The CV checklist

Your Curriculum Vitae - your CV - the checklist





Aaltje Vincent & company.

Your CV has one single purpose, which is to evoke: "We need to see this person!". When you ask recruiters how they read CVs in the first instance, they'll usually say: "I read many, I need 9 second at the most!". So tailor your résumé to rushed readers! There are many tips for writing a CV; this checklist will give you some tools. Keep in mind that you are a unique solution on your job market and that the best/perfect/winning CV for you is the CV that brings you to the table of your potential employer! Everyone has their own unique job market, do what works for you.*

IN GENERAL

Maximum of two A4 pages. Note: the first page is decisive; and often the first half of it is seen on a tablet, laptop and smartphone. Start with your expertise.

- Make quick 'scannable' lists and use ● or ○ in your lists (no blocks of text).
- Use 'keywords' from the job descriptions of your profession. This is crucial for ATS CV selection (and for recruiters who are searching for your expertise on LinkedIn).
- Focus on the last 10 years of your professional experience, that's who you are now. Relevant experience before this period can be mentioned briefly.
- Colour: your picture and the logos (look at the section Work Experience) will add colour to your resume. It will have greater impact than just the use of a coloured block.
- The eye is always drawn to **the bottom and at the back** of the lists and pages. **Use this cleverly.**

PERSONAL DETAILS

Please note: omit the words 'name', 'address', 'e-mail' etc. from this list. This is not necessary.

- Use the same professional, business-like, portrait photo in appropriate clothing, with a smile 🙂 as on your LinkedIn profile.
- First name and surname and any title (official first names are not necessary).
- Street, house number, postal code are irrelevant. Mentioning your city will suffice.
- Date of birth? You can leave this out. Or, find out what works for you, with or without. With date, mention it in full: November 23th, 1963.
- Mobile phone number, email address with your own name (no 'fake name') and your LinkedIn-URL.





PROFILE

Visually describe the solution you are on the job market. Do it in a way no one else would. Include your strengths in a couple of lines, maximum four.

WORK EXPERIENCE

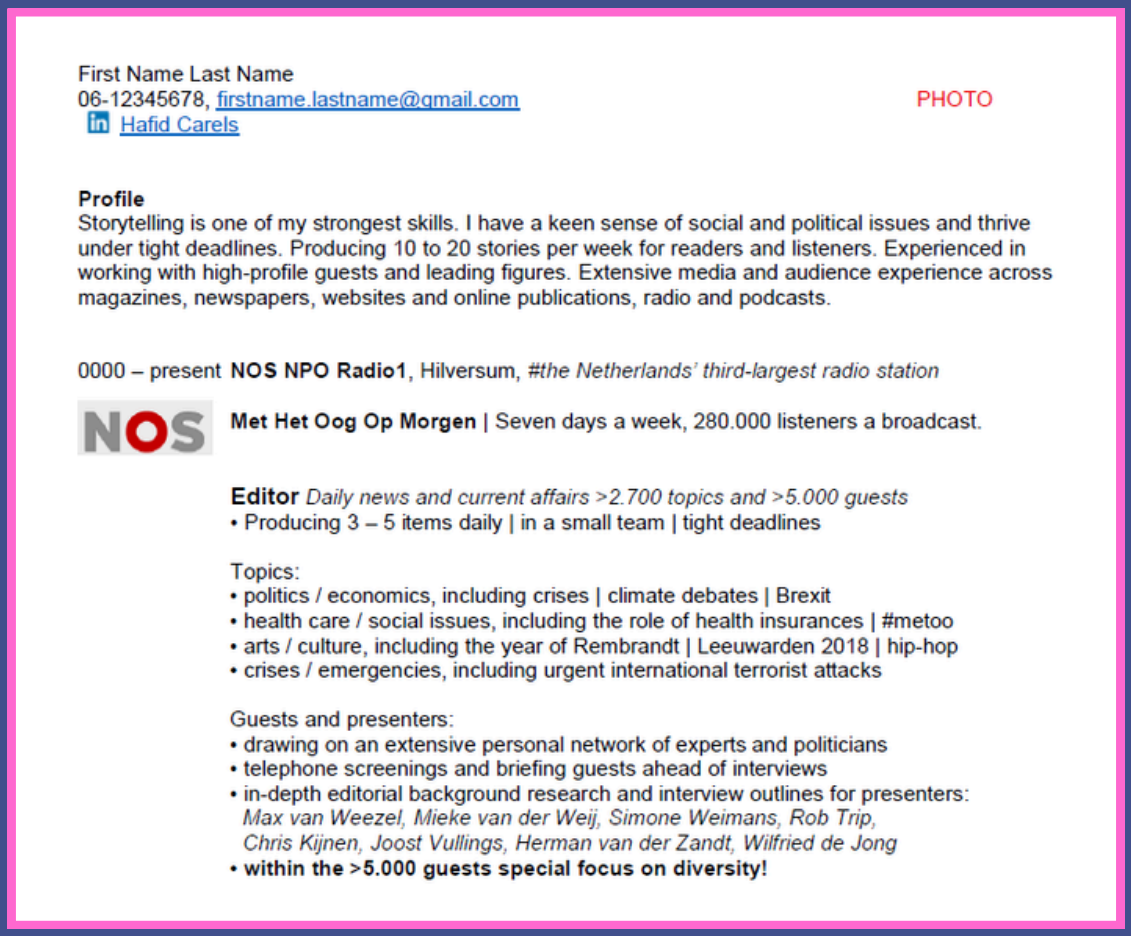
- Describe your work experience anti-chronologically, meaning your last work experience first.
- Provide the employer's name in full, as the employer is now called, avoid abbreviations. Use logos too! The brain processes images 60,000 times faster than text.
- Context: briefly describe your employer, size of the company, how many people work there, etc.
- Job title: use the job title that is most common in your field (this is not always the same as the title in your employment contract).
- Describe a gap in your CV briefly and positively, e.g. Orientation on the labour market, study and career reorientation, informal care or full-time parenting.
- Professional experience: mention the most important things in lists, concrete, with results, numbers and percentages - **numbers are magic!**



Look at the following page for an example of part of a successful CV.

Example of a successful CV

You will understand that I can only share my clients' successful CVs in exceptional circumstances. This is one such example, anonymised and only partially shared. You can find several before-and-after CV examples among the documents I have shared on LinkedIn (see my Activity / Documents section).



First Name Last Name
06-12345678, firstname.lastname@gmail.com
Hafid Carels

PHOTO

Profile
Storytelling is one of my strongest skills. I have a keen sense of social and political issues and thrive under tight deadlines. Producing 10 to 20 stories per week for readers and listeners. Experienced in working with high-profile guests and leading figures. Extensive media and audience experience across magazines, newspapers, websites and online publications, radio and podcasts.

0000 – present **NOS NPO Radio1**, Hilversum, *#the Netherlands' third-largest radio station*

NOS **Met Het Oog Op Morgen** | Seven days a week, 280.000 listeners a broadcast.

Editor *Daily news and current affairs >2.700 topics and >5.000 guests*
• Producing 3 – 5 items daily | in a small team | tight deadlines

Topics:
• politics / economics, including crises | climate debates | Brexit
• health care / social issues, including the role of health insurances | #metoo
• arts / culture, including the year of Rembrandt | Leeuwarden 2018 | hip-hop
• crises / emergencies, including urgent international terrorist attacks

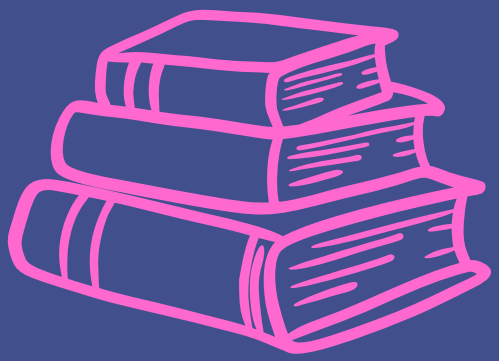
Guests and presenters:
• drawing on an extensive personal network of experts and politicians
• telephone screenings and briefing guests ahead of interviews
• in-depth editorial background research and interview outlines for presenters:
Max van Weezel, Mieke van der Weij, Simone Weimans, Rob Trip, Chris Kijnen, Joost Vullings, Herman van der Zandt, Wilfried de Jong
• **within the >5.000 guests special focus on diversity!**

AI and your CV

JYou've probably already heard that AI can help you with your CV, such as ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, Gemini, or Mistral. Maybe you're already using it yourself, or perhaps your career coach is already using it in your guidance program. You can use it very intelligently. For example, give the AI language model the role of a recruiter or career advisor, together with your current CV and the job posting you're applying for. Then ask how your CV could be improved. And ask for concrete examples. One important thing: if you use AI, the EU AI Act requires a certain level of AI literacy. See if you can take a training course somewhere. You'll also learn that you should never share personal data and that you should never blindly copy what AI produces. Use it as a source of inspiration, and then make sure your CV truly shows who you are. You are the one who wants to be invited for the interview. It's about you. And if the person reading your CV thinks, "hmmm, this sounds very AI-generated," you may immediately hurt your chances. And that's the last thing you want. Really. As a source of inspiration, AI works perfectly well. You decide what you use.

EDUCATION

- Describe your education including the year and the current name of the institute.
- **If you completed an important part-time study program, mention it twice.**
  - Once under the job you held while doing the program, and once under your education section.
- **Did you follow a course or training to support a current career switch?** List it at the top of your résumé as well as in the education section.



LANGUAGE SKILLS

For example: English - daily use for twelve years, fluent business English since 2018. Stay away from star ratings, etc.

SIDE ACTIVITIES/INTEREST/SPORTS

Assess relevance and whether it empowers your 9-second CV. Also regarding your personality. **Adding sports is inviting,** vitality is an asset!

TIP: NEVER CREATE YOUR CV ON YOUR OWN

From my experience I know that if you make your CV on your own or only have your CV ‘checked’, you won’t even get thirty percent of your full potential. That's because you think it's perfectly normal what you do in your work. This craftmanship will then not be mentioned on your CV. You're ‘unconsciously competent’ in your profession. If you make your CV together with a buddy or a coach, you will become 'consciously competent'. Your CV may then evoke: "We need to see this person” in 9 seconds.

If you want to know everything about job application, get your copy of Solliciteren naar werkgeluk, 2nd edition 2024 in Dutch, and the Jobmarketing 3.0 boek, 35th edition 2026 in Dutch.

I wish you every success as you take the next steps towards finding happiness and fulfilment in your new job!



Warm regards,
Aaltje Vincent

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