



Drew Saur Coaching

6 Essentials To Land An Executive Role





I started my technology career like many other people. I had deep technical skills, a strong work ethic, and delivered everything that was asked of me. After 10 years of steady promotions, I was a Senior Director, ready for my first executive role. And then, for the first time in my career, I didn't get the promotion.

I asked dozens of people for advice, but only got vague answers like "give it more time" or "keep building your executive presence". Since no one could tell me, I had to figure it out myself. I studied the executives and began to see the differences in what they did, how they approached things, and what they said.

And then it clicked. There was a whole different set of rules I needed to follow to get there and thrive as an executive. To succeed, I needed to transform myself. As soon as I did, I got my executive promotion and then continued to advance.

I spent the next decade studying why some got promoted and others didn't. I sat on hiring committees and promotion boards. With what I learned, I coached my own team members through their transformations and promotions to the executive level.

In 2020, I decided this was my purpose, and founded Drew Saur Coaching to help Tech Directors and VPs learn the strategies, tools, and tactics to make that transformation and land their next-level executive role. My mission is to help as many Tech Leaders as I can land bigger and better roles so they can experience the fulfillment and compensation that come with it.

I hope this ebook is helpful and I wish you much career success!

Drew Saur

FOUNDER, DREW SAUR COACHING

The 6 Essentials

1. Define Career Success

2. Clarify Your Unique Value

3. Sharpen Your Message

4. Elevate Your Content

5. Improve Your Influence

6. Deliver Via Relationships

1. DEFINE CAREER SUCCESS

Career success requires two things: a problem you want to solve and the day-to-day work and benefits you desire. Don't end up in a role you won't enjoy.

The Mistake: Relying on Others to Define Success

Don't get trapped by what other people define as success. You are the only judge that matters when it comes to your career. If you don't enjoy the day-to-day responsibilities, you won't enjoy your job, no matter how much you like the title or compensation.

The Executive-Level Approach

- Be crystal clear about what success means to you by ranking your personal priorities across job features, day-to-day work, and overall life
- Find new opportunities by exploring different problems and associated roles
- Network! Talk to people in the roles that you want to find out what their key challenges are and what they do on a day-to-day basis
- Figure out the promotion and hiring decision-making process by discovering who the decision makers are as well as their influencers and gatekeepers



2. CLARIFY YOUR UNIQUE VALUE

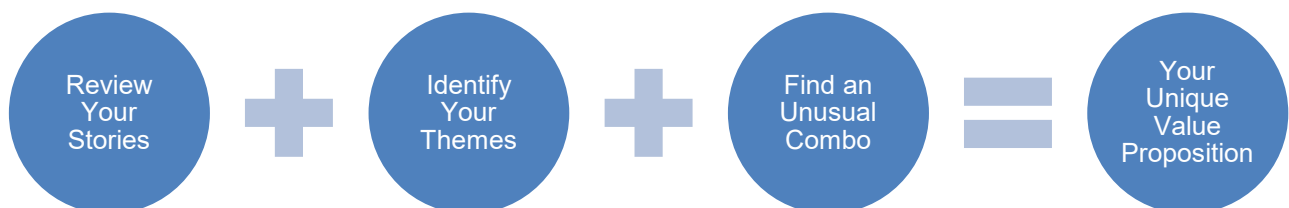
If you are not able to explain what differentiates you quickly and succinctly, you will be overlooked or ignored for new opportunities.

The Mistake: Not Differentiating Yourself

Avoid saying the same thing as everyone else. “Highly motivated”, “Great problem solver”, “Great with people” are all too common and overused. Everyone who gets into the final rounds of consideration can do the job well.

The Executive-Level Approach

- Uncover the problems you solve uniquely well by reviewing your past successes, discover patterns, and identify which will be most useful in getting your next role
- Communicate your value succinctly with a powerful, personalized professional brand, including an updated resume and LinkedIn profile
- Back up your own value by having an inventory of “go-to” stories that demonstrate your experience and expertise
- Create a widely recognized professional brand to boost your visibility



3. SHARPEN YOUR MESSAGE

If you aren't clear on what you're trying to achieve, your message will get lost, and senior executives will ignore you as they won't take time to figure out your point.

The Mistake: Relying on Details

In the world of science, details make a stronger argument, but in the executive world details often detract. Rather than focusing on “what and why”, people often focus on “how”, giving the impression that they are too in the weeds, which detracts from their executive presence.

The Executive-Level Approach

- Cut the noise out of your communications
- Focus on why the conversation matters and what needs to happen next
- Build your storytelling skills by learning different story structures
- Be prepared to adapt, such as when you get 2 minutes for your 20-minute presentation by using adaptive communication models

A Simple Executive Communication Model

Keep it Brief: What? So What? Now What?

- What? What information is most important, in what level of detail, and in what format? (email, memo, in person, etc.)
- So What? Why is it important? Why now?
- Now What? Who needs to do what, and more specifically, is there anything I (the recipient) need to do?

4. ELEVATE YOUR CONTENT

Managers and directors are there to complete deliverables, achieve goals, and run operations so executives have time to focus on higher-level topics.

The Mistake: Focusing on Delivery

Being amazing at your job does not mean you will succeed at the next level. If you talk too much about delivery, operations, incidents, and problems, people will see you operating where you are, rather than at the next level.

The Executive-Level Approach

- Be recognized for your “executive presence” by thinking like an owner, expressing your opinions, and challenging ideas
- Impress executives from other departments by understanding and solving their problems
- Inspire your team and avoid wasting time and energy by being clear on how and when you will engage and what your expectations are
- And most important, talk about topics that resonate with senior leaders:

Functional Priorities:

- Strategy
- Financials
- Risk Management
- Staff / People

Business Priorities:

- Revenue / Margin
- Roadmaps
- Business Capabilities
- Client Satisfaction

5. IMPROVE YOUR INFLUENCE

Organization-level challenges require you to get other people to do things when they don't have to listen to you, and that requires influence.

The Mistake: Making it About You

Professional development is all about improving yourself: “Speak clearly, project your voice, make eye contact”, but executive-level success needs a different mindset. Influence is not about you, it's all about them.

The Executive-Level Approach

- Quickly identify people's key motivators and use the right incentives to get them to act in a way that benefits both you and them
- Engage in the styles of your bosses so you are someone they want to listen to – use their style, not yours
- Learn about the science of influence and persuade your boss, peers, and teams to join you



6. DELIVER VIA RELATIONSHIPS

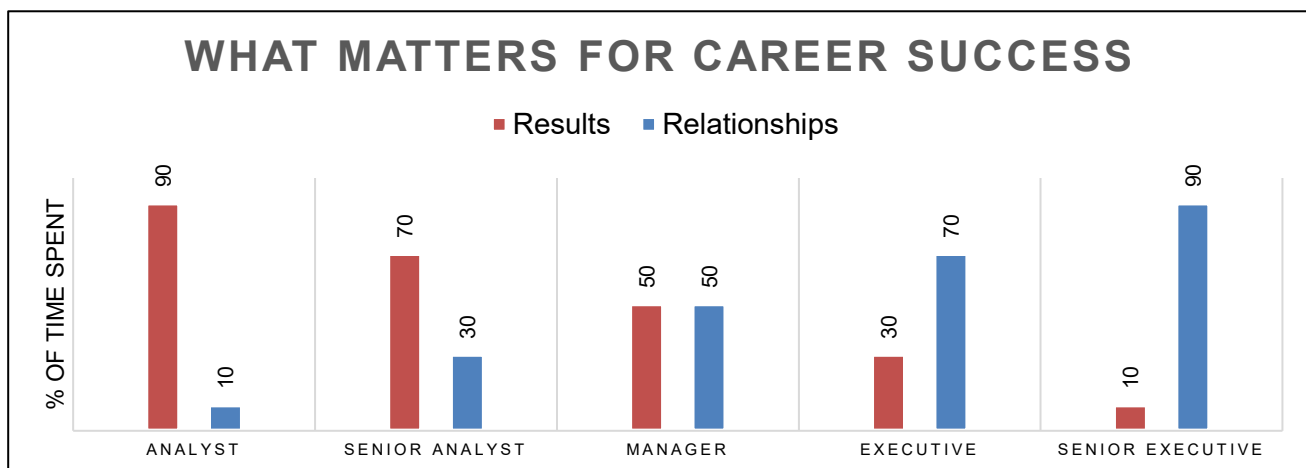
If you can't build relationships across the board and partner with your peers, you won't succeed as an executive, no matter how qualified you are.

The Mistake: Focus on What You Can Do Yourself

Avoid thinking that results are enough to get ahead at the senior levels. If you focus too much on what you and your team do, you aren't spending enough time building the broad relationships you need to deliver organizational-level value.

The Executive-Level Approach

- Realize that career results rely more and more on relationships as you move up the ladder
- Build strong relationships with *every* member of the leadership team, especially those whom you don't interact with regularly
- Differentiate yourself as a leader to your boss by initiating joint projects with your peers, and then delivering together and sharing credit



The 6 Essentials



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CLARIFY YOUR UNIQUE VALUE

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SHARPEN YOUR MESSAGE

In the executive world, details often detract. Focus on why it matters and what's next.



ELEVATE YOUR CONTENT

Being amazing at your job does not mean you will succeed at the next level. Upgrade your content.



IMPROVE YOUR INFLUENCE

Influence is not about you, it's about them. Improve your influence skills.



DELIVER VIA YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Results are not enough to get ahead at the senior levels. Focus on your relationships first.





WORK WITH ME!

My mission is to help as many Tech Leaders as I can land bigger and better roles so they can experience the fulfillment and compensation that come with it.

If you are a Tech Leader who wants to land an executive role in 6 months or less (without having to work 80-hours a week), let me show you how.

**I Want To Land
An Executive Role**

