



# CVs: A FEW TIPS

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**Disclaimer:** the opinions expressed in this presentation are mine and are NOT endorsed by IT, CERN or WIT  
I accept no liability, so use these tips at your own risk!

# WHY ME? / REALITY CHECK

- English mother-tongue
  - Experienced
  - Helped many people
  - Had to read many CVs
  - Have some ideas worth sharing
- 
- Will this get you your dream job?  
**NO!** Only you can do that
  - Should you run away and change your whole CV?  
**NO!** Take what you think is relevant, useful and will work for you
  - Can you send me your CV?  
**NO!** Unless you know me 😊

# CURRICULUM VITAE – WHAT IS IT FOR?

- Latin for “the course of your life”
- Detailed account of your professional life?
- Showcase your full educational results from age 15?
- Pages of paragraphs of text explaining what you do?

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**NONE OF THE ABOVE!**

- **Job application:**

- CV = to get you an interview -> it's marketing!

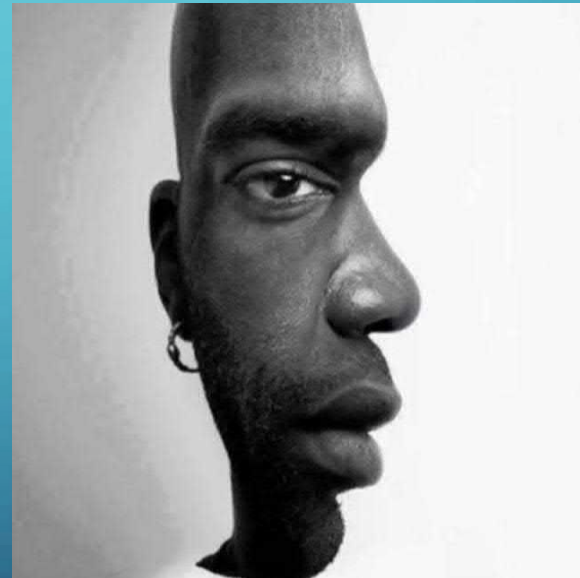
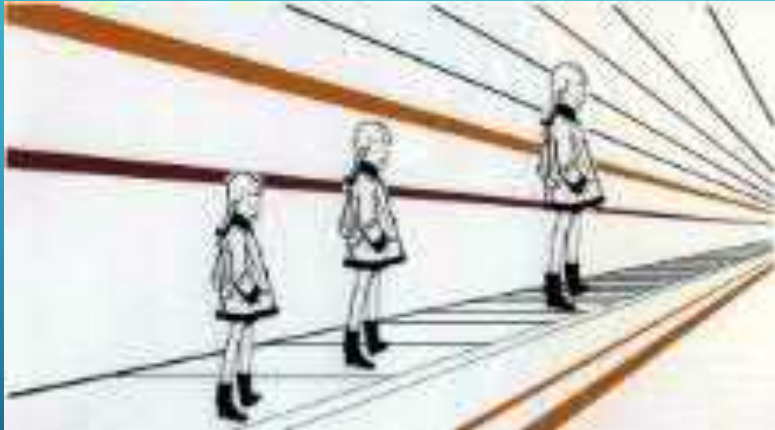
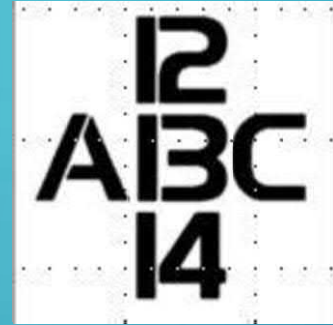
- **Promotion:**

- CV = **demonstrate** you have correct experience/level/etc

- Applying for jobs is a **LOT** of work and takes a **LOT** of effort... be prepared!

# WHAT MAKES A GOOD CV?

- **Tailored and relevant:** to **specific** job you are applying for  
Write a **BASIC CV** plus extra parts to add and remove
- **Easy to read:** help HR tick their boxes!
- **Short and sweet:** plus publications list if relevant



- **Context and perspective:** we do **NOT** all look at things in the same way!
- **Remember you are in a competition!**

# LAYOUT

- You don't need the words Curriculum Vitae on it...!
- **Name:** big bold at the top, on **all pages** in header plus in **filename**
- **Properties:** check and edit, also in PDF! Paper size should be **A4** 😊
- **Reference letters:** check properties here too, e.g. Author!
- **Clear and concise** – white space is your friend!
- **Bullet points** starting with verbs/power words, not long paragraphs
- **Personal details:** nationality, date of birth, marital status, photo...  
= Personal choice
- **Online profiles:** if you have them, make sure they are up-to-date and match detail-wise, but don't copy/paste
- **Objective:** YES! Bold statement of who you are and what you are looking for, but **TAILORED TO SPECIFIC JOB!**

# FONT

## FONTS MATTER

*You'll always  
be mine...♥*

**YOU'LL ALWAYS  
BE MINE...**

# DO YOUR RESEARCH!

- Have you **researched** company? Do you understand what they stand for?
- Does CV tick the boxes **WITH EXAMPLES** from the job description?
- Is CV **understandable** to your target audience? **Who are they?**
- **Remove jargon** where possible
- **Add explanation** where useful – but don't overdo it
- **Some numbers** can be useful for scale – but don't overdo it
- You don't **NEED** to include **ALL** your tasks – and you don't **HAVE** to match **ALL** job description points in order to apply
- **Something unusual** will help them remember you - as long as it's **relevant!**  
*But demonstrating skills is better than being quirky!*

**Signposting**



# CHECK YOUR CV – AGAIN AND AGAIN!

- **Don't just list** activities and duties: instead (where possible) describe results you achieved and skills or qualities you demonstrated
- **Start with power word or verb:** provides strong and clear opener plus makes your skills and achievements stand out
- **Language is important:** don't use *I worked as part of a project team*  
Instead: spearheaded, led, ran, was responsible for x part of y project
- **Be specific:** demonstrated leadership in xxx situation...
- **Proof-read** your CV, look with fresh eyes – then get **someone else** to do it  
*Any grammar errors or typos = straight on the reject pile!*
- Now show it to friends and family to **get their feedback**
- For **EACH AND EVERY** job you apply for ...

# POSITIVE POWER WORDS

Accelerated	Debated	Heading	Professional
Accomplished	Decided	Helped	Promoted
Achieved	Delivered	Implemented	Provided
Adapted	Designed	Improved	Represented
Advanced	Developed	Increased	Researched
Advised	Devised	Influenced	Resolved
Analysed	Effective	Informed	Responsible
Assessed	Empathised	Investigated	Significant
Challenged	Enhanced	Led	Specialised
Co-ordinated	Ensured	Maintained	Succeeded
Committed	Enterprising	Managed	Successfully
Communicated	Enthusiasm	Mediated	Team Working
Compiled	Established	Monitored	Tested
Completed	Exceeded	Motivated	Trained
Conducted	Excelled	Negotiated	Upgraded
Consistently	Extended	Persuaded	Utilised
Created	Fulfilled	Planned	Versatile

- Check **TENSE**: present for current job, past for previous projects/jobs
- **THREE** is the magic number for point you want to highlight – don't overuse!

# PROOF-READING ISSUES

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- Check **EACH WORD** individually – is every word spelt correctly?
- Then check the **GRAMMAR!** Does phrase make sense? Can it be shorter, more concise?
- Now read it out **ALOUD** – anything tripping you up? Change it!
- Then check the **FLOW** etc. Are the bullets in the right order?

# PROOF-READING ISSUES

- Yes this **IS** a big deal!

<https://theundercoverrecruiter.com/the-top-resume-mistakes-that-could-cost-you-the-job/>

- 59% of recruiters will reject a candidate because of poor grammar or a spelling error. Though these mistakes seem small, they indicate that the candidate is sloppy and hasn't taken the time to proofread their resume.
- Over 50% of recruiters will reject a candidate if their resume is full of cliches. You need to differentiate yourself from the crowd, cliches are boring.
- Over 40% are also put off by too much design, such as snazzy borders, inappropriate fonts, clipart images.....or even an emoji!

# SOME SIGNPOSTING EXAMPLES

- **Bad:** Presented talk on XYZ at HEPiX
- Presented talk on XYZ at HEPiX (High Energy Physics IT eXchange)  
**Does that help? Not really...**
- **Better:** Presented talk on XYZ at ~~HEPiX~~ (*a worldwide forum for IT staff in High Energy Physics institutes*)
  
- **Bad:** Developer for ACRONYM (acronym in full) tool  
**IT acronyms are notoriously bad... so usually doesn't help/add anything useful**
- **Better:** Developer for ACRONYM tool (*explain what it is, some numbers e.g. storage, users, etc.*)  
Developer for ~~Indigo~~ (*an open source tool for event organization, archival and collaboration, with >80,000 events created per year*)
  
- **Bad:** Company name for previous employment
- **No-one** is going to look it up at application time... **So add some info!**  
Company name (*a leading IT infrastructure company in Spain, with around 200 employees*)  
Company name (*a small online education start-up in Italy*)

# BUZZWORDS

- Group-wide, cross-group, inter-departmental, CERN-wide
- National, European, international, worldwide



- Represented section/group/department/project/experiment/CERN at...
- Participated in, active member of, contributed to
- Resulted in: greater standardisation, reduced costs, increase in number of users, increase in user satisfaction

Include figures! *But need to know: how measured and by how much*

# STARR SYSTEM

Useful for **competency-based job descriptions and interviews**

*If you don't know it, look it up!*

- **Situation:** set the scene – context
- **Task:** what was the key objective – required of you
- **Action:** what you actually did, step-by-step or brief summary
- **Result:** how well it all played out
- **Review/reflect:** describe what you learnt – finish on a positive

Paint the picture, explain the goal, describe how you met that goal and what final outcome was, what you would do (different, same, or better) next time

# STARR SYSTEM – METHOD

- **List:** skills, competencies and experience required for the job
- **Brainstorm:** examples when you displayed those skills, competencies and experience – don't stop until you have a really long list! Non-work examples are good too  
**E.g. difficult situation to overcome, tight deadline to meet, showed initiative, demonstrated commitment, etc.**
- **Flesh out:** the brainstormed examples in STARR fashion
- **Be concise:** now reduce the text!
- **Be inventive:** can you briefly work some examples into CV?



# CERN'S RECRUITMENT POLICY

- You may be surprised at a few points: <https://careers.cern/recruitment-policy>
  - **Over-qualified:** CERN will strive to hire people of the right qualifications for the position which is opened. In general preference will be given to candidates with the qualification level indicated on the vacancy notice. **Candidates with higher qualifications (in the same domain as the post) than those required will normally not be considered**
  - **CERN will target fresh recruits:** In principle, and in line with recently-implemented policy, **CERN will not re-hire former LD staff members.** In exceptional circumstances where specialised competencies may not be found on the market, and with the DG's authorisation, a former LD candidate may be invited and selected
- My advice:
  - Check the qualification level in the Job Description
  - Check the Job Duration -> 2 or 5 years?
  - Informed people make better decisions! Check out the link above

# CERN'S COMPETENCY MODEL

## CERN'S PROMOTION GUIDE

- Having trouble thinking of competency examples?
- Don't understand what competency level the job requires?

These two documents are your friends!

- **Competencies:** <https://hr-dep.web.cern.ch/content/cern-competencies>  
Integrity, Commitment, Professionalism, Creativity, Diversity
- **Promotion Guide Rev2:** <https://cds.cern.ch/record/2239735/>  
Gives NINE factors & explains the different levels (a-g, max SEVEN)  
Then every Benchmark Job listed with levels required at each Grade
- Plus CERN's CV tips & tricks: <https://careers.cern/help-center>

# OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Every CV is enhanced by outreach activities 😊

- Reminder of CERN competency areas:  
**Integrity, Commitment, Professionalism, Creativity, Diversity**



How can Outreach help?

- Inspiring others -> **shows communication and interpersonal skills**  
(compassion, empathy, positivity, patience)
- In a foreign language -> **shows EN/FR skills**
- Teaching experience -> **shows management and organisational skills**
- Volunteering in free-time -> **shows commitment and flexibility**
- Helping develop programmes -> **shows creativity and diversity**

# OUTREACH AND DIVERSITY

- The **WIT community** is particularly active encouraging the next generation to get involved in computing through local events:
  - Django Girls
  - EU Code Week
  - Expand Your Horizons
  - Girls in ICT Day
  - HEPIA Open Days
  - Semaine de l'Egalité
  - CERN Open Days
- **Volunteers: ALL** are welcome – simply **join e-group** and sign up to events!  
[wit-outreach-volunteers@cern.ch](mailto:wit-outreach-volunteers@cern.ch)
- **Training is provided** – for more details see: <https://cern.ch/wit/outreach>



**JOIN TODAY!**

# WIT COMMUNITY

- Community about Women **FOR EVERYONE!**
- This includes **men**
- And **all** professional spheres



- Inclusive conversations require **EVERYONE'S** voice & participation
- How can we make the future better for **EVERYBODY?**

- **Website** & subscribe: **e-group, mattermost, discourse** today!

<https://cern.ch/wit/>

[wit-matters@cern.ch](mailto:wit-matters@cern.ch)

**JOIN TODAY!**

# BONUS TIPS!

- **BODY LANGUAGE: TED Talk by Amy Cuddy:**

[https://www.ted.com/talks/amy\\_cuddy\\_your\\_body\\_language\\_shapes\\_who\\_you\\_are](https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are)

- **COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEWS:**

- **STARR** examples as explained earlier
- These should be **short stories** you are comfortable telling
- **Make notes** and take them to interview so can use them
- Some stories **can be tweaked** to show different competencies  
So make sure you have a few major stories to cover many bases!  
“Can you give me another example of...”
- Can use **competency examples from outside work** – studying, sport, activities, volunteering, etc. *Gives hints to your personality!*

**Picture yourself as the story heroine,  
and practice your storytelling skills 😊**

# SUMMARY

## IMHO

- **CV = marketing:** are you putting yourself in the best possible light?
- **Use bullet points / verbs / power words / buzzwords / signposting / rule of three:** to highlight best points – always in moderation, **it's seasoning!**
- **Tailored to specific job:** no job description? You're not finished!
- **Tick the boxes:** don't need to include **ALL** your tasks / meet **ALL** their needs
- **STARR system:** for competency-based CVs (& interviews)
- **Proof-read:** again & again plus by others...
- **File properties:** make sure it is your details & **A4 paper size!** 😊
- **Outreach enhances ALL CVs!** Sign up: [wit-outreach-volunteers@cern.ch](mailto:wit-outreach-volunteers@cern.ch)
- **Competition:** your CV has to be better than the others!
- **Body language:** 2-minute power stance to be **BEST** version of yourself!

Thank you for your attention!  
Questions? Comments?



Was it useful? Got a tip to share?