

Breaking the "5 Years Experience" Barrier

Ever found the perfect job only to see "Must have 5+ years in [specific tech]"?

As a seasoned project manager, you know PM skills are universal across technologies.

Here's how to land that job even when you don't check every box.

 **by Kimberly Wiethoff**



Why Companies Fixate on Tech Experience

1 Easy Filtering

Companies use specific tech requirements to filter candidates in ATS systems, even if it's not a true success indicator.

2 Assumed Faster Onboarding

They believe onboarding will be quicker with tool familiarity, though strong PMs adapt rapidly.

3 Misunderstanding PM Skills

Many don't realize PM skills are technology-agnostic, focusing on leadership and execution.



Highlight Transferable Skills

Reframe Your Experience

"I've successfully led large-scale cloud transformation projects, including Azure migrations, and the same principles apply to AWS."

Focus on Implementation Skills

"While I haven't managed Guidewire implementations, I have led multiple enterprise software rollouts."

Emphasize Leadership

Show that technology is just a tool—what matters is your ability to lead people, processes, and strategy.



Focus on Business Outcomes

Instead of Saying

"I haven't worked with AWS before."

"I don't have experience with Workday."

Say This Instead

"I led cloud transformation projects that improved efficiency by 20% and reduced costs by \$1M."

"I managed enterprise HR system implementations, ensuring seamless adoption and data integrity."

Start resume bullet points with business impact first, then tie it to the technology.

Leverage Cross-Functional Leadership



Engineer Collaboration

Highlight how you've worked effectively with technical specialists to execute projects.



System Transitions

Emphasize experience leading teams through new system rollouts and migrations.



Risk Management

Showcase your handling of risk, stakeholder expectations, and change management.





Demonstrate Continuous Learning

Take Relevant Courses

Complete AWS Cloud Practitioner or Azure Fundamentals training to show initiative.

Get Adjacent Certifications

Earn certifications in technology-adjacent skills like FinOps or Cybersecurity.

Complete Platform Badges

Finish Trailhead badges for Salesforce or intro courses on Workday or Guidewire.



Bypass ATS Filters

1

Connect Directly

Reach out to hiring managers on LinkedIn to express interest beyond the job posting.

2

Seek Referrals

Ask for recommendations from current employees, as companies prioritize internal referrals.

3

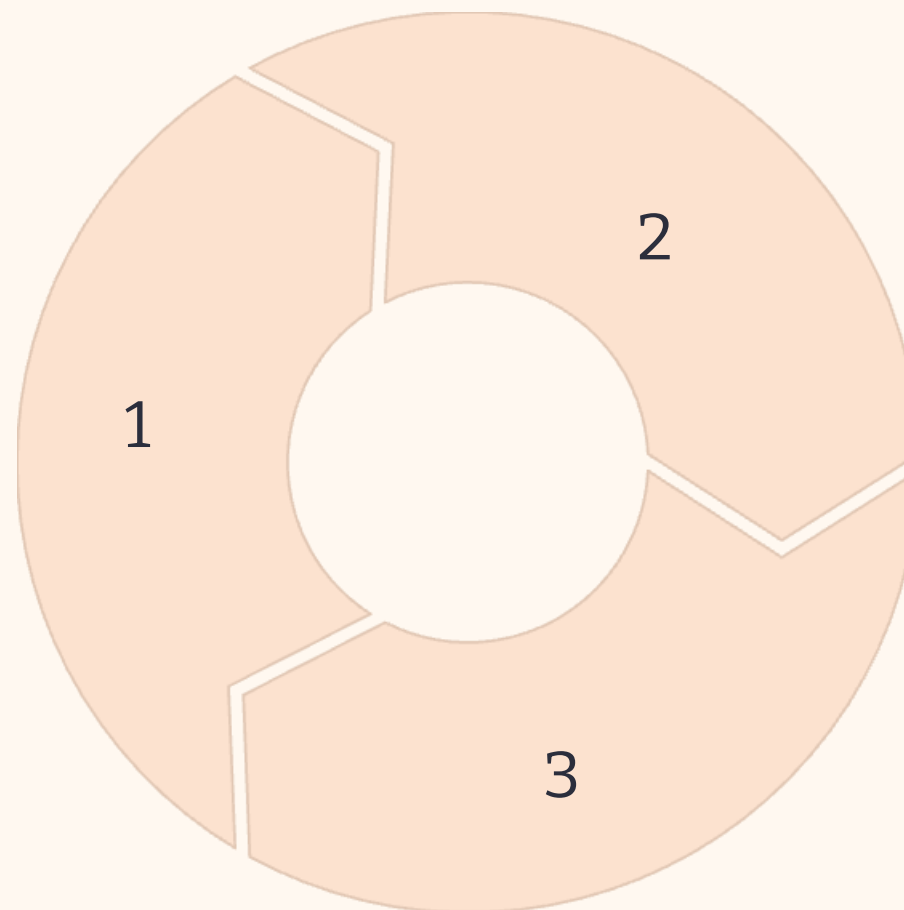
Engage Recruiters

Explain to recruiters how your experience aligns, even without checking every box.

Craft Your LinkedIn Outreach

Hi [Hiring Manager], I came across the [Senior PM Role] and am very interested. I've successfully led cloud transformation projects in Azure and have a strong background in Agile program management. I'd love to chat about how my expertise in driving large-scale IT initiatives aligns with your team's needs. Can we connect?

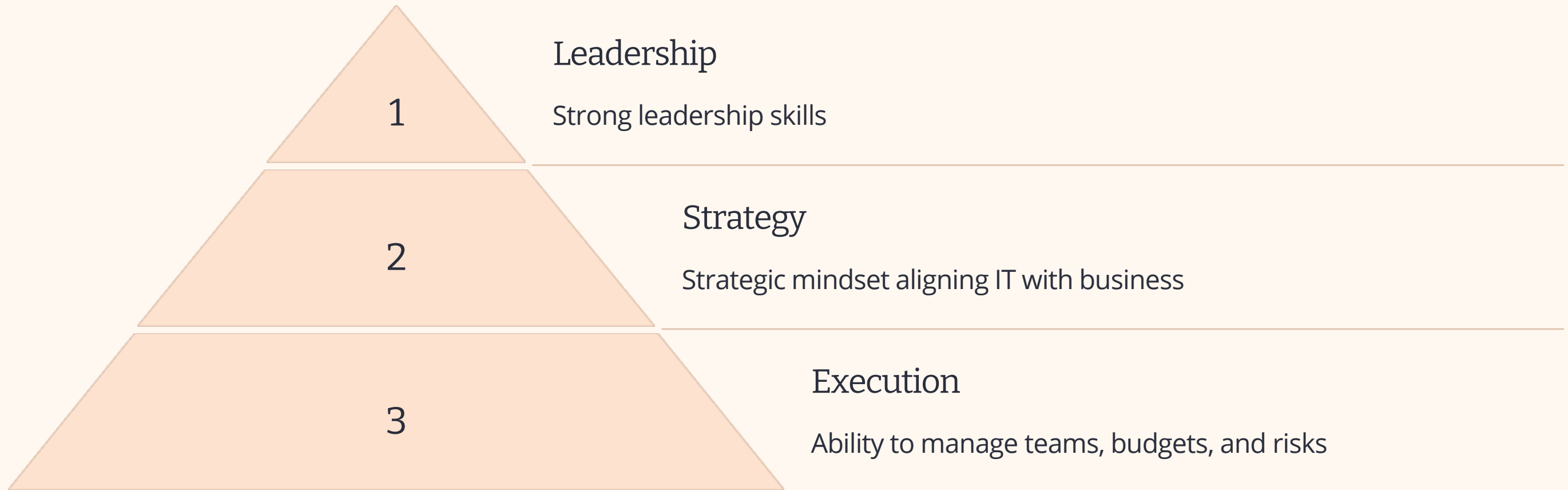
Show Interest
Mention the specific role that caught your attention.



Highlight Relevance
Briefly note your most relevant experience.

Request Connection
Ask for a conversation about alignment with their needs.

You Are More Than a List of Technologies



Companies that only hire based on years in specific tech miss out on great leaders.

Don't let a missing keyword stop you from applying.

Take Action Today

1

Reframe Your Experience

Focus on outcomes and transferable skills in your resume and cover letter.

2

Build Knowledge

Take a quick course in the required technology to show initiative.

3

Network Directly

Bypass ATS by connecting with hiring managers and seeking referrals.

Don't let "5 years experience" requirements hold you back from your perfect role.

