

TRANSITIONING FROM IC TO LEADER

THE MINDSET SHIFT

Focus Area	Individual Contributor Mindset	Emerging Leader Mindset
Ownership	"I own my code and my tasks."	"I own outcomes – even if others deliver them."
Problem-Solving	"How do I fix this?"	"Who's best positioned to fix this, and how can I support them?"
Communication	Shares updates when asked.	Proactively communicates to align, unblock, and inspire.
Impact	Measures success by individual speed and quality.	Measures success by team clarity, velocity, and learning.
Recognition	Relies on results to speak for themselves.	Ensures wins are visible and shared across the team.
Time Management	Focused on personal productivity.	Balances execution with coaching, prioritization, and decision-making.
Decision-Making	Optimizes for technical precision.	Optimizes for trade-offs that align with strategy and team capacity.
Identity	Pride comes from being the expert.	Pride comes from helping others become experts.
Response to Pressure	Speeds up and takes on more.	Slows down, delegates, and thinks systemically.
Learning	Focused on technology mastery.	Focused on mastering people, systems, and influence.

NAVIGATING THE TRANSITION

1. Redefine progress.

Progress no longer means lines of code or completed tickets. It means clarity, trust, and momentum created for others. Learn to celebrate that invisible work.

2. Balance depth with presence.

You'll still need technical depth, but your real leverage comes from awareness – noticing when to zoom in and when to step back.

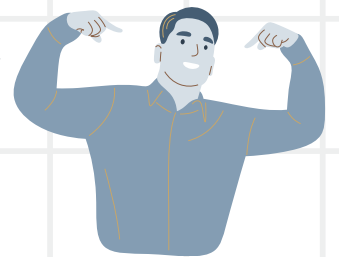
3. Reflect weekly.

Ask yourself: "Where did I lead this week – even without being asked?" That question alone builds intentionality faster than any promotion plan.

6 PRACTICAL TIPS

KEEP A "BRAG DOC"

Track your achievements and impact so your growth story is clear when opportunities arise.



PRACTICE FACILITATING MEETINGS



Turn scattered discussions into focused decisions and show you can lead with clarity.

COMMUNICATE YOUR AMBITION

Make your leadership goals explicit and align on a concrete growth plan with your manager.



MENTOR A JUNIOR OR CROSS-TEAM



Help others grow to demonstrate influence, empathy, and scalable impact.

CREATE VISIBLE TECHNICAL IMPACT

Improve a critical system and communicate its measurable value across the company.



BUILD YOUR EXTERNAL IDENTITY



Share lessons publicly to grow confidence, visibility, and credibility as a future leader.

