

5 Questions That'll Help You Decide What to Keep (and Cut) on Your Resume

By Aja Frost



For every 10 years you've been working, you can add one page to your resume.

That's [according to Google's head of HR](#), anyway, who's reviewed more than 20,000 resumes.

If you're now staring at your resume, wondering how you'll ever cut it down to the appropriate length, here are a few crucial questions you can ask yourself to help with the process.

1. Does This Relate to the Job Description?

There's a really simple way to make sure your resume is tailored to the role you're applying for. First, print out the job description, along with your resume. Then, highlight everything on your resume that aligns with a skill or requirement in the description.

Everything you just turned yellow? It should stay.

(And if you didn't highlight at least two-thirds of your resume, that's a sign it needs to be better [customized for the position](#).)

2. Was This a Big Responsibility Within the Role?

The longer you work, the easier it gets to add important responsibilities to your resume. It's not that coordinating your manager's schedule wasn't important—but it becomes increasingly less so when you start to compare it to your other accomplishments.

Let's say under your role as "HR Manager" you've included:

- Planned and produced monthly "Live From HQ" video broadcasted to 5,000 employees
- Set up weekly calls and webinars

The first bullet is clearly a big deal, but the second isn't—and it should be deleted. Basically, if a responsibility isn't as exciting or impressive as the other bullet points, you can cut it.

3. Do I Show This Elsewhere on My Resume?

Make sure you're not being redundant. For example: Maybe as a UX designer for Herald & Co. you designed wireframes that incorporated user feedback, project objectives, and business goals.

And then as a UX designer for Bright Nite, you did the exact same thing.

Since you're trying to maximize your space, you don't need to include the wireframe aspect of your job under both positions. Instead, put it under the more recent position—since the rule goes that the less time it's been since you had a job, the more bullets it merits.

You can also include the relevant skill (in this case, “wireframing”) under your qualifications section so you [show up in the right searches](#).

4. Could I Do Something Similar in This Next Role?

Sometimes, your work experience [isn't totally relevant](#)—yet it's still worth including.

For example, you're currently in recruiting and trying to transition into sales. In your current job, you consistently hit or exceed your recruiting goals. Not only is that impressive, but it also shows you know how to sell a product (in this case, your company!). There's no doubt it should be on your resume.

To make the connection really obvious to the hiring manager, include a line in your cover letter that says, “I'd apply the skills I learned in attracting top talent to acquiring valuable clients for your company.”

But the bullet you've included about conducting in-depth phone screens with job candidates? Well, since you're not going to be interviewing candidates as a sales rep, that should probably go.

5. Is This Just Really Freaking Impressive?

There are some achievements, awards, or skills you should keep on your resume simply because they make you look really, really good.

What falls under this category? Well, my fellow Muse writer [Lily Herman](#) was named one of *Glamour Magazine's* Top 10 College Women. That kind of honor merits the resume real estate.

Alternatively, maybe you speak five languages fluently (emphasis on fluently). Even if you're applying to a role that only requires English, being multilingual speaks volumes about your drive and intellectual curiosity.

Also in this category: *extensive* volunteering, speaking experience, times where you saved the company a lot of money, or anything that would make someone go, “Wow!”

Bottom line: If something on your resume doesn't make you answer yes to one (or more) of these five questions, it can go. In return? You'll have a resume that's shorter, more impressive, or both.

Photo of [woman on laptop courtesy of Shutterstock](#).

About The Author Aja Frost is a freelance writer who covers career, lifestyle, current events, and social justice. Besides being a Muse contributor, she's also Editor-in-Chief of Her Campus Cal Poly, co-founder of Feminists at Lunch, and a student at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Say hi to her [on Twitter](#).