

A firefighter in silhouette is working inside a structure that is heavily engulfed in flames. The fire is bright orange and yellow, with thick smoke rising. The firefighter is wearing a helmet and appears to be using a tool, possibly a pike pole, to work on the structure. The overall scene is dramatic and intense, capturing a moment of high-stakes firefighting.

# **What's Keeping You From Getting Promoted?**

***Firehouse Central - Las Vegas, NV***

***October 2008***

***- Steve Prziborowski -***

***Battalion Chief - Santa Clara County F.D.***

A vertical photograph on the left side of the slide shows a firefighter in silhouette, wearing a helmet and gear, working inside a structure that is heavily on fire. The fire is bright orange and yellow, with thick smoke or steam rising. The firefighter appears to be using a tool, possibly a pike pole, to work on the interior of the structure.

# Your Facilitator

- Battalion Chief with the Santa Clara County (Los Gatos, CA) Fire Department
- Adjunct Faculty member with the Chabot College (Hayward, CA) Fire Technology Program
- Executive Board Member – Nor Cal Training Officers Association
- Someone with a passion for assisting personnel with promotional preparation



## Course Objectives

- **Determine reasons keeping you from getting promoted.**
- **Identify reasons others have not been promoted.**
- **Formulate a plan to take control of your destiny and be the one who gets promoted, not the one who becomes the life-long test taker.**



*Before We Go Further, You  
Must Promise To.....*

- **Take responsibility**
- **Hold yourself accountable**
- **Not blame others**
- **Prepare for the position, not just the test**
- **Honestly look at yourself**
- **Be a part of the solution!**

A firefighter in silhouette is working in a burning structure, possibly a tunnel or a large room. The scene is filled with intense orange and yellow flames, creating a dramatic and high-contrast environment. The firefighter is wearing a helmet and is positioned in the foreground, looking towards the source of the fire.

# 5 Important Things To Remember

1. I'm not here to waste your time
2. I'm here to have you leave with a better idea of what you need to focus on to get promoted.
3. You may be a part of the problem

A firefighter in silhouette is working in a burning structure, possibly a tunnel or a large room. The scene is filled with intense orange and yellow flames, and the firefighter is wearing a helmet and protective gear. The background is dark and smoky, with the fire providing the primary light source.

## 5 Important Things To Remember

4. More importantly though – you are part of the solution!
5. We have good news.....and we have bad news.....let's start with the bad news so you can learn from the mistakes of others.

A dramatic scene of a fire with a doorway in the center, where a person is visible in silhouette. The fire is intense and bright orange, with thick smoke rising. The doorway is framed by the flames, and a person is standing in the doorway, looking towards the camera. The overall atmosphere is one of danger and urgency.

What Keeps People  
From Getting  
Promoted?



## What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

### *General Reasons:*

1. Attitude and/or entitlement (they think they are owed the promotion)
2. Lack of credibility and respect from folks above and below and around you

A vertical photograph on the left side of the slide shows a firefighter in silhouette, wearing a helmet and gear, working inside a structure that is heavily on fire. Bright orange and yellow flames are visible at the top and bottom of the frame, framing the firefighter. The background is a dark, smoky interior.

What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

## *Two Reasons People Fail*

1. They are nervous
2. They are unprepared

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What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

*However, We Need To Go  
Deeper Than That & Focus On*

- Promotional Process Items
- Professional / Career Items
- Personal / Family / Off-Duty Items

What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

*Reason #1*

**Promotional  
Process  
Related Items**

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## What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

### *Inability To:*

- Meet minimum qualifications
- Complete application
- Follow instructions throughout process
- Pass all phases of the process
- Prioritize what is really important
- Make decisions
- Adequately solve problems



## What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

### *Inability To:*

- Think “big-picture”
- Demonstrate command presence
- Calm your emotions
- Present yourself professionally
- Understand the dimensions you’re being evaluated on
- Understand what you’re really getting yourself into

## What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

### *Inadequate knowledge:*

- Of the big three items all officers need to be subject matter experts in:
  1. Building Construction
  2. Fire Behavior
  3. Strategy/Tactics



A vertical image on the left side of the slide shows a firefighter in silhouette, wearing a helmet and gear, working inside a structure that is heavily on fire. The scene is dark with bright orange and yellow flames and smoke. The firefighter is positioned in the lower-left foreground, looking towards a larger opening in the structure where more fire is visible.

## What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

### *Inability To:*

- Focus on the position itself, spending too much time on trying to figure out the promotional process
- Understand the entire job description of the position
- Properly delegate
- Demonstrate leadership ability

# What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

## *Inadequate*

- Planning skills
- Time management skills
- Oral communication skills
- Written communication skills



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What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

*Last, But Not Least -*  
*Inability To:*

- Take constructive criticism from your evaluators or your administrative staff during or after the process

What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

*Reason #2*

**Professional /  
Career Related  
Items**

# What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

## Lack Of:

- Formal education
- Department involvement
- Community involvement
- Training & Education
- Experience
- “Well rounded” experience
- “Life” experience

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## What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

### *Inability To:*

- Follow instructions throughout your career
- Set or follow through with professional goals
- Build good working relationships with your co-workers, supervisors, union officials, community, subordinates



What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

*Having A History Of:*

- Starting & not completing projects, classes, etc.
- Discipline problems throughout your career
- Being tardy or absent excessively
- Not being open to others, regarding your interest/desire to get promoted

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## What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

### *Having A History Of:*

- Being a part of the problem, not the solution
- Getting involved in department related functions – but only to build your resume
  - Don't forget.....it's not the quantity that counts....it's the quality of your time, effort, and involvement!!!!



## What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

### *A Thought:*

- The best predictor of future behavior.....is past behavior!
- Yes, people can and do change,
  - but it may be an uphill,
  - if not next to impossible battle to do so and prove to others you have changed

# What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

## Reason #3

**Personal /  
Family / Off-  
Duty Related  
Items**

## What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

### *On-Going History Of:*

- Problems that bleed into the workplace:
  - Personal / family medical problems
  - Financial problems
  - Second job problems
  - Guilt from not spending enough time with family
  - Life in general



# What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

## *Family Commitment*

### *Problems:*

- Lack of time to prepare for the position & promotional process
- Lack of time to get involved with your department (on and off-duty)
- Lack of time to get involved with your community




# What Keeps People From Getting Promoted?

## *Family Commitment*

### *Problems:*

- Family members unable to realize it's a full-time job getting promoted
- Inability to have support and by-in from family to prepare for and participate in a promotional exam



A photograph of a fire scene. In the background, several firefighters wearing helmets and gear are visible, working near a structure that is heavily engulfed in bright orange and yellow flames. The foreground is dominated by the intense fire, with thick smoke and bright light emanating from the burning area. The overall scene is dramatic and chaotic, capturing the aftermath of a major fire.

**Now onto the good  
news – what can  
we learn from all  
of that?**



**The Promotional  
Candidate's  
Action Plan**



## The Promotional Candidate's Action Plan

### *5 To-Do Items:*

1. Look in the mirror
2. Communicate (more listening than talking)
3. Take charge of your destiny
4. Don't fall into the traps
5. Prepare for the position!

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## The Promotional Candidate's Action Plan

### Item #1:

### Look In The Mirror

- Find out which of the previously mentioned items apply to you
  - Yes, it's a long list
  - Some may or may not apply to you
  - Nobody said it was going to be easy



## The Promotional Candidate's Action Plan

### Item #2:

### Communicate

- Talk to folks in & above positions you aspire to
  - Get constructive criticism / feedback
  - Encourage them to be brutally honest
  - Ask them for their opinions; where do you go from here?
  - Be careful what you ask for!

Item #3:

Take Charge of Your Destiny

- From this point on:
  - Stop blaming others
  - Take responsibility
  - Be accountable....for your actions and your future!
- Only you can get promoted!
- It's amazing what a positive attitude can do for someone





## The Promotional Candidate's Action Plan

### Item #3:

### Take Charge of Your Destiny

- Be the go-to person on your department and from outside of your department
- Continue / Resurrect / Expand your education, training and experience
- Build / Rebuild / Maintain credibility and respect from other department members

Item #3:

Take Charge of Your Destiny

- Don't abandon your current position
- Be the best darn \_\_\_\_\_ (current position) you can be!
- Have your own vision and plan of what you will do when you are in the rank you aspire to



## The Promotional Candidate's Action Plan

### Item #4:

### Don't Fall Into The Traps

- Do not let yourself get:
  - Frustrated
  - Bitter
  - Resentful
  - Angry
  - Negative
  - Immature
  - Discouraged
  - Unprofessional...at any time!





## The Promotional Candidate's Action Plan

### Item #4:

### Don't Fall Into The Traps

- Let go of your baggage!
- Not doing so will only confirm the concerns others may have about you and your ability to become a positive role model and poster child for the position you aspire to!
- Prove others wrong about any negative perceptions they may have of you

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## The Promotional Candidate's Action Plan

### Item #5:

### Prepare for the Position!

- As opposed to just the testing process
- Put yourself in that position every day
- Consider preparing for one rank above at the same time



**Closing  
Thoughts:**

## What is keeping you from getting promoted?

- It isn't easy getting promoted, especially if you're finding yourself to be a:
  - Continuous test taker or....
  - Someone who keeps getting passed over by the person doing the promoting



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## What is keeping you from getting promoted?

- There are typically some obvious reasons (hopefully not illegal or unethical ones) why you are not getting promoted.
- Hopefully the folks around and above you can “open up your eyes” to what you need to do.

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## What is keeping you from getting promoted?

- Realize, once your eyes have been opened, and the light has come on, your goal should be to prove them wrong through your actions and performance.
- If all else fails, maybe consider going to another department.
- The ball is in your court....what are you going to do with it????



- Thank you very much for your time and your willingness to be here
- I wish you the best in your future promotional processes!
- We want this next promotional process to be the last one – and for you to get promoted!
- Any questions?????

A firefighter in silhouette is working inside a structure that is heavily on fire. The firefighter is wearing a helmet and is positioned in the foreground, looking towards the interior of the burning structure. The background is filled with bright orange and yellow flames, creating a dramatic and intense scene.

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