In "[Lose the Eyebrow-Raising Accomplishments From Your Resume](#)," Lisa Vaas examines another variation on this theme: the temptation to layer on accomplishments that are not only irrelevant to your value as an employee but potentially detrimental.

For example, Vaas recounts the story of a candidate for a senior position at a large financial institution whose resume included her role in helping to elect a polarizing political figure. While the woman was proud of this accomplishment, it ultimately cost her the chance to work for this cautious institution, said the woman's career counselor, Roy Cohen, author of "[The Wall Street Professional's Survival Guide](#)."

Short of a Nobel Prize, consider the shelf life and relevance of every accomplishment you feature on your resume. Stay away from achievements from the distant past that may date you, and by all means avoid extracurricular accomplishments that may sow controversy among the people responsible for choosing the winning candidate.

According to career coach Laura Rose, "Hiring managers don't have time to be distracted by accomplishments that do not have anything to do with the position they are hiring for. Oftentimes, HR or others will pre-scan the resume. If their eyes scan something irrelevant, you've increased your chances of being tossed aside."

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