

The Field Guide For the Accidental Manager

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What Are We Talking About?

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01

Introduction

Who Am I – What Is My Story



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- Advisory Lead in Technology & Experience at West Monroe
- Developing software (and an occasional DBA) since 2011
- Most experience is with Microsoft technologies, specifically .NET and SQL Server
- Ice hockey referee (USA Hockey and DIU) – ask me how much I enjoy the offseason!



How Did I Get Here?



I'm going to be an engineer!



I'm an engineer!
Not a manager!



I'm an engineer! But I guess
I'll manage projects...



I'm a manager, but I still
write code...sometimes...



I'm a manager! I don't
need to write code!



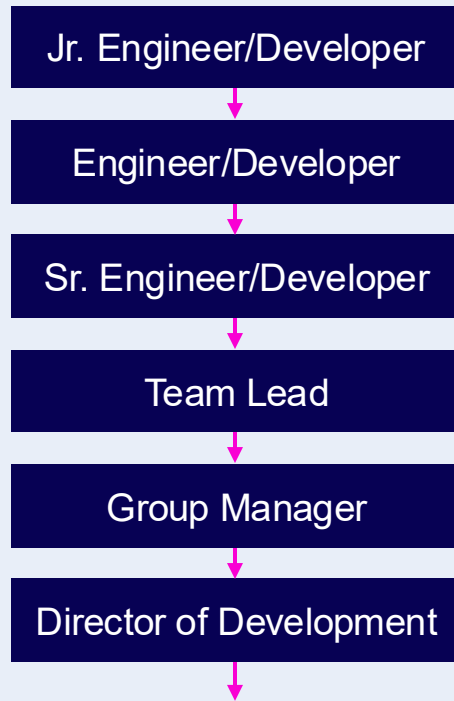
02

Planned vs. Unplanned

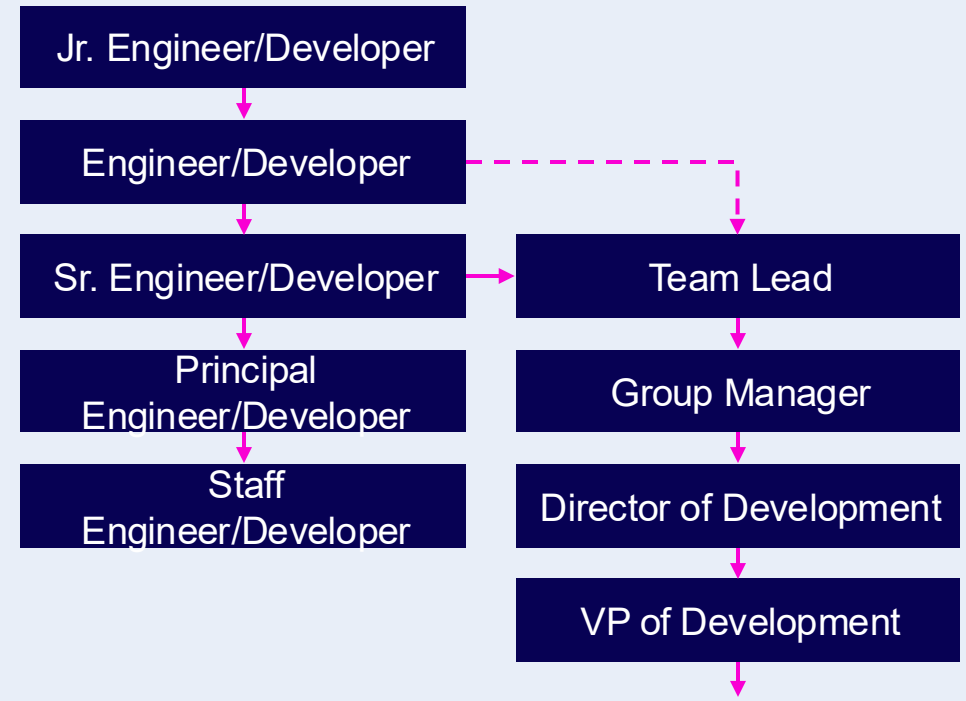
When Career Choices Are Made For Us

The Career Model

“BAD” ORGANIZATIONS



“GOOD” ORGANIZATIONS



**How many of you are in organizations
that force a promotion to
management?**

Planning Your Career

PROACTIVE

- You know where you want to go and what you want to achieve
- You are familiar with your organization's career model and how your goals align with it
- You seek out opportunities for growth
- You know when to switch jobs

PASSIVE

- You don't know what you want
- You don't know your organization's career model
- You let opportunities come to you
- You stay in jobs too long

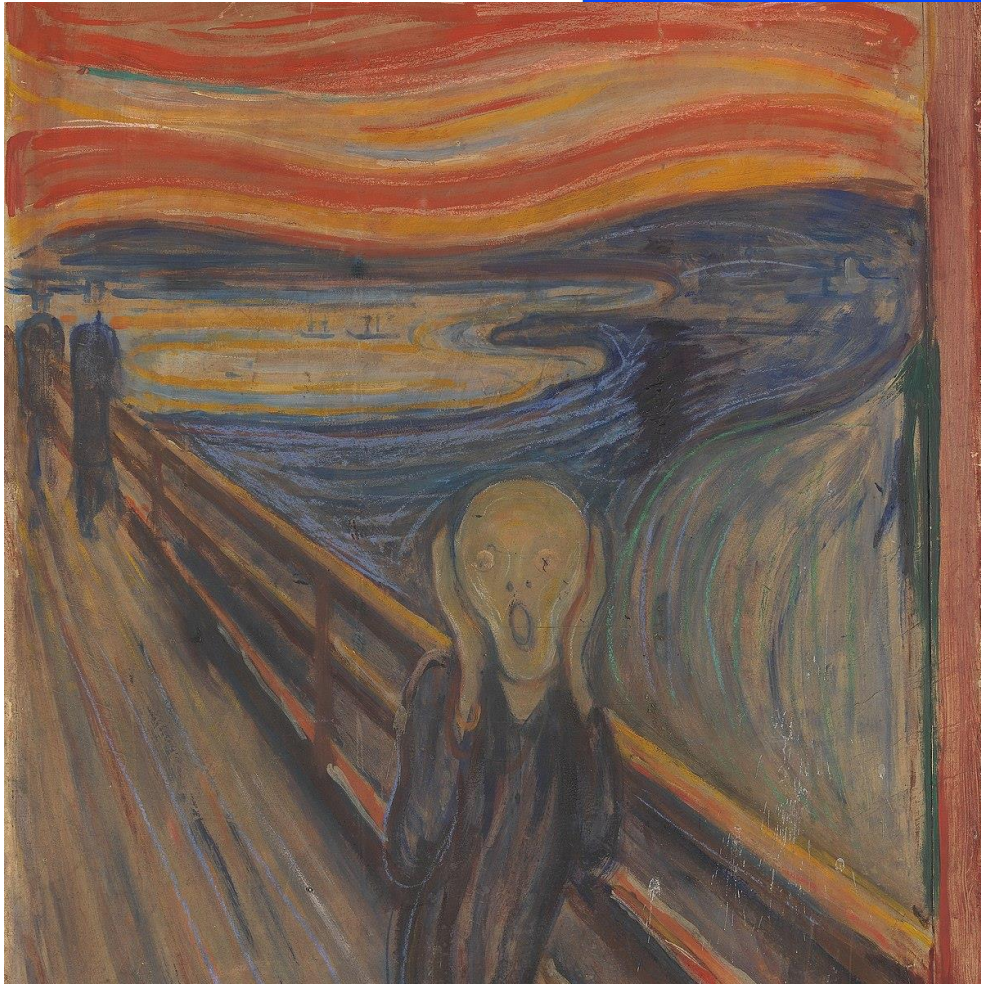
**This means you might have to
switch jobs to ensure your goals
are met**



03

Where To Start As A New Manager

What To Do
What Not To Do



**It's your first day as a manager
– now what?**

What Should You Do First (and Second and...)

01	ALIGN WITH YOUR MANAGER	Make sure you and your manager have the same understanding about what your team needs
02	MEET WITH YOUR PEOPLE	Even if it was your team, meet with everyone to understand what they would like to see changed (and what they want to keep the same)
03	MEET WITH YOUR PEERS	Talk to your peer managers and get their take on what they see as your team's biggest priority
04	REVIEW REVIEWS	Take a look to see how the team has graded out – you might be surprised
05	PLAN YOUR CALENDAR	Schedule 1:1's, team meetings, mandatory deadlines, and get added to management meetings – don't forget to add blocks on your time, too (like lunch)
06	TAKE NOTES	Take lots of notes, on everything

What Shouldn't You Do

Change
everything!!!

What Shouldn't You Do

Change Everything

- It's not all broken (hopefully)
- Your team is already dealing with major upheaval
- Give it a few months

Prejudge Team Members

- People may surprise you (good, bad, otherwise)
- Your impressions do not always fit reality

Sit Back

- It is easy to get comfortable sitting in the background
- Your team will be looking for active management

Change Yourself

- You are who you are, and it is why you arrived in a management position
- Your team will have met one version of you – don't change that on them

Judge Yourself Too Harshly

- You will mess up, and you will make bad decisions – it's okay
- The first few months will be the hardest – you will have a sense of “what am I even doing here”

Ignore Training

- If your organization offers it, go to trainings
- If not, talk with your manager – the required skill set is much wider than as an individual contributor

What About Coaching And Mentoring?

Coaching and/or mentoring will be required to ensure team success

But it is often omitted from training courses, especially at the IC level

Follow these basics:

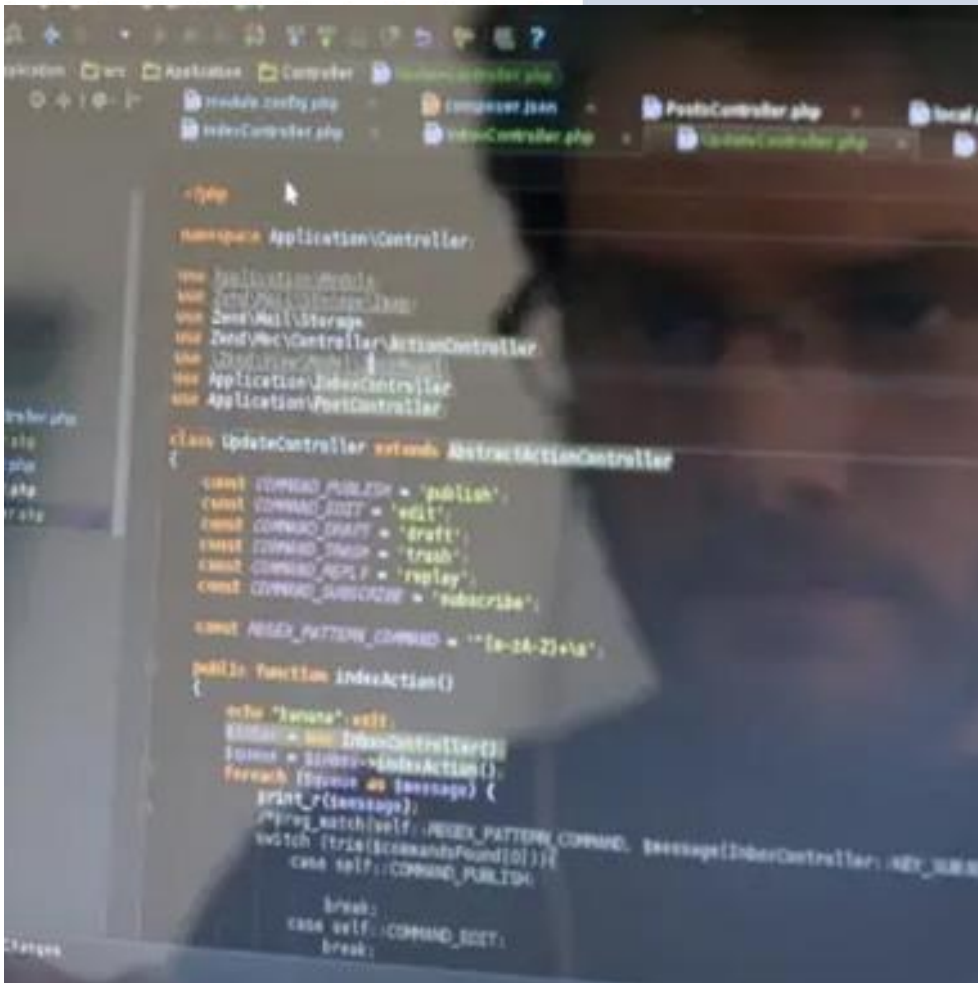
1. Understand and respect their background – check your pre-conceived notions at the door
2. Engage on a personal level – you are *not* friends, but you should know something about your people and make sure they feel included
3. Check for understanding – what makes sense to us may not make sense to other people
4. Be honest but not hurtful – constructive feedback is very useful



04

Differences From Individual Contributor Roles

Writing Code Is No Longer Your (Only) Day Job



As an Individual Contributor (IC), your primary (and sometimes only) job is to write code



**Management can sometimes
feel more like this**

Your Time Is No Longer (Only) Yours

Humans work best uninterrupted

Context switching is very expensive for a human

You will be interrupted

And it may not be at the most convenient time

Your new normal

As a manager of people, this is the biggest change from IC roles (and can be hard to learn to handle)

Take a breath

It is natural to be frustrated at being interrupted – take a breath and then answer the question – whatever you do, do *not* bite their head off

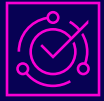
Build independence

You must handle some requests (e.g., for time off), but for others, work on empowering your more senior team members to handle requests

Coding? What's That?

- As a manager, writing code is often a luxury
- Many organizations do not expect managers to write code
- You should continue to be involved in code review
- If it is important to you, you will find the time to do more (but don't ignore your team for it)

Administrivia – Or “What’s a Budget”



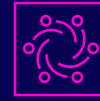
REVIEW CYCLES

- Annual reviews – be sure to carve out time
- Plan your feedback to employees
- Pay attention to deadlines and set expectations appropriately



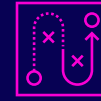
BUDGETS AND COMP

- Ask your manager what budgets and signing authority you have
- Be sure to respect limits and *always* inform your manager of spend
- Work with HR on comp – don’t do it by yourself



HIRING

- Work with HR to develop a role description
- Insist on reviewing resumes yourself or working with HR to develop a rubric
- Involve your team in interviewing candidates
- No one bats 1.000



STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Beyond one sprint, or even one quarter, you will need to think strategically
- As a lower-lever manager, a one-year horizon is usually sufficient – this increases as you advance

05

How To Go Back

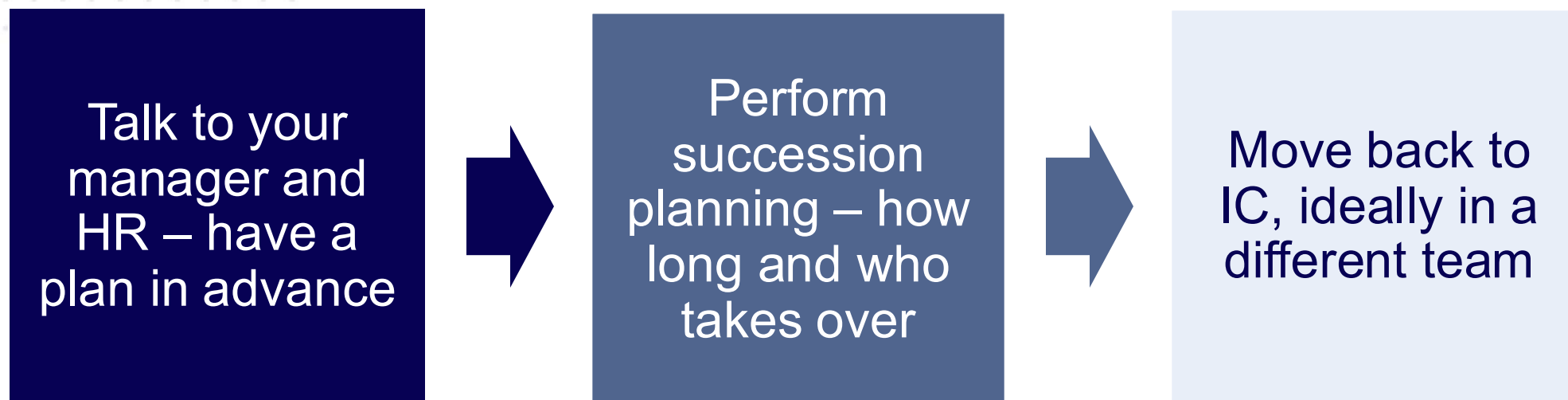
What If You Don't Want To Be a Manager Anymore?

What If It's Just Not Working?

1. First, ask yourself why you feel the way you do
2. Second, talk to your peers, your manager (if it's safe), and your outside advisors
3. Avoid talking to your team, at least until the decision is made
4. Be **honest** with yourself!



What Does the Process Look Like?



**Sometimes, you will have to
change companies to effect the
change you need**



06

Questions

What Didn't I Cover You Wanted Me To?



Thank You!

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