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It's known that those who don't study history are doomed to repeat it. Have you studied your own job application history? Moreover, have you studied how you use your CV?

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Wednesday March 10th  
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**Speaker:**  
John Humphries,  
Senior Instructor,  
ESI International

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Greetings!

What does the future hold for the curriculum vitae and its effectiveness in gaining employment? The February edition of Project Management Tipoffs attempts to explore the nature of CVs, the mistakes that hinder progress in a job search and if they are even the best document to send forth when soliciting interest in a role.

We've discovered there is one alternative to the CV gaining steam, and delve into the concept of The Working Resume as opposed to the traditional work history for your key document submission needs. We talk to some Arras consultants about errors and gaps in your CV and how they can reflect poorly on otherwise schedule-minded managers. And the editor offers a commentary on the state of working progress being hindered by a title from a dead language that will upset the students of Cicero and Machiavelli but also stir your forward-thinking optimism.

We'd like to thank those of you who helped determine the project management climate in 2010 through the Arras People Project Management Benchmark Report, which you can now register for. See below for more details. Guest book reviewer Claire Collings provides a delightfully tasteful look at our book of the month, *The Complete Guide to Project Management for New Managers and Manager Assistants*. Capping it all off is our Q&A session, where a current volunteer worker between full-time jobs wonders what hiring professionals would think of his situation.

The Working Resume™: A New Approach for Job Applications

*The Working Resume*™ has been popularised in recent years thanks to Nick Corcodilos, an American head-hunter and management consultant who runs the popular job search/hiring tips blog "Ask the Headhunter". In a 2008 newsletter piece entitled [Resume Blasphemy](#), Corcodilos describes the idea behind The Working Resume which is about stating specifically what you would do going forward in your career, listing (quoted from the article):



- "A clear picture of the business of the employer you want to work for."
- "Proof of your understanding of the problems and challenges your prospective employer faces."
- "A plan describing how you would do the work the employer needs done."
- "An estimate of what/how much you think you could add to the bottom line."

Corcodilos writes also of his disdain for CVs\*, judging them "too static" and susceptible to being "lumped in" with other CVs. In applying for a job, he opines that *The Working Resume* doesn't require academic credentials, prior employers, past experience, jobs you've done, accomplishments, achievements or awards. Just stick to the four bullet points above. Sounds radical, so we delved further to see if this approach could be adopted by the project management industry.

His January 21st post entitled [How to apply for a job: The Working Resume](#) highlights an effective example of a solid Working Resume (submitted by one of his readers) from one of the great artisans of history: Leonardo Da Vinci. It revolves around Da Vinci's application for employment with Ludovico Sforza, the Duke of Milan, in 1481. In it Da Vinci illustrates ten-fold examples of what he can do when hired, and wraps up by indicating his willingness to provide a free trial.

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## Arras People to Attend PPSOSIG at Open University



**The Programme & Project Support Office Specialist Interest Group (PPSOSIG) will host their first conference of the new decade this March.**

The PMO-focused group's one day conference, entitled "PPSO Competence and Competencies: High Level Performance", will take place 19th March at the Open University, Milton Keynes from 9.30am-4.30pm.

The 17th conference from the PPSOSIG is focused on competency and how competencies affect careers within the PMO. The conference features peer consultations, presentations and interactive sessions combined with networking and discussion groups on key topics such as competence frameworks for the PMO, role profiles in the PMO and how competence and competencies are viewed and used in the real world. Each delegate will receive their own individual competence assessment and a copy of the APM Competence Framework. Feedback and discussion from the completed assessments will also be on offer during the conference.

"This is our first recession-busting conference for 2010," said Lindsay Scott,

Corcodilos is bowled over by the letter, ending the post with disdain for the traditional CV and its reference to experience, credentials, education and achievement.

Corcodilos writes: "When the applicant says he can do all the things you need him to do and is willing to show up and prove it? That's a *Working Resume*."

It's an inspired read, one we definitely recommend so you gain a full understanding of just what is happening in this new and radical approach to gaining the job you really want. And although we do advise on delivering effective CVs to hiring personnel, we're not above suggesting *The Working Resume* to you if it can give you a leg up in getting your foot in the door. Frankly, when done effectively, it's a document worthy of endorsement.

The UK job hunting market as it stands today (see a role, apply for it [through agency or direct], gain interview and hire) is not conducive to *The Working Resume* idea for a number of reasons:

- Lack of need to include anything in terms of working history, the achievements or accreditations is too much of a step change - how on earth would recruitment agents be able to sift and sort without keyword searches (!)
- Most opportunities in the marketplace don't give enough detail about who the organisation is, the ins and outs of the programmes or projects, or the realism of the job specification and person specification - how can an effective *Working Resume* be created without this information
- There is not enough of a collective voice to say "we don't like how the hiring process works" to change the way we do things now - without that, it doesn't become the norm

But that's the great thing about *The Working Resume*, it is not the norm and we think the principles of it can be adopted for your competitive advantage.

While keeping the four bullets within the context of it, our version of *The Working Resume* does not eliminate the CV. Rather, it moulds it according to *The Working Resume* standards. Keep the CV, but emphasize the achievements or responsibilities you've undertaken previously in your work experience that specifically address the key points in the job specification. If you do the research and can point to those things on your working resume as effective demonstration of your capabilities in the role, you've started to gain a competitive advantage already.

The project management field lends itself perfectly to the four principles of *The Working Resume*:

- **"A clear picture of the business of the employer you want to work for."**

Ensure you clearly include in your CV your match to the employer business or sector. It's easier to do this when applying directly to an organisation but if you are applying through an agency, ask the questions that enable you to make these changes to the CV.

- **"Proof of your understanding of the problems and challenges your prospective employer faces."**

Project management is all about providing solutions to business issues, whether it's corporate strategy, customer needs or public service. If you research enough about the project or organisation you want to join, it becomes easier to understand what the current pressure points are and what projects are being undertaken to address them. Demonstrating that you understand the bigger picture of how projects provide solutions for a business could be included in the personal statement or work history.

- **"A plan describing how you would do the work the employer needs done."**

Director of Recruitment for Arras People, a long standing sponsor and member of the PPSOSIG. "The event is excellent value at £100 for a conference day packed with experts in the field of PMO."

#### NOTES ABOUT PPSO COMPETENCE AND COMPETENCIES

DATE: Friday 19th March 2010, 9.30am - 4.30pm  
VENUE: Open University Campus, Milton Keynes.  
PRICES: £115.00  
BOOKING: Download the booking form and email to the address provided in the form.

#### Quick Links...

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#### Social Media Roundup

##### Blogs / Articles

- [How to Apply for a Job: The Working Resume - Ask the Headhunter Blog](#)
- [Resume Blasphemy - Ask the Headhunter Newsletter](#)
- [Prioritise Your CV Content - Fuller CV](#)

##### From Arras People & How to Manage a Camel

- [Project Management CV Advice](#)
- [Arras People CV Template \(.PDF\)](#)
- [Are You Guilty of These CV Errors?](#)
- [Finding the Unique Selling Point for your CV](#)
- [Running Checks on CV Claims](#)
- [To Pay or Not to](#)

Now this might sound like "teaching grandma to suck eggs" so I won't go into detail but a project management CV should include the basics of how you manage projects. Tell the reader how you deliver successfully (and not just that you deliver within the triangle constraints!) Spell it out: from initiation, through planning, execution and support, these are the details your future perspective employer needs to see.

- **"An estimate of what/how much you think you could add to the bottom line."**

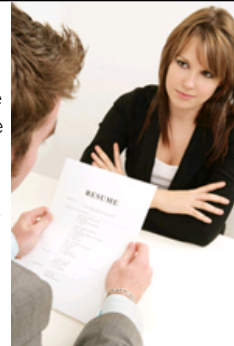
Again, this is the bigger picture; if you understand the problems and challenges a business faces and you know you deliver projects effectively and successfully, tell the prospective employer not only where you've delivered cost savings, increased profit, reduced time to market etc, but also how this translates to their current needs.

For *The Working Resume* to be an effective undertaking, it cannot be the same for different roles you apply for. This is a principle that applies to simple CVs as well: The job descriptions are different, and that changes the achievements you'll need to highlight in your traditional CV. You have to tailor the document you are providing to the job and hiring personnel you're applying for/to. That means properly prioritising the order of work examples from your past, allowing you to better point to accomplishments that address the problems and issues the new employers need to have solved.

*"Corcodilos' writings rarely use the word 'CV', as the commonly-known title for a working history document in America is the French term 'resume'. We've stuck with 'CV' in all possible references outside the trademarked **The Working Resume™** to avoid confusing our readers.*

#### Mind the Chronology Gap: What the Recruiters and Hiring Professionals Think Of Crucial Missing Details

You would never leave out the dates on your project schedule. After all, such detail informs project team members about deadlines and providing as accurate as possible what needs to happen to make your project succeed. So what possible reason is there for sending out your CV devoid of any crucial information like lack of dates, gaps in chronological work history, achievements, or things that directly address your suitability for the vacancy?



Now this might sound a ridiculous thing to say and you're probably pooh-poohing it already: "My CV's not like that." Take another look, because you might be surprised to learn that it happens more than you think. This article is meant to serve as your heads up to ensure that you are not making basic CV errors and seriously affecting your chances in the employment market.

What are the crucial things that are being left out of a CV? Some may be obvious: others require more digging.

##### Unexplained Gaps in Working History

Sometimes when an unexplained gap in your work history occurs, candidates may have left it so because they were confused as to how to handle this aspect of their life, unsure of what might look best on their CV. The result, as you can imagine, was avoidance of the issue altogether, and a reader of your CV left feeling not assured. Don't run from these gaps: embrace them. If you took a break from work to do important things, like travel the world, raise a family, undertake further education/training or you're simply between contracts; lessons learned, achievements and honesty can prove beneficial to your attractiveness to employers.

##### Clear and Concise

Hiring managers don't want to read a novel; they want it spelt out with the 5W-How (see below) and to have it right now. Pages upon pages of a single CV have been submitted by candidates in years past as some sort of badge of honour. In reality, hiring managers are likely to put it at the bottom of the pile. They're not looking to weed through it and pick out the bits that suggest "Hey, that's where it addresses what this candidate can do for us in this role. Get 'em in here!" You want to work for them, so don't assume for a minute

[Pay for CV Writing Services?](#)  
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#### Websites

- [pposig](#)
- [Project Offices](#)

#### Podcasts & Vodcasts

- [Project Shrink](#)
- [The PM Podcast](#)
- [PM411](#)
- [PMThink!](#)
- [Careers Advice @ Direct.gov - CV Tips](#)

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- [projectmgmt](#)
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#### Latest News from Arras People



#### Benchmark Report Now Available



> [Request a Copy of the Report](#)

Now in its fifth year, the Project Management 2010 Report from Arras People is the most comprehensive report available for the project management marketplace in the UK.

This year it would appear that we have all been impacted in some way by the turbulent economic conditions and as ever there have been winners and losers in the Programme and Project management community.

they're going to work for your sake before you're even asked in for an interview.

#### Prioritise the Information

Few candidates tailor or amend their CV for the role they've applied for, one of the most overlooked flaws in the process. It's not a "one size fits all" document: you have to account for the information that directly addresses the crucial points of the job specification.

Therefore, your CV for role A must be different from the CV you submit for role B.

#### How do you manage projects?

It's often assumed that this is a fairly obvious part of a project management CV. Take a look at your CV now and ask yourself the question, "Does this CV tell the reader how I manage or support projects?" If you are a project manager, do you cover how you plan a project, how you resource effectively, how you communicate with stakeholders etc? If you are a project support professional, do you cover the tools you use to report, plan, and support the project or how you track the project in accordance with the methodology? You will receive questions in the interview that delve deeper into your project management competence, experience, skill and style so make sure you are being picked for the interview shortlist by giving the reader what they really want. In the simplest terms your CV should be able to answer the question "Does this person have all the required skills and experiences we need to make a successful hire?". A good starting place with the CV is the 5W-How terms:

- Who are you?
- What is your experience?
- Where are there examples of your ability to do the job?
- When (or, How Long) have you done the job?
- Why do you think you are suitable for the role?
- How do you manage projects?

Another tip in creating a CV that demonstrates how you manage or support a project is the "lifecycle" model. Take a blank piece of paper and draw your project lifecycle across the top. For each stage of the lifecycle, note down the role you perform and the tasks and activities you carry out. This gives you a framework on which to start building up your CV.

#### Context and Scale

Parameters of a project are often spelt out in the job description, giving you an idea of budgets, size and schedule before you even submit a CV for a role. Include your previous projects' context and scale frequently in the CV as an asset to help hiring professionals trust that they're dealing someone who's done this before. If the context and scale match up well with the job description and you address it clearly and concisely, you're in the running!

The main idea of a CV is to effectively project (no pun intended!) your potential in the role you're applying for in a clear, well-spelt out manner. A consultant I spoke with recently pointed out that the jobs sometimes go to the people who market themselves best and not necessarily the best person for the job. Thinking of the CV not as a portrayal of what you've done, but rather as a testimony to what you can do for future employers, may provide you with a new understanding of how well your CV can be used to market yourself better and more effectively.

#### Why a Dead Language Should Not Influence Your Professional Capabilities

A Commentary by Dan Strayer, Editor

Latin, as an everyday spoken language, is all



As the impact on individual practitioners seems to have been so variable the 5th Annual Arras People survey of the UK Project Management Community will give us all a snapshot of how you and your peers fared during 2009 and at the end of the noughties the general mood looking forward into 2010.

In addition to remuneration and rewards across the sectors we will be able to better understand professional competencies, project failure and the green issues that are currently high on the global agenda.

> [Request a Copy](#)

### JobSearch Support Service for Newly Unemployed Professionals



Arras People have been working with Job Centre Plus across the country to provide practical help and advice to project managers who are currently out of work.

There's further in-depth details on how to access the service via [the blog](#) or via [the website](#).

Please pass along the details to any friends you know who may be able to benefit from the service

We've got testimonials to back up the quality of our service:

*"Hi. Thought I would let you know that a recruiter called me just now after being impressed by my new CV! So it's already working for me - thanks again."*

*"Just to let you know that I have taken a 6 months contract as a project manager rolling out broadband, PCI DSS, BO config etc to 260*

dead. Save for law, higher education mottos, and the sciences (particularly medicine), this ancient tongue exists in those idioms in a manner suggesting that Latin is something we are clinging to as a origin, rather than as a force in everyday life.



And while it does live on in many ways thanks to its offspring (French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian and Spanish, among others), the only way you are likely to see it in everyday life is in that document you've polished up with gusto - the "curriculum vitae".

This is exactly why the title should be dropped altogether.

When done correctly, the CV is the lifeblood, the essence of who you are as a working professional. Everything is in there: Where you worked, what you accomplished, what your accreditations are...everything. But like a Constitution, the document should also be a living, breathing document, something capable of springing to life and evolving with every thing you do or want to achieve next. It's not going to look the same in four years' time: you'll have to account for new accomplishments, perhaps a couple of different promotions/reassignments or even new employers, and certainly more recent dates. The CV will also look different depending on the role you apply for which means you could be changing it every day of your job searches. It is open for amendment, and therefore, alive.

So why would you refer to it in a dead language that chokes the life out of its meaning and description?

We mentioned The Working Resume™ in an earlier article in this issue, and more than a few employers will undoubtedly be intrigued by the notion of a candidate enthusiastically addressing the matters and issues that the vacancy needs to address. If you make this switch, understand some crucial elements of this document (when done correctly) give your candidacy a progressive, direct and active outlook because you've:

- Directly addressed the problems they want answered.
- Talked about how you would handle the project, point by point, task by task
- Showed your past experiences as proof of how you are capable of handling the responsibilities the role requires.
- Tailored your document according to the job specification to help them familiarise what you are in your previous life (working history) and how that qualifies you in your upcoming life (hired by them).
- Stated your willingness to show up and prove it.

Do you think that a hiring manager will be impressed with someone who has already proven they have read the job description by answering how they will complete the tasks, pointing to their experience, and showing a willingness to do it on trial? That folks is a great example of active voice that presents action. You have nothing to lose, everything to gain, and a willingness to prove your worth for someone in need of capable hands like yours.

This is what your "dead language" document needs. It has to have action in that living, breathing, continuously-updated database that is your working document. By referring to it in a progressive mannered voice, then showing your commitment to applying your past to the employer's future, a Working Resume adds value and gives your application to the role a vibrancy the other CVs wish they had the luxury of bragging about.

In layman's terms, Latin derivatives in the everyday vernacular kill meaning, feel and/or level of familiarity altogether. And with a document that clearly wants to stand out in the pile, anything that suggests "dead on arrival" suggests its time that you took the matter into your own hands. The Working Resume concept may not be for you, as you're still comfortable with the traditional "CV". By all means, stay with it, but consider changing it to "resume" (French for "synopsis"). Whatever title you go with, either one gives your candidacy that "Yes, We Can" vibrancy; the idea of looking forward while addressing your credentials never seemed more eminently possible.

stores. You have helped me quite considerably with my CV and interview technique and I wish to thank you for your professional assistance in this matter."

## Book Review - The Complete Guide to Project Management for New Managers & Manager Assistants



**Author:** Elle Breaux  
**Length:** 288 pages  
**Publisher:** Atlantic Publishing Co

OK, I have to admit that my first instinct when picking up the book was not the most positive one. Cheesy pictures - check. Strange US spellings - check. Dedication (and photo of) the office dog 'Bear' who "did not receive a salary but worked tirelessly 24 hours a day" - erm, check. Despite all that, I was sold on the by-line 'How to Get Things Done in Less Time'. Surely that is every PM's dream?!

*The Complete Guide to Project Management* is aimed at new Project Managers and Project Assistants and endeavours to give them a complete overview of their new role. It takes the reader through the whole process of running a successful project and gives them the tools required to do so. Practically everything you could ever need is covered, not only do you get a complete introduction to your new career, you get the full details of running a project - from estimated costs and resources, right down to Excel formulas.

I found the "Software is Not Rocket Science" chapter the most useful as it evaluates all the possible software and internet options available to keep your project on target (including some free ones!), which is extremely useful if you have no idea where to start. Even if you use Breaux's suggestions as a starting point to work out what you need, it helps to narrow down your choices.

The chapters are well laid out and the text is clear and concise, which makes it an enjoyable read rather than that looming 'homework' feeling you get when you normally pick up a work-related book. It also throws in a bit of pop psychology - I learnt that on my team I have 'monopolisers', 'mixers' and 'methodicals', and don't get me started on 'cheerleaders'.

Breaux's writings are evidenced with case studies from Project Managers of many different experience levels and backgrounds which work well to authenticate her writing and give the reader confidence. Seasoned Project Managers may also find these case studies useful, if only for an insight into how other people run projects.

The book delivers what it says on the tin, and thus proves very useful for a general overview. It does not tell you what you have to do - rather, it gives you a list of approaches and systems to try. It does not preach or patronise, but gives you the opportunity to learn along with the book. So, if you can overlook the cheesy pictures and the slightly irritating 'flying a plane' analogy that underpins the chapter headings (e.g. "Who is flying your plane?" and "Choosing a runway" [Shudder]), I would recommend it as a read for a good PM overview.

- Reviewed by Claire Collings

### Q&A

***I have just recently started work as a part-time Project Manager with a local charity. As it is only part-time I am still in the market for a full-time Coordinator type position. However, I am unsure as to whether to add this role to my CV. From a recruiters perspective, will the fact that I'm applying for jobs with a recently started position on my CV work against me? I look forward to your advice, thanks in advance.***

- Hanif

Thanks for your question. No, not at all, many people will put their current place of work like that on their CV because the contract might be short, say 1-2 months work, or they have a rolling contract which gets renewed or not on a monthly basis, i.e. they're looking around because they want a new role which offers them more security. There are reasons you can explain which are not viewed negatively, the best way to go is to be honest:

*"I have a role but it's only part-time and I need something full-time; hence the reason why I'm looking"*

Employers will understand that, but if you do find a new role, it's only fair to give your charity as much notice as possible so make sure you tell prospective employers your situation and notice period.

For more examples like this and/or further help & advice regarding extending your search and creating professional and effective cover letters refer to our [Careers clinic](#) / [JobSearch Support Services](#) / [Careers Advice](#) pages.

Got a question for us? [Contact us](#) today.

### Tipoffs Sponsor to Host Live Webinar

Tipoffs sponsor ESI International will host an hour-long Live Project Management Webinar entitled "A Guide to Managing Projects - Ensuring Project Success!", Wednesday 10th March from 12:30pm.



In this webinar ESI will teach you about the entire project life cycle, from conception to implementation and explore the responsibilities of the project manager in bringing the project to a successful conclusion.

The webinar is a taster of ESI's classroom course - Managing Projects, next taking place in London 22-24 March and 21-23 April (other dates are available throughout the year). The webinar is hosted by Topic Expert John Humphries.

By attending you will get a snapshot of:

- The fundamentals of project management
- The project life-cycle
- What tools and techniques are available
- The role of the project
- Critical success factors
- Project completion

For more information & to register visit [this address](#) or call 020 7017 7100.

#### About the Speaker

John Humphries, an instructor with ESI International, has more than 25 years of experience in managing projects and teaching risk and project management in the public and private sectors. His areas of expertise range from Microsoft® Project to training needs analysis and courseware development and customisation.

#### About our Sponsor

ESI International is a project and programme management and business analysis learning company. Our courses are accredited by the PMI and IIBA and we work with many of the top Fortune 500 companies across all industries. We offer classroom, online, virtual and corporate training, and consulting solutions ranging from individual and corporate assessments and health checks to workshops and seminars. ESI regularly draws upon the knowledge and expertise of our instructors and academic partners to put together tools and resources to help you advance your professional skills and knowledge. For more information on what we offer call 020 7017 7100 or [email them](#).

Sincerely,

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Arras People - Project Management Recruitment