

# Engineering Your Promotion

*What Network Pros Get Wrong About Career Growth*

# The Uncomfortable Truth

Most career talks start with “work harder, get better.” This one starts with an uncomfortable truth:

**Success isn't always earned.  
Sometimes it's given.**

You've seen it. Someone around you gets promoted and you know — you *know* — you're more technical, more experienced, more capable.

But they were seen. And you weren't.

**That's not a reason to be bitter. It's a reason to change your strategy.**

# Start with the Basics

## 1. Be great at your job

This is the floor, not the ceiling. Everything else falls apart without it — but it's just the entry fee.

## 2. Know where you want to go

You can't navigate without a destination. If you don't know the next role, you can't shape yourself toward it.

### My Story:

As a Senior Solutions Architect, management wasn't my path. My promotion wasn't coming from within my team. I had to look outside.

*Where do I actually want to go, and who's already there?*

### 3. Know who has influence

It's not always your direct manager. Map the org. Understand who makes or shapes the decisions.

### 4. Ask for the promotion

Ambiguity is your enemy. Most people hint. Few people ask. Leaders respect clarity.

### My Story:

I heard they were building a new director-level Principal Architect role. I identified the VP and reached out directly — not to pitch myself, but to understand what the role required.

*I wanted to know exactly what I needed to do to get there.*

# Make Your Work Visible

## 5. Hard work ≠ visibility

This is the myth that kills careers.

**If no one knows you're doing it, it didn't happen.**

Self-advocacy isn't bragging — it's translation.  
You're converting effort into language leadership can see.

## 6. Think in impact, not tasks

“I closed 47 tickets” = task

“I reduced response time by 40%” = impact

**Speak in outcomes. That's the language leadership uses to make decisions.**

# Build Visibility Deliberately

- ▶ Volunteer for cross-functional projects
- ▶ Present at monthly/quarterly calls
- ▶ Write about what you build
- ▶ Demo your work to the widest audience
- ▶ Post on LinkedIn
- ▶ Ask for help — collaboration = visibility

## **My Story:**

I built NetDevOps talk tracks and immediately asked to present them on our calls. Built something in the lab? Quick blog + demo.

**The key: never “look what I did” — always “here’s the impact for you.”**

## 7. Get in front of the right people

Don't hope the right people know what you're doing. Make sure they do.

## 8. Break the myth that leaders are too busy

Most leaders *want* to invest in people who ask.

### **My Story:**

Every time I was near that VP, I walked up, re-introduced myself, and talked about what I was working on. Not a hard pitch — a real conversation.

***Soft skills open the door. Impact walks you through it.***

## 9. Ask to be mentored

Find someone who is where you want to be. Most people are flattered to be asked. A mentor gives you a roadmap and someone in the room who knows your name.

## 10. Build relationships

People promote people they trust. This isn't politics — it's human nature.

### My Story:

I volunteered for larger projects across the org and asked my manager to plug me into cross-functional work. Not for credit — to build relationships with the people I wanted to be associated with.

***You can't do any of this if you're not talking to people.***

## 11. Get feedback constantly

Don't save it for year-end. More loops = faster adjustment.

## 12. When passed over, get curious

Defensiveness closes the loop. Ask what they needed to see. That feedback is a roadmap.

## 13. Track what you do in real time

Weekly bullet points. When it's time to make your case, the evidence is there.

## 14. Know your environment

Is this a healthy culture or a toxic one? A good environment is something to leverage. A toxic one is something to time your exit from.

## 15. Invest in soft skills

The person who got promoted wasn't more technical. They were more *legible* to leadership. Communication, presence, influence — these are promotable skills.

Do the work. Frame the impact. Build the relationships. Put yourself in the room.

**Your promotion isn't just earned.**  
**It's engineered.**