



Video Transcript

## Executive Interview Questions: Wisdom from a Legendary VC

I'm Dave Arnold of Arnold Partners, and here are some questions that a great venture capitalist asks his potential executive candidates.

I recently I sat down with one of the all-time great venture investors. I have had the pleasure of working with him on five successful CFO searches and now a board search. This guy knows how to spot talent. Here's what I learned.

**Track record:** The first thing he looks for is track record. Has this person picked winning companies? What is their contribution within those winning companies? If they do have a company that didn't work out on their resume, that's probably OK, but if there's a whole string of companies that haven't worked out on one executive's resume, it's game over.

**Biggest success and biggest failure:** It's the failure question that he is honing in on. If the candidate can't be totally honest with him about a failure right in the first meeting, they're going to get sent down.

**The third thing he looks for is preparation:** Has the executive candidate shown up at the meeting with great questions, strategic questions about the company at hand? If they haven't, they're probably not going to get hired.

**My biggest take-away from my meeting: he doesn't rely on the interview itself.** He doesn't trust his own great judgement to make a hire. What he relies on is reference checking: on-list and off-list references. He says anybody can fool anyone in a one-hour meeting. If you're thinking about hiring an executive, or anybody for that matter, be sure to do thorough reference checking, both on-list and off-list.

Happy searching!

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