The narrative thread in your CV:
How to turn individual roles and career decisions into a coherent story.

Why having a clear narrative thread in your CV can be a decisive advantage.

Many CVs in the cyber security space follow a similar pattern.

Each individual role is, in itself, correct.
The job titles sound relevant.
The technologies align.

And yet, as you read, questions arise.

Why?

Because the narrative thread is missing.

What does a narrative thread in a CV mean?

A narrative thread means that your career path is understandable.

The reader understands:

Why you moved from role A to role B.
Why you developed certain areas of focus.
Why you are exactly where you are today.

It creates a complete picture.

Not just a list of jobs.

And importantly:

Not every career is planned from the outset.

Many paths evolve spontaneously.
Through projects.
Through new interests.
Or through opportunities that arise.

This is entirely normal.

What matters is not whether everything was planned.
What matters is whether your path is clearly explained.

Why the narrative thread matters

A CV is not just an overview.

It is a document of traceability and tells the story of your professional journey.

When reading your CV, employers ask themselves:

Why did this person choose this particular path?
Which decisions were intentional?
Which developments were driven by expertise?

If your CV answers these questions, it builds trust.

The most common mistake

Many candidates describe their roles too briefly and in isolation.

Example:

2018–2020: Security Analyst
2020–2022: IT Consultant
2022–present: Cloud Security Engineer

A simple list – concise and pragmatic – is technically correct.

But:

What is missing is depth.

Why exactly these transitions?
Which skills were developed?
Was this coincidence or a deliberate progression?

Without this information, the CV remains superficial.

The reader sees positions.
But no story behind them that creates genuine interest.

And that is exactly where the narrative thread gets lost.

How a narrative thread is created

A strong CV does not only show positions.

It shows development, direction, and decision-making.

Example:

Security Analyst
Focus: Building detection use cases and analysing security incidents
Insight: Strong interest in broader security processes and client interaction

IT Consultant
Focus: Conducting security assessments and advising clients
Development: Shift from operational work to conceptual and advisory roles
Motivation: Greater impact through consulting and strategic security topics

Cloud Security Engineer
Focus: Designing secure cloud architectures and security by design

Outcome: Technical specialisation with architectural responsibility
Goal: Building scalable security solutions in modern environments

The difference:

Before: A sequence of jobs
Now: A coherent development with a clear direction

That is a clear path.

Further education is part of the narrative thread

A strong career path is not only reflected in roles, but also in further education.

Example:

Initial hands-on experience in security operations.
Followed by training in incident response.
Later, certifications in cloud security.

The reader recognises:

This development is intentional.

The right education was chosen at the right time.

And again:

Not every step is planned long-term.

Sometimes interest develops through projects, new topics at work, or recommendations from a manager.

What matters is that you explain why you took that step.

Career changes are normal

Many cyber security professionals come from different backgrounds:

IT operations
Software engineering
Network administration
Electrical engineering
or even entirely different industries

This is completely normal.

The key point is:

Explain the transition.

Example:

Weak:

System Administrator
2016–2019

Security Engineer
2019–present

Strong:

System Administrator
2016–2019
Focus on network and infrastructure

Security Engineer
2019–present
Transition into cyber security driven by increasing exposure to security topics in infrastructure operations

Motivation: Growing interest in IT security and targeted further education in this field, supported by certifications in cyber security (see education section)

Personal reasons can also be mentioned

A career change can have many causes:

New professional interests
Health-related reasons
Changes in personal circumstances
or new career opportunities

This is not a problem.

On the contrary:

Transparency makes your path understandable.

Turn your CV into a story

Many CVs are simply lists of tasks.

Role 1.
Role 2.
Role 3.

Strong CVs work differently.

Turn your CV from a purely factual list of responsibilities into a compelling short story that people actually want to read.

It is about making development visible.
Explaining motivation.
And clearly presenting connections.

That is where the difference is made.

A narrative thread does not happen by accident

It is created through explanation.
Through context.
And through the conscious presentation of your development.

Many careers look good at first glance.

They become truly strong when the reader understands:

Why you made certain decisions.
Which direction you chose.
And where your profile is heading.

Review your CV using these questions:

Is it clear how my area of expertise has developed?

Is it understandable why I changed roles?

Do my further education and certifications align with my career path?

Is it clear where my profile is heading?

If these questions are clearly answered, your CV has a narrative thread.

Next week: *CV length and photo.*
What is expected in the DACH region and which mistakes to avoid.

This article is part of the cyberunity CV series for cyber security professionals in the DACH region.