

YOU'VE PUT IN THE WORK. WHY HASN'T YOUR CAREER MOVED?

You've spent time learning new skills, earning certifications, and preparing for better opportunities. But your salary, responsibilities, or career options haven't changed the way you expected.

THIS WORKBOOK HELPS YOU

- 01 Examine what's keeping you in place
- 02 Identify where your existing experience already fits
- 03 Decide what deserves your attention next

MAKE YOUR NEXT CAREER MOVE COUNT

A practical career positioning workbook from Broadus Palmer · Level Up In Tech

YOU MAY BE USING THE WRONG SCOREBOARD

WHAT MOST PEOPLE TRACK

Learning progress

- Course completed
- Certification earned
- Project finished
- New skill developed



WHAT ACTUALLY CHANGES YOUR CAREER

Career movement

- Different responsibility
- Harder problems
- Better decisions
- Stronger evidence
- More valuable opportunities

Learning is important. The question is whether your learning is changing what someone could confidently put in your hands.

Which column have you been scoring yourself on? Circle it.

YOU'VE BEEN WORKING ON YOUR CAREER. SO WHY DOES IT FEEL LIKE NOTHING IS CHANGING?

You might have spent the last year preparing for a better position while handling the same responsibilities at work.

You've completed courses after hours, studied for certifications on weekends, and tried to make sense of which technical skills employers actually want.

But your responsibilities haven't changed much. You're not seeing the opportunities you expected, and you're wondering whether all that time is leading somewhere.

They aren't the only reasons careers stall, but two patterns come up again and again:

SITUATION A

You have more relevant experience than you give yourself credit for.

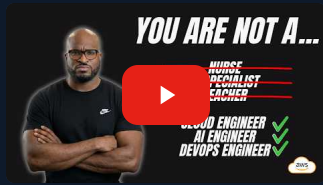
The work is there. Employers just can't see how it connects to the role you want.

SITUATION B

You're learning skills without seeing how they connect to the work.

The effort is real. It just isn't aimed at the responsibilities the role is trusted with.

Those situations need different solutions. Before you spend another six months learning something, **figure out which situation you're in.**



WATCH ME ON YOUTUBE • 9 MIN

You Have the Certs. You Have Some Projects. Why Aren't You Getting Hired?

WHERE ARE YOU STUCK?

[START HERE](#)

Pick your bottleneck below, read its playbook, and choose your first action.
Use the rest of the workbook over the next 7 days.

Which statement sounds closest to where you are right now?

pick the one that stings a little

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| ☐ I'm still unclear about the role I should be building toward. | DIRECTION
PAGE 05 |
| ☐ I know the role, but I'm not sure what I need to become good at. | FOCUS
PAGE 05 |
| ☐ I've learned a lot, but I need more experience using it. | PRACTICE
PAGE 06 |
| ☐ I have experience, but employers are not seeing the connection. | TRANSLATION
PAGE 06 |
| ☐ I'm applying, but interviews are not happening. | VISIBILITY
PAGE 07 |
| ☐ I'm getting interviews, but I'm not moving forward. | INTERVIEWING
PAGE 07 |
| ☐ I know what I need to do, but I'm struggling to stay consistent and know whether I'm doing it well. | CONSISTENCY
PAGE 08 |

Your answer tells you more than asking, “What should I learn next?” Turn to its playbook for what it means and what to do this week.

BOTTLENECK 01 DIRECTION**“I’m still unclear about the role I should be building toward.”**

Possible cause: Your learning is spread across several directions, so nothing adds up to a story an employer can hire.

CHECK THE EVIDENCE

Can you name your target role in one sentence and list three responsibilities it’s trusted with? If not, and your saved courses span cloud, security, data and AI, the evidence points here.

CHECK ANOTHER POSSIBILITY

You may know the direction but doubt you’re qualified for it. That looks like indecision, but it’s usually a Translation or Practice problem.

YOUR NEXT 7 DAYS

USE P. 10 • P. 11

Pick two candidate roles. Pull five real postings for each, circle the responsibilities that repeat, and mark the ones you’ve already done some version of.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You can name one target role and three responsibilities it’s trusted with, and you know which ones you’ve already handled.

BOTTLENECK 02 FOCUS**“I know the role, but I’m not sure what I need to become good at.”**

Possible cause: You have a destination but no priority order, so every new tool feels equally urgent.

CHECK THE EVIDENCE

Your learning list keeps growing, and you can’t say which single responsibility of your target role you’re weakest at.

CHECK ANOTHER POSSIBILITY

If you keep switching because the material is too advanced or too basic, the problem may be the resource, not your focus.

YOUR NEXT 7 DAYS

USE P. 10 • P. 14

Rank the three responsibilities from your Career Target page by how often they appear in postings and how weak you are in each. Spend this week on the top one only.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

One responsibility is clearly your priority, and everything you study this week connects to it.

BOTTLENECK 03 PRACTICE**“I’ve learned a lot, but I need more experience using it.”**

Possible cause: Your knowledge hasn’t been tested under real conditions, so you can’t yet show you can do the work.

CHECK THE EVIDENCE

Name something you built, broke and fixed without a tutorial that you’d walk an interviewer through. If the honest answer is a course project, the evidence points here.

CHECK ANOTHER POSSIBILITY

You may already have the practice and just not be showing it. If you’ve done similar work on the job, check Translation first.

YOUR NEXT 7 DAYS**USE P. 10 • P. 15**

Choose one responsibility from your target role and build a small project that performs it end to end. Write down one decision you made and why.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

One finished piece of work you can explain, including what went wrong and how you fixed it.

BOTTLENECK 04 TRANSLATION**“I have experience, but employers are not seeing the connection.”**

Possible cause: You describe the tools you used instead of the problems you were responsible for solving.

CHECK THE EVIDENCE

Show your resume to someone in your target role. If they can’t name which of their responsibilities you’ve already handled, the evidence points here.

CHECK ANOTHER POSSIBILITY

Some gaps are real. If the role needs responsibilities you haven’t handled anywhere yet, better wording won’t close them. That’s a Practice problem.

YOUR NEXT 7 DAYS**USE P. 09 • P. 11**

Choose three responsibilities from your target role. For each, write one real problem you handled, the decision you made, the result, and what’s different in the cloud.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Three written examples that connect your real work to the role, plus an honest list of what you still need to build.

BOTTLENECK 05 VISIBILITY**“I’m applying, but interviews are not happening.”**

Possible cause: Your resume isn’t communicating your relevant experience quickly enough.

CHECK THE EVIDENCE

Compare three recent applications with their postings. Are the core responsibilities visible in the first half of your resume? Can you show you’ve done comparable work?

CHECK ANOTHER POSSIBILITY

You may be applying to roles that need responsibilities you haven’t handled or shown yet. Then the fix is Practice or Translation, not more applications.

YOUR NEXT 7 DAYS

USE P. 09 • P. 10

Choose one realistic target role and strengthen two evidence-based examples in your resume. Apply selectively and track the responses.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Your resume clearly connects your real experience to the role, and you have a baseline to tell whether targeted applications do better.

BOTTLENECK 06 INTERVIEWING**“I’m getting interviews, but I’m not moving forward.”**

Possible cause: Your background gets you in the door, but you aren’t yet showing how you think through real problems.

CHECK THE EVIDENCE

Write down the last three questions you struggled with. If most began with “how would you” or “tell me about a time,” the evidence points here.

CHECK ANOTHER POSSIBILITY

If you stall mainly in hands-on technical rounds, the gap may be Practice rather than how you communicate.

YOUR NEXT 7 DAYS

USE P. 11 • P. 16

Pick one real incident you handled. Practice explaining the problem, what you checked, what you decided and the result in under two minutes. Record it once and listen back.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You can tell one incident story clearly in two minutes, and you know which question types still trip you up.

BOTTLENECK 07 CONSISTENCY

“I know what to do, but I struggle to stay consistent and know if I’m doing it well.”

Possible cause: You’re missing a regular checkpoint that shows whether your work is good enough.

CHECK THE EVIDENCE

Look at your last month. If you can’t point to one finished piece of work someone else has reviewed, the evidence points here.

CHECK ANOTHER POSSIBILITY

If you stop because you’re unsure the work matters, the root issue may be Direction or Focus. Consistency is easier when the target is clear.

YOUR NEXT 7 DAYS

USE P. 15 • P. 16

Pick one deliverable to finish this week: a lab, a diagram or a written incident explanation. Set one checkpoint with someone more experienced to review it.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

One finished deliverable and one piece of outside feedback on it.

HOW TO USE YOUR RESULT

- 1 Read your bottleneck’s playbook, then run both checks.
- 2 Do its 7-day action. Finished beats perfect.
- 3 Use the pages it points to (pages 09 to 15).
- 4 At the end of the week, fill in your Career Positioning Snapshot on page 16.

Picked more than one? Run the evidence check on each. **Start with the one where the evidence is strongest**, not the one that sounds most familiar.

WHAT GOOD POSITIONING LOOKS LIKE

Same experience in each pair. The only thing that changed is how it's described.

SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR → CLOUD ENGINEER

BEFORE

"I've worked with Active Directory, Windows Servers and network troubleshooting. Recently I've been studying AWS and Terraform."



AFTER

"I've spent years investigating infrastructure failures, restoring services and managing access to business systems. I'm now building the AWS and infrastructure-as-code skills to do the same work in cloud environments."

NETWORK ENGINEER → CLOUD NETWORK ENGINEER

BEFORE

"I've configured routers, firewalls and VPNs. I'm studying for an AWS networking certification."



AFTER

"I've spent years designing and troubleshooting the connections a business depends on, from site-to-site VPNs to firewall policy. I'm now building the AWS networking skills to do that work across cloud environments."

WHAT CHANGED

Responsibilities before tools

Lead with the problems you owned. Tools are how you solved them.

Only what you've done

Neither version claims cloud experience they don't have. Honesty is what makes it credible.

Name the gap you're closing

Saying what you're still building shows you understand the role.

YOUR AFTER VERSION

YOUR CAREER TARGET

THE ROLE I'M MOVING TOWARD

WHAT I WANT THAT MOVE TO CHANGE FOR ME

☐ Role☐ Income☐ Responsibility☐ Flexibility☐ Other _____

Looking at real roles, what are people in this position actually being **trusted to handle?**

*Responsibilities.
Not skills.*

01

02

03

Tip: pull these from three to five real job postings, not from course outlines.

WHAT YOU ALREADY BRING

Take each responsibility from your Career Target page. Then find where you have already done something related, even in a different environment.

FOR EXAMPLE

Troubleshooting infrastructure

→ Troubleshoot production, network, and user-impacting issues

Identity and access

→ Managed AD, permissions, onboarding and offboarding

Reliability

→ Responded to outages, monitored systems, handled escalations

WHAT THE ROLE REQUIRES	WHERE I'VE ALREADY DONE SOMETHING RELATED
	→
	→
	→
	→
	→

New technology does not automatically make your previous career irrelevant.

SEE IT FILLED IN

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE

CURRENT ROLE

Systems Administrator

CURRENT RESPONSIBILITY

AD permissions, network
troubleshooting, server support

TARGET

Cloud Engineer

NEW LEARNING

AWS + Terraform

FROM PAGE 10 • CAREER TARGET

Moving toward *Cloud Engineer*☒ Role ☒ Income ☒ Responsibility

- 01 *Keep production cloud systems reliable, and recover them fast when they break*
- 02 *Control who can access what across the company's AWS accounts*
- 03 *Change infrastructure safely through code, without breaking things*

FROM PAGE 11 • WHAT HE ALREADY BRINGS

Reliability	→	<i>Owned server outages and escalations</i>
Identity and access	→	<i>AD permissions, onboarding, offboarding</i>
Troubleshooting	→	<i>Network and server issues hitting users</i>

*Notice what changed:
AWS and Terraform
now have a job to do.
They serve
responsibilities he
already owns.*

B.P.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE WITH A REAL PROFESSIONAL

Stephen Cleary

TECH SUPPORT → CLOUD ENGINEER

STARTING POSITION	Working in tech support. He wanted to move up and knew he needed new skills to do it.
WHAT WASN'T WORKING	Studying on his own. The effort was there, but not the structure. He was also fighting imposter syndrome.
THE REAL GAP	Not more information. He needed a clear path to follow, then evidence that he could do the work. In workbook terms: Focus first, then Practice.
WHAT HE DID	Joined Level Up In Tech and trusted the coaches' process. When an interview didn't go the way he wanted, he built a project that addressed the gaps it exposed and showed he could learn new technology fast.
OUTCOME	Landed a Cloud Engineer role.

What to take from it: he didn't answer the gap with another course. He answered it with evidence.



HEAR IT FROM STEPHEN • 27 MIN

Level Up Legends: From Tech Support to Cloud Engineer

BEFORE YOU ADD SOMETHING ELSE

Before you buy another course or certification, answer these four questions in writing.

WHAT I'M CONSIDERING _____

- 1** What role is this supposed to help me move toward?

- 2** What responsibility will it help me become better prepared to handle?

- 3** What am I able to do after this that I cannot do today?

- 4** How will I know whether it helped my career instead of only increasing my knowledge?

If you cannot answer those questions yet, you may not have enough information to decide **whether this is your next move.**

MY DECISION ☐ Enroll ☐ Wait until I can answer all four ☐ Skip it

THE DAILY CAREER MOVEMENT CHECK

Before you finish today, ask:

DATE _____

- ☐ Did I work on something connected to the **responsibility** of the role I want?
- ☐ Did I **practice using** what I know, or did I only consume more information?
- ☐ Did I **create anything** today that could help another person understand what I can do?
- ☐ Did I **connect any of my existing experience** to the career I'm moving toward?
- ☐ Did I learn something because **my target role requires it**, or because it simply looked useful?

THE QUESTION TO REMEMBER

If I repeated today for the next 90 days,
would I expect my **career to look different?**

Yes

No

I'm not sure

circle one. be honest.

ONE THING I'LL DO DIFFERENTLY TOMORROW

MY CAREER POSITIONING SNAPSHOT

DATE _____

Everything in this workbook builds to this page. Fill it in at the end of your first 7 days, writing your answers on the lines. Notes marked Example show what a finished answer can look like.

Target role	EXAMPLE <i>Cloud Engineer</i>
My strongest existing responsibility	EXAMPLE <i>Production infrastructure troubleshooting and service restoration</i>
My suspected bottleneck	☐ Direction ☐ Focus ☐ Practice ☐ Translation ☐ Visibility ☐ Interviewing ☐ Consistency EXAMPLE <i>Translation: I'm not showing how my existing responsibilities relate to cloud roles</i>
Evidence I will create	EXAMPLE <i>Three incident examples connecting my decisions and outcomes to the role</i>
What I still need help with	EXAMPLE <i>Knowing if my examples show the level of responsibility a cloud engineer is expected to own</i>
My next 7-day action	EXAMPLE <i>Finish the three examples, compare them to job postings, and get qualified feedback</i>

Bring this page to your next step. It's the fastest way for anyone helping you to see where you are.

YOU'VE NAMED WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK. NOW LET'S WORK ON IT.

1. Keep learning with me on YouTube

[@LEVELUPINTECH →](#)

Start with the video for the bottleneck you picked. Watch it while you work on your 7-day action.

DIRECTION	 Why Cloud Engineer Roadmaps Keep Giving You Different Answers	2 MIN
FOCUS	 You're Wasting 80% of Your Time Learning Cloud Wrong	5 MIN
PRACTICE	 Learning Cloud but Still Don't Feel Job Ready?	11 MIN
TRANSLATION	 You Have the Certs. Why Aren't You Getting Hired?	9 MIN
VISIBILITY	 100 Cloud Job Applications. 0 Interviews.	1 MIN
INTERVIEWING	 This Interview Question Eliminates Cloud Career Changers	2 MIN
CONSISTENCY	 Stop Just Consuming, Start Executing	15 MIN

2. Put it into practice FREE

Join the Cloud Career Accelerator and take the **Cloud Engineer Practice Challenge**: five real AWS environments, each with something broken. Respond like it's your job. Rank to beat: Incident Commander (13+ out of 15).

[Join free on Skool →](#)

3. Want to talk about your situation?

If you're unsure where your experience fits, message me on Instagram at [@Mrlevelupintech](#). Send "Level Up In Tech" and the bottleneck you identified, and we'll start there.

Broadus