

LEADERS IN TRANSITION · INTERVIEW PREP

How to Differentiate Yourself as a Leader

Over the last year it has felt like a new round of layoffs every week — no company spared, competition for senior roles only intensifying. More than ever, leaders at interview need to differentiate, and prove they understand and can meet the specific challenges that take a business from survival to growth.

Across 112+ CMC and Quality leadership placements since 2018, the leaders who convert at interview consistently do the seven things below. The full article is at ph3.bio.

How to use this checklist

Work top to bottom as you prepare. Each block is a theme interviewers test; the moves consistently separate the leaders who land the offer from those who don't.

The checklist

01 — Leverage your network. Identify known contacts within your desired company. Request referrals and recommendations.

02 — Align with company culture. Research the stated mission and values. Ask detailed questions to uncover the real culture: What makes it unique? Can you give an example of how it's special?

03 — Understand the company's perspective. Study older annual reports and recent investor presentations. Analyze the market; identify competitors and threats. Formulate insightful questions about current challenges and future goals.

04 — Highlight your skills and achievements. Prepare specific examples that showcase your ability to overcome challenges and lead teams. Demonstrate your grasp of the company's challenges and how your experience helps. *Have your exit line ready — a calm, consistent "why I left" frees the room to focus on your impact.*

05 — Showcase problem-solving. Share examples where you led teams to solve problems and achieve results. Emphasize how you ensure team safety, motivation, and engagement.

06 — Emphasize adaptability & continuous learning. Provide examples of adapting to changing priorities. Highlight your willingness to learn and improve.

07 — Understand & convey business impact. Articulate how your leadership drives the business toward key milestones. Be ready to discuss how you achieve results efficiently while keeping teams motivated and aligned.

What good sounds like

Generic: "I'm a strong leader who improves operations and builds great teams."

Differentiated: "At my last company we were burning runway on a stalled tech transfer. I rebuilt the CDMO relationship, set a weekly joint governance cadence, and pulled the PPQ timeline in by four months — protecting the BLA filing date and roughly \$6M of avoided burn. I'd expect the same triage to apply to your ALV-100 scale-up."

Preparing for a leadership move in biotech? Phase 3 Search places the CMC, Quality, and Technical Operations leaders behind companies going from Series A to BLA and beyond — 112+ leadership placements since 2018. We know which of those roles are open before they're posted. [Talk to Phase 3 → ph3.bio/contact](#)

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