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Promoted From Peer To Leader? 17 Ways To Make A Smooth Transition



Forbes Coaches Council COUNCIL POST | Membership (fee-based)
Leadership

POST WRITTEN BY

Forbes Coaches Council

Top business and career coaches from **Forbes Coaches Council** offer firsthand insights on leadership development & careers.

Congratulations, you've been promoted! All your late nights, big ideas and hard work have finally paid off, and your supervisor has entrusted you with the responsibility of leading a team.

As exciting as this time may be, many first-time leaders fail to consider the fact that they are now a step above their former peers, and may be directly in charge of people who were once at their same level. This shift has the potential to negatively impact the team dynamic with resentment and hurt feelings – but it doesn't have to be that way, with the right leadership strategies.

Members of **Forbes Coaches Council** shared their best advice for new leaders to help make a smooth transition from peer to manager.

Members of Forbes Coaches Council discuss how to effectively lead a team you were once a part of.
PHOTOS COURTESY OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

1. Hold One-On-One Meetings

Help people ease into the transition by having one on one meetings with the new team members. Lay out the vision for the team and seek input from each person. Understand their desires, frustrations and expectations. Gain their trust with inclusivity. Use your insider knowledge of people's pain points to alleviate those concerns now that you are a step closer to the decision makers. -[Gia Ganesh, Gia Ganesh Coaching](#)

2. Set Your Boundaries

People who go from buddy to boss tend to treat their team like friends. Set clear expectations from the start. As peers, you would go out for happy hours, but now as manager, you should only stay for one drink or simply not go. Avoid gossip and water cooler conversations. Remain highly approachable, but show through your behavior that you are now their manager. You can be friendly without being a friend. - [Loren Margolis, Training & Leadership Success LLC](#)

3. Keep Your Peers In The Loop

Many people fear being promoted and worry about how they would handle peers when they become subordinates. This is a fallacy. They were peers before, and if you are to succeed, they need to stay as that. They need to understand your role has changed, so recruit them in helping you transition. Connect more and send the ego for an errand. - [Magdalena Bak-Maier, Make Time Count Ltd](#)

4. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Be available, empathize and listen intently to what is in your former peer's hearts. A change in their status and way of relating to you has undergone radical change, and the uncertainty can be emotionally stressful. Let them know you have their back and that your relationship matters. Communicate your vision, ask for input and follow up with how their input made a difference for you. - [Lori Darley, Conscious Leaders LLC](#)

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5. Think About Your Influence

[John Maxwell](#) says, "Leadership is all about influence, nothing more, nothing less." Work hard at what you do. Those around you will see it and you will gain influence. Influence cannot be mandated. It must be earned. Don't fall into being a manager; become a leader. - [MaryAnne Gillespie, Red Apple Coaching](#)

6. Find Your First Follower

Your team isn't going to emulate you. Your team will take their cues from your first follower. How does your first follower challenge you and support you? This first follower will be your greatest advocate during the storming phase that will certainly come as you transition from peer to boss. This will be your greatest opportunity to have a team of courageous followers. - [Dean Miles, Bridgepoint Coaching & Strategy Group](#)

7. Share The Success

No one makes progress without help and collaboration from others. It's important to acknowledge your co-workers who have been part of your success journey. Acknowledge them publicly, if possible. This helps to establish your brand as an authentic leader who appreciates collaboration, colleagues and employees. - [Barbara OMalley, Exec Advance LLC](#)

8. Be Confident

You're getting the new role for a reason. You're good. You bring things to the table that will help you be an amazing leader. Your team needs you to move forward confidently while making it clear to them you value their engagement to create something great. Trust them to contribute. Help them

play to their strengths. Do what you uniquely can do and allow them to own their unique roles as well. - [Tim Ressmeyer, Ressmeyer Partners](#)

9. Set Clear Expectations

When transitioning roles to leading your peers, set expectations as their new leader. Open and transparent dialogue is key. Keep the language and feedback real. Understand how your peers like to be coached and set your expectations on how you'd like to be coached. - [Joyel Crawford, Crawford Leadership Strategies](#)

10. Empower Your People

Moving from peer to management means you probably know a lot about what's unpopular inside the group. This opens a tremendous opportunity for you to showcase your leadership skills. Meet one-on-one with your team and truly listen to their ideas and complaints. Empower them to come up with and/or champion solutions. The more you allow your team to shine, the more you shine as a manager. - [Lucie Yeomans, YourCareerAlly.com/Sick Resumes](#)

11. Get In The Trenches With Them

Even as you lead the ranks, don't forget that you are still a part of the ranks. Leadership does not negate you from getting in the trenches with those you lead. Your peers need to be able to see you lead and still know that you relate to them. You don't have to prove yourself. You received the promotion for a reason. Own it. - [Maleeka T. Hollaway, The Official Maleeka Group, LLC.](#)

12. Learn How To Develop Expertise In Others

You're often promoted above your peers because of your exceptional expertise, but now is the time you must begin to let that expertise go. Your role now is to develop critical thinking and leadership among your former peers. Have conversations with your direct reports to understand how you

can be most effective in supporting them in their success as experts and becoming future leaders. - [Jenn Lofgren, Incito Consulting](#)

13. Re-Introduce Yourself In The New Role

Set the reset button to help people get to know you as their leader. Share things your team may not know, like how your background has formed your values, how you define high performance, pet peeves or how your directs can best let you know if they disagree with you. Open it up to questions at the end. Be open and transparent, while confidently sharing your leadership style and strengths. - [Bonnie Davis, Destination Up](#)

14. Tap Into A Strong Support Network

As you transition into a new role, your relationships will change. It is important to have strong thought partners (who are not your current peers) who can help you think through the challenges you will face. During this transition, you will also recast your existing relationships. It is important for your peers to understand you value them and how you see the transition and ask for their input. - [Maureen Metcalf, Metcalf & Associates, Inc](#)

15. Don't Make It Awkward

The more natural you are about the promotion, the easier the transition. Remember, it is only awkward if you make it feel that way, so be empathetic to everyone involved and communicate! Get your colleagues' buy-in and be authentic and transparent with your former peers consistently. Ask for feedback and bring the team along with you. - [Tanya Ezekiel, CareerCoach.com](#)

16. Become A Better Servant

So many people try to become a leader after being bestowed a title. Even in the military, we saluted the rank but gained confidence in others by how we treated people and served others. Being in charge means more responsibility

and more service to others, not less service and more authority over others. If you gain authority, then become a bigger blessing to those who you serve.
- [John O'Connor, Career Pro Inc.](#)

17. Capitalize On Your Established Relationships

Like every business relationship, people love to work with others they know, like and trust. Why would that change now, with your new title? Let go of hierarchical designations and capitalize on the solid and established relationships you've already developed in ways that those who now work for you want to help you succeed! - [Carol Egan, Immersion Health](#)



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