

# Are you operating as a HI-C?

A five-dimension self-assessment

A High-Impact Individual Contributor (HI-C) is a senior professional with no direct reports who carries work from hypothesis to measurable business outcome end to end, staffing the adjacent functions — design, engineering, data, copy, go-to-market — with AI rather than with a team. Where a traditional individual contributor owns one slice of a workflow, a HI-C owns the whole outcome.

Score yourself 1 to 5 on each dimension below. 1 means the lower-end description fits you today; 5 means the higher-end one does. There is no passing total — the point is to see where the distance is largest, because that is where the next move lives.

## 01 End-to-end ownership

Can you take a problem from framing to a shipped, measured outcome?

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1 — LOWER END

Owns a defined slice; depends on others to close the loop.

5 — HIGHER END

Owns the outcome, including the parts nobody assigned.

## 02 Adjacent-function coverage

How many neighbouring disciplines do you staff yourself with AI?

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1 — LOWER END

Deep in one craft; files tickets for everything else.

5 — HIGHER END

Produces acceptable-quality design, code, copy, analysis and go-to-market without waiting for a specialist.

## 03 Judgment under uncertainty

How good are your calls where there is no correct answer?

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1 — LOWER END

Executes well against a defined spec.

5 — HIGHER END

Sets the spec. This is the dimension AI does not supply, and the reason the role stays senior.

## 04 Own distribution

Can you reach an audience or a decision-maker without organisational permission?

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1 — LOWER END

Reach is granted by title and org chart.

5 — HIGHER END

Has a direct channel — writing, community, network, reputation — that survives changing employer.

# 05 Decision autonomy

How far can you travel before you need approval?

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1 — LOWER END  
Most consequential calls route upward.

5 — HIGHER END  
Operates inside an explicit mandate with clear boundaries and few gates.

# Reading your result

## Find your lowest score, not your total.

A HI-C is not someone who maxes every dimension. It is someone with no dimension left at 1 or 2 — because a single weak one caps the whole. The lowest number is your next 90 days.

## Judgment is the one AI does not supply.

If your low score is judgment under uncertainty, no tool closes it. That gap is closed by making more decisions where there is no correct answer, and checking them against outcomes. Everything else on the list, AI can help staff.

## Distribution is the slowest to build and the most durable.

If reach is your gap, start now — it compounds over months, not weeks, and it is the one asset that survives changing employer.

### There is a route for where you are coming from

Most HI-Cs arrive from one of three places, and the gaps differ by origin. The full route — what transfers, what decayed, the compensation conversation, and a 90-day plan — is at:

[aicareer.me/hi-c/from-engineering-manager](https://aicareer.me/hi-c/from-engineering-manager) · [/from-senior-ic](https://aicareer.me/hi-c/from-senior-ic) · [/from-director-or-vp](https://aicareer.me/hi-c/from-director-or-vp)