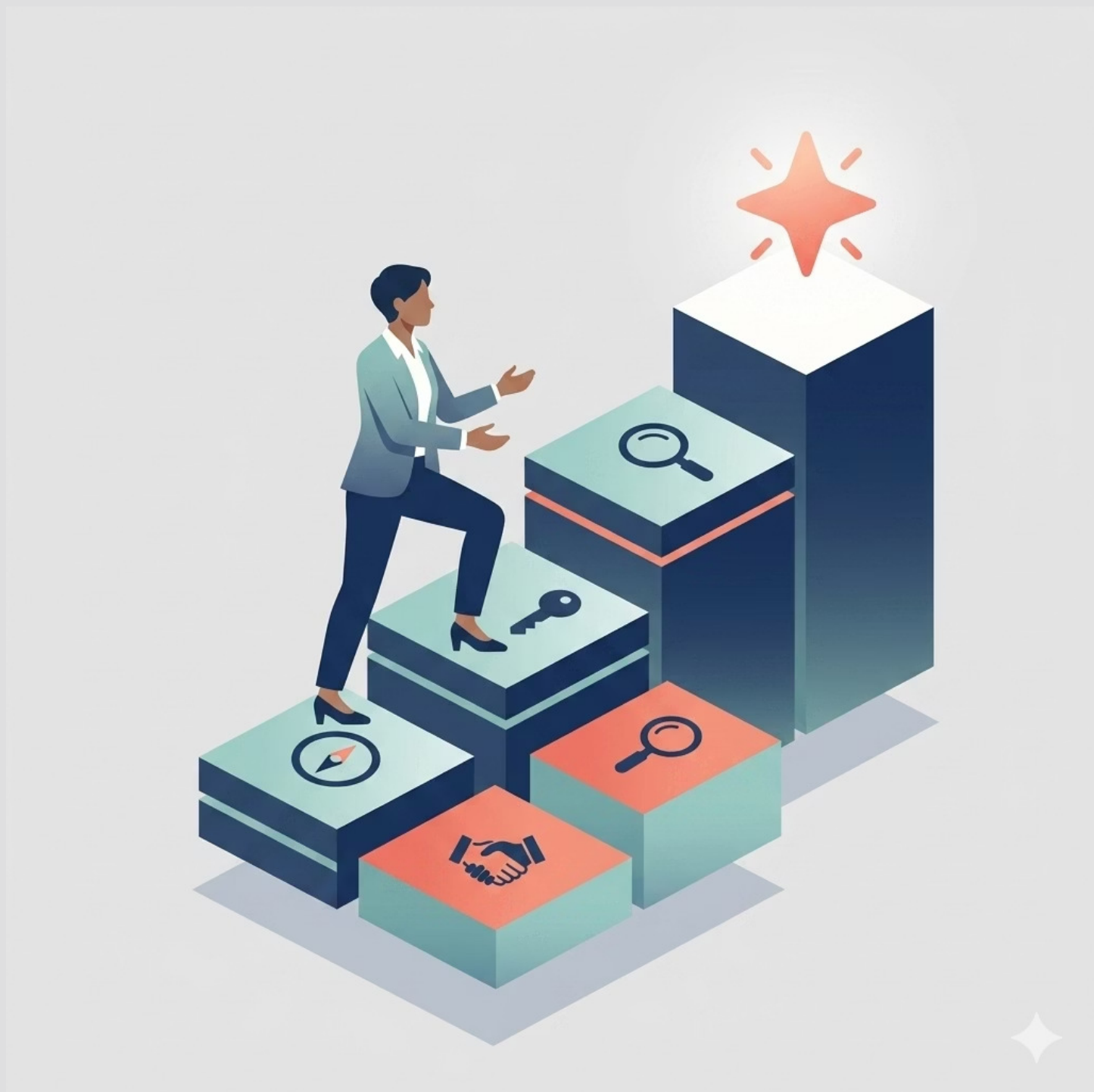




Promotion Readiness Audit Tool

A hands-on guidebook for working professionals who are ready to stop waiting — and start positioning. Whether you're angling for your first promotion or a leap into senior leadership, this tool gives you the honest, structured self-assessment you need to know exactly where you stand, what gaps to close, and how to make your case with confidence.



Why Most Promotions Are Missed — And How to Fix That

Here's a hard truth: most professionals who deserve a promotion don't get one — not because they aren't good at their jobs, but because they haven't made the right case. They've been heads-down, delivering results, assuming that quality work alone will get noticed. It rarely does. Promotions are decisions, and decisions need evidence, timing, and clear framing.

This resource was built to close that gap. The Promotion Readiness Audit Tool is a structured self-assessment system that helps you evaluate your current standing across five critical dimensions: **Performance, Visibility, Relationships, Skills, and Mindset**. It doesn't just tell you what to do — it shows you where you actually are, so you can focus your energy where it counts most.

Whether you're 18 months into your first professional role or managing a team of ten, this guidebook is built for the time-poor professional who needs clarity, not theory. It's designed to be used in three ways: as a **one-time deep-read** when you're actively preparing for a promotion conversation, as a **quarterly reference** to track your progress, or as a **worksheet companion** you fill in, revisit, and update as you grow.

What You'll Walk Away With

- A clear picture of your current promotion readiness score
- Identified gaps and a prioritized action plan
- Language and frameworks to own your promotion conversation
- Habits that compound your visibility over time
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How to Use This Guidebook

- **First read:** Go cover to cover — take notes, complete the worksheets
- **Reference mode:** Jump to any module that matches your current gap
- **Quarterly check-in:** Retake the audit every 90 days to measure progress
- **Before the conversation:** Use Module 5 to prepare your case

The Five Dimensions of Promotion Readiness

Promotion decisions are rarely about a single skill or a single project. They are multidimensional. Decision-makers — your manager, their manager, HR — are evaluating whether you have demonstrated the *full profile* of someone operating at the next level. That profile breaks down into five interconnected dimensions. Understanding these dimensions is the foundation of everything that follows in this guidebook.



1. Performance

Are you consistently delivering results that exceed expectations at your current level? Performance is the baseline — it's the cost of entry. Without it, nothing else matters. With it, you have the foundation to build on.



2. Visibility

Do the right people know what you're contributing? Visibility is about ensuring your work doesn't exist in a vacuum. It's not self-promotion — it's strategic communication of your impact to stakeholders who matter.



3. Relationships

Have you built the network of sponsors, advocates, and collaborators who will champion your name when opportunities arise? Relationships are the invisible infrastructure of every promotion.



4. Skills

Are you already demonstrating the capabilities required at the next level — not just your current one? The promotion is granted in recognition of future potential, not just past performance.



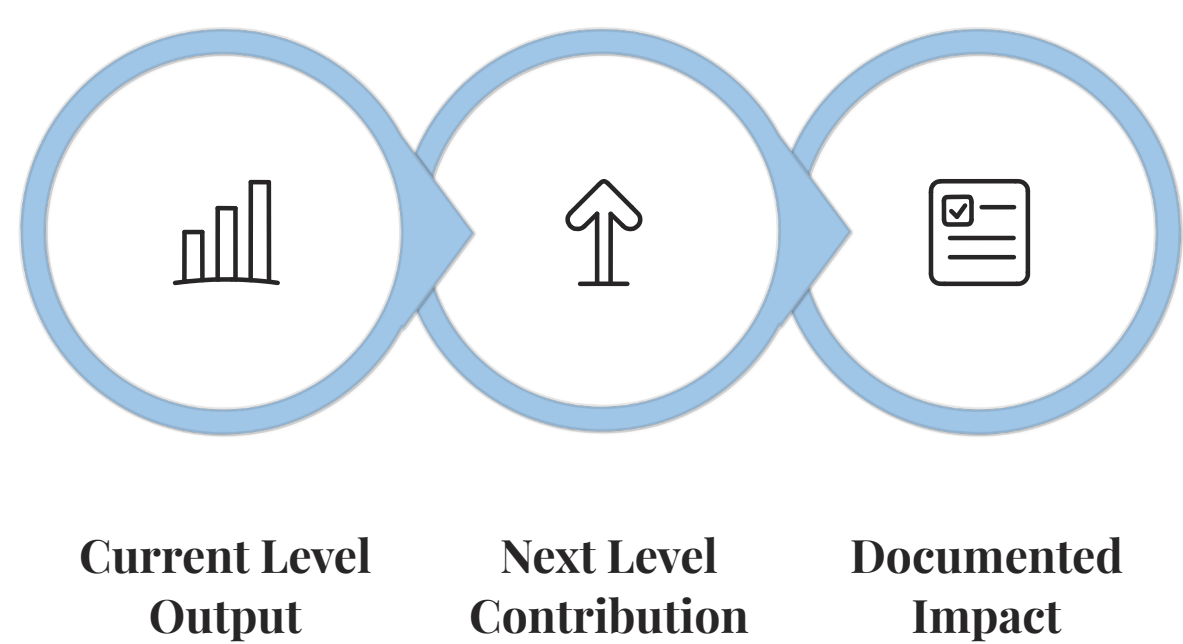
5. Mindset

Do you think, communicate, and make decisions like someone at the level above you? Mindset is often the most underestimated dimension — and the one that separates good candidates from great ones.

Performance Audit: Are You Delivering at the Next Level?

Performance is the non-negotiable foundation. But here's what most professionals get wrong: they assess their performance against the criteria of their *current* role, not the one they're targeting. Promotion committees aren't asking "Is this person great at what they do today?" They're asking, "Has this person already started operating at the next level?" That's a fundamentally different question — and it requires a fundamentally different kind of self-assessment.

The performance audit in this module pushes you to evaluate your contributions through the lens of scope, complexity, and ownership. Are your projects becoming more strategic? Are you solving problems your manager used to handle? Are the outcomes you're driving measurable, attributable, and memorable? These are the markers that signal next-level readiness.



Moving from current-level output to next-level contribution requires intentional effort — it doesn't happen by accident. Once you've made that shift, documenting and communicating impact evidence is what makes it visible to decision-makers.

Performance Self-Assessment Checklist

Results & Output • I consistently meet or exceed my KPIs and targets • I've delivered at least one high-impact project in the past 6 months • My manager would describe my output as "above expectations" • I can quantify my contributions with specific numbers or outcomes	Scope & Complexity • I've taken on work that goes beyond my formal job description • I handle ambiguous problems without needing step-by-step guidance • I've led or co-led a cross-functional initiative • I make decisions that used to require escalation	Ownership & Accountability • I take full accountability for outcomes — including when things go wrong • I proactively identify risks and flag them before they become problems • I follow through consistently without needing reminders • Colleagues and stakeholders trust me to deliver on commitments
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☐ **Reflection Prompt:** Write down your three most impactful contributions in the past 12 months. For each one, note: What was the business outcome? What would have happened without your involvement? Who else knows about it?

Performance Evidence Builder

This worksheet helps you systematically document your most compelling performance evidence. The goal is to build a bank of "proof points" you can draw from during your promotion conversation, in your performance review, or when updating your internal profile. Be specific — vague claims like "improved team efficiency" are far less powerful than "reduced reporting cycle from 5 days to 2 days, saving the team approximately 6 hours per week."

Project / Initiative	What You Did	Measurable Outcome	Who Can Validate This?
Example: Q3 Client Onboarding Overhaul	Led redesign of onboarding process across 3 teams	Reduced time-to-value from 45 to 22 days; NPS up 18 pts	Director of CX, Head of Operations
[Your entry 1]			
[Your entry 2]			
[Your entry 3]			

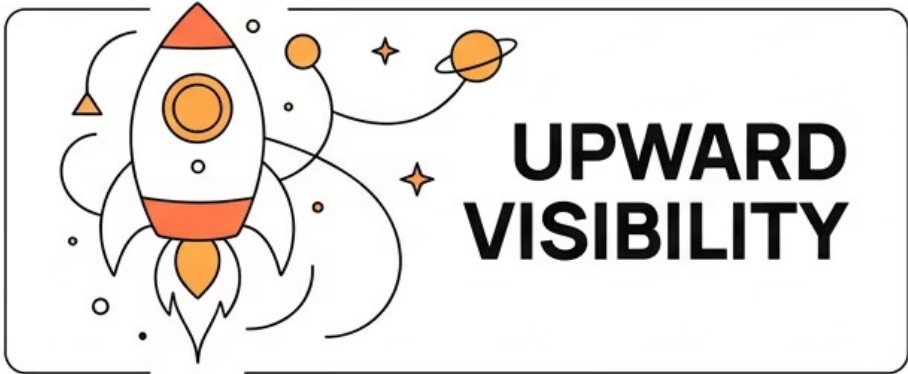
Pro Tip: Aim for at least five strong proof points before you enter any promotion conversation. Three is a minimum; five gives you choices. The best proof points combine scale, complexity, and business relevance — not just effort.

Visibility Audit: Do the Right People Know Your Value?

Visibility is one of the most uncomfortable dimensions for high-performing professionals — especially those who grew up believing that good work speaks for itself. It doesn't. Not consistently, and not at the pace required for a timely promotion. The reality is that in most organizations, promotions are decided in rooms you're not in, by people who are drawing on what they've seen and heard. If your contributions aren't being shared, cited, and connected to business outcomes in those conversations, you are functionally invisible — regardless of how hard you work.

Visibility is not about being loud or self-congratulatory. It's about **strategic communication**: ensuring that the right people understand your contributions, your capabilities, and your trajectory at the right moments. It's about building a consistent professional brand that makes your name come up naturally when opportunities arise. This module helps you audit your current visibility footprint and identify the highest-leverage places to build it.

Four visibility levers: Upward, Lateral, External, and Depth Visibility.



Visibility Audit Questions

→	Upward Visibility Can your manager's manager describe two specific things you've accomplished in the past quarter? If you're unsure, the answer is probably no — and that's a gap to close through regular stakeholder updates, participation in senior meetings, and concise impact summaries.
→	Lateral Credibility Do colleagues in other teams or departments know your name and associate it with a specific strength? Cross-functional reputation is increasingly important as organizations become more matrix-structured. If you're known only within your immediate team, your visibility footprint is too small.
→	Meeting Presence In the last month, how many times have you contributed a substantive idea, question, or recommendation in a meeting with senior stakeholders? Presence in meetings is one of the fastest and most direct ways to build upward visibility — and it's largely within your control.
→	Written Communication Are your written updates, reports, and proposals creating a trail of competence? Every email, document, and presentation you send is a visibility touchpoint. High-quality written communication signals next-level capability in a way that nothing else can match for scale.

Build Your Visibility Strategy in 30 Days

Visibility is built through consistent, intentional actions over time — not a single grand gesture. The 30-day sprint below gives you a practical cadence for expanding your visibility footprint without feeling like you're constantly self-promoting. The key is to make visibility a *habit*, not an event.

Week 1: Audit & Identify

List 5 senior stakeholders who influence promotion decisions. Identify which ones don't know your work well. Map your current touchpoints with each.

Week 2: Create One Update

Send a brief, structured impact update to your manager. Format: "This week I completed X, which resulted in Y. The next step I'm driving is Z." One paragraph, once a week.

Week 3: Speak Up Once

In one senior meeting, contribute a substantive comment, question, or recommendation. Prepare in advance. Quality beats quantity — one sharp insight lands harder than five average ones.

Week 4: Connect Laterally

Reach out to one colleague in a different department. Share something useful — an insight, a resource, an introduction. Lateral relationships build the cross-functional reputation that matters to decision-makers.

- ☐ **Visibility Template — Weekly Impact Pulse:** "Hi [Manager's name] — quick update on this week: (1) Completed [deliverable], which [impact/outcome]. (2) Currently driving [next initiative] with a target of [goal]. (3) One thing I could use support on: [specific ask or FYI]. Happy to discuss at our next 1:1."

Relationships Audit: Who's In Your Corner?

No one gets promoted alone. Behind virtually every significant career advancement is a network of people who advocated, vouched, or at minimum did not object. These are your **sponsors, advocates, and trusted colleagues** — and together, they form the invisible infrastructure of your promotion readiness. The uncomfortable truth is that relationships often matter as much as results in promotion decisions. This isn't unfair — it reflects the reality that organizations promote people they trust, and trust is built through relationships.

This module makes a critical distinction that most professionals miss: the difference between **mentors** and **sponsors**. Mentors give you advice and guidance. Sponsors put their reputation on the line and actively advocate for you when promotion decisions are being made. You need both, but you need to be intentional about cultivating sponsorship — it doesn't happen automatically just because you've delivered good work and someone likes you.

Mentor vs. Sponsor: The Key Difference

Mentor: Someone who advises, guides, and shares their experience. They invest in your learning and development. Typically more accessible; relationship is about personal growth.

Sponsor: Someone who actively advocates for your advancement. They use their political capital to open doors, endorse you in rooms you can't enter, and link their reputation to yours. Requires earned trust.

Your Relationship Audit Questions

- Can you name one person at a senior level who would advocate for your promotion today?
- Does your manager's manager know your name and work?
- Do you have at least one peer in a different team who values your collaboration?
- Have you had at least one career-focused conversation with a senior leader in the past 90 days?
- Are you known as someone who helps others, not just someone who delivers for themselves?

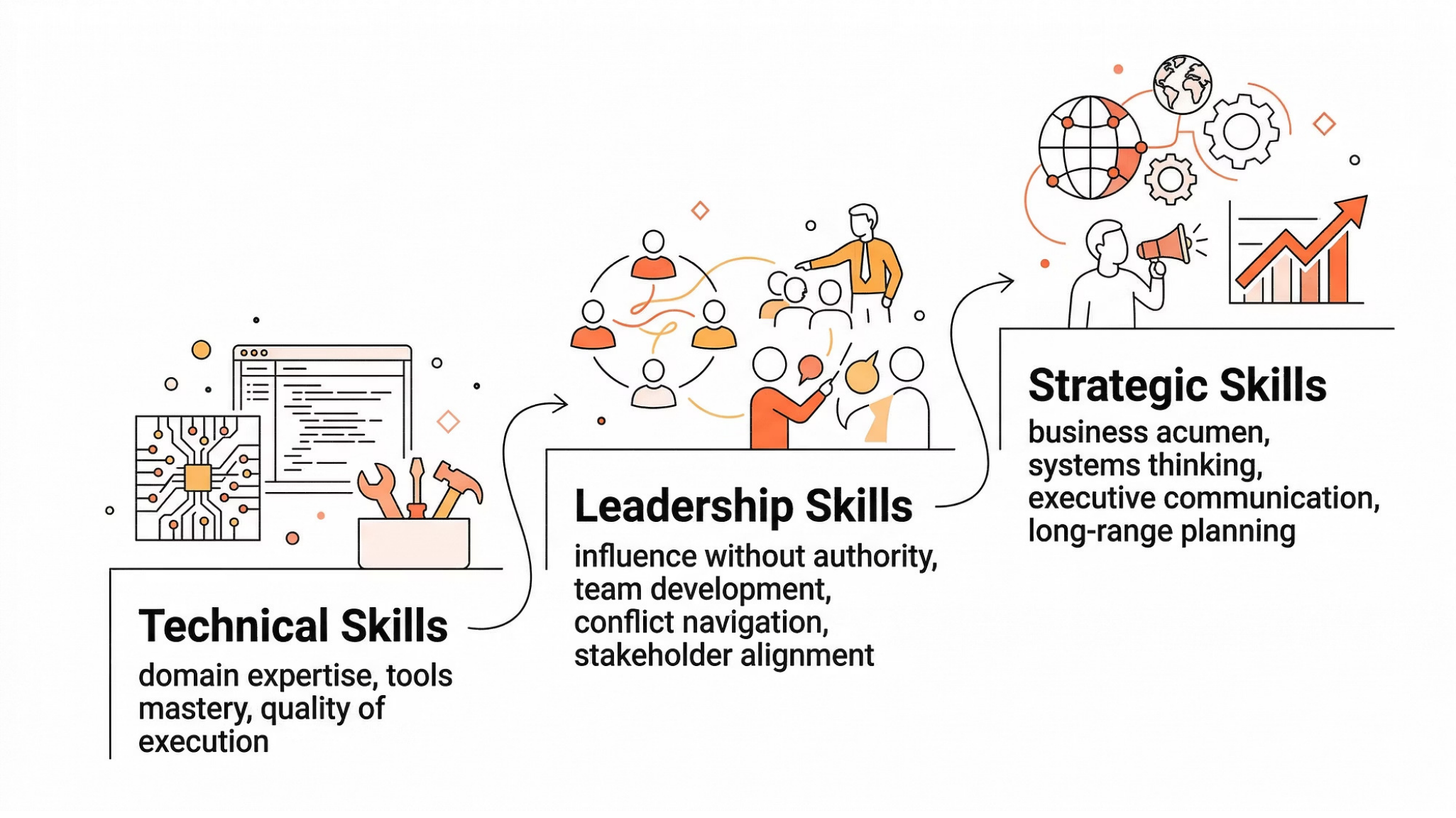
Relationship Mapping Worksheet

Name / Role	Relationship Type	Strength (1–5)	Next Action to Deepen
Example: VP of Product	Sponsor (emerging)	3	Request 30-min coffee to share Q4 project update and ask for feedback
[Name 1]			
[Name 2]			
[Name 3]			

Skills Audit: Are You Already Operating at the Next Level?

Here is the single most important insight about skills and promotions: **you are not promoted because you've mastered your current role — you are promoted because you've already started demonstrating the skills of the next one.** This means the skills audit isn't about checking off your current job description. It's about reverse-engineering the expectations of the level above you and honestly assessing how many of those capabilities you're already showcasing.

Skills for promotion purposes fall into three categories: **Technical Skills** (the domain-specific knowledge and tools relevant to your function), **Leadership Skills** (the ability to influence, align, and develop others — whether or not you have a formal management role), and **Strategic Skills** (the ability to connect work to business outcomes, think systemically, and communicate in the language of organizational priorities). Most early-to-mid career professionals are strong on technical skills but have significant gaps in leadership and strategic skills — and those gaps are precisely what hold promotions back.



Skills Gap Analysis — Fill-In Worksheet

For each skill area below, rate yourself honestly from 1 (not yet demonstrating) to 5 (consistently demonstrating at the next level). Then identify one specific action to close the gap in each area.

Skill Area	Category	Self-Rating (1–5)	One Action to Close the Gap
Domain expertise at next-level complexity	Technical		
Data-driven decision-making	Technical		
Influencing without authority	Leadership		
Developing or coaching others	Leadership		
Navigating conflict constructively	Leadership		
Connecting work to business strategy	Strategic		
Executive-level communication	Strategic		

The "Shadow the Level Above" Practice

One of the most practical and underused strategies for closing the skills gap is what we call "**Shadow the Level Above**" — a deliberate practice of studying, emulating, and seeking exposure to the behaviors, decision-making patterns, and communication styles of professionals at the level you're targeting. This is not passive observation. It's active learning by proximity.

Here's how it works in practice. Identify someone in your organization or industry who holds the role you're targeting. Over the next 30–60 days, pay close attention to three things: **How they communicate in meetings** (their vocabulary, framing, the questions they ask, the confidence they project). **How they prioritize and delegate** (what they choose to own versus hand off, how they explain their reasoning). And **how they handle ambiguity and pressure** (their composure, their frameworks for decision-making under uncertainty). Then consciously begin incorporating those patterns into your own behavior — starting with the lowest-risk, most immediately transferable elements.



Mindset Audit: Are You Thinking Like the Next Level?

Of all five dimensions, mindset is the one that most reliably differentiates candidates who get promoted from candidates who get passed over — even when the technical and performance gaps are similar. The way you think, the problems you prioritize, the questions you ask, and the way you communicate about your work all signal which level you're operating at. And decision-makers pick up on these signals constantly, often unconsciously.

Next-level mindset isn't about being more confident or more assertive (though those help). It's about a fundamental shift in **operating perspective**: moving from an individual contributor mindset — focused on tasks, personal deliverables, and doing great work — to a leadership mindset focused on outcomes, organizational impact, team capability, and strategic alignment. This shift doesn't require a title change. It starts happening in how you talk about your work today.

Current-Level Mindset Signals

- "I completed my tasks this week"
- "That's not my responsibility"
- "I'm waiting for direction on this"
- "I'm focused on getting this project done"
- "I need more resources to succeed here"
- "I'll raise this in my next 1:1 with my manager"

Next-Level Mindset Signals

- "This week's work moved the needle on [business goal]"
- "I noticed a gap — here's my proposed solution"
- "I've identified three paths forward; here's my recommendation"
- "How does this project connect to the broader Q4 priority?"
- "What does success look like from the organization's perspective?"
- "I've already aligned the key stakeholders on this approach"

Mindset Self-Reflection Exercise

Complete the following sentence stems honestly. These are designed for private reflection — the goal is brutal honesty, not performance. Your responses will reveal where your mindset is genuinely operating today.

Prompt 1

"When a problem arises that isn't technically my responsibility, I typically..."

[Write your honest answer. Next-level response: take ownership, propose a solution, loop in relevant people proactively.]

Prompt 2

"When I describe my work to my manager, I usually focus on..."

[Write your honest answer. Next-level response: outcomes, business impact, and connection to team/org goals — not just activities completed.]

Prompt 3

"When I'm in a meeting with senior leaders, my instinct is to..."

[Write your honest answer. Next-level response: contribute a substantive perspective, ask a strategic question, add visible value — not just listen and observe.]

Prompt 4

"The last time I proactively drove a change or improvement without being asked, it was..."

[Write your honest answer. If you struggle to recall a recent example, that's a signal about your initiative and ownership mindset.]

Your Promotion Readiness Scorecard

Now it's time to bring all five dimensions together. This scorecard is your single-page snapshot of promotion readiness. Rate yourself honestly on each statement — not how you aspire to perform, but how you *consistently* perform today. After scoring, calculate your total and identify your top two gap areas. Those are where your 90-day action plan should focus first

Use a scale of **1–4** for each item: **1** = Not yet; **2** = Occasionally; **3** = Consistently; **4** = Demonstrating at the next level. Total possible score: 80. Use the band guide below to interpret your result.

#	Statement	Score (1–4)	Dimension
1	My results consistently exceed expectations at my current level		Performance
2	I can cite 3+ quantifiable business outcomes I've driven in the past year		Performance
3	I've taken on scope or complexity beyond my formal role		Performance
4	My manager's manager knows my name and can describe my contributions		Visibility
5	I proactively communicate my impact to stakeholders beyond my direct team		Visibility
6	I have a strong presence and contribute meaningfully in senior meetings		Visibility
7	I can name at least one sponsor who would advocate for my promotion today		Relationships
8	I have genuine cross-functional relationships outside my immediate team		Relationships
9	I have had at least one career conversation with a senior leader in the past 90 days		Relationships
10	I am already demonstrating skills required at the next level above me		Skills
11	I can articulate the business strategy and connect my work to it clearly		Skills
12	I influence outcomes and people without relying on formal authority		Skills
13	I think and communicate in terms of outcomes and business impact, not tasks		Mindset
14	I proactively identify and solve problems without being asked		Mindset
15	I consistently demonstrate ownership, accountability, and initiative		Mindset

60–80: Ready to Advance

You are demonstrating strong next-level readiness. Focus on closing your 1–2 weakest dimensions and initiating the promotion conversation with your manager now.

40–59: Progressing Well

You have a strong foundation with identifiable gaps. Use your 90-day plan to close the two lowest-scoring dimensions before initiating the formal promotion conversation.

20–39: Building the Case

Multiple development areas need attention. Prioritize performance and visibility first — they create the platform for everything else. Set a 6-month development milestone.

Case Study: From Invisible to Undeniable

Meet Jordan. Jordan is a 4-year mid-level project manager at a mid-sized tech company. By all accounts, Jordan is a strong performer — reliably delivering projects on time, maintaining good relationships with the team, and always willing to go the extra mile. Jordan has been waiting for a promotion for 18 months, had one conversation about it 6 months ago, and received feedback that was vague: "You're doing well. Keep doing what you're doing. When the time is right, we'll look at it." Sound familiar?

Jordan decided to use this Audit Tool to get an honest picture. Here's what the scorecard revealed — and what changed in the 90 days that followed.

Dimension	Initial Score	90-Day Score	What Changed
Performance	11/12	12/12	Documented impact in a structured evidence bank; added one stretch initiative
Visibility	5/12	10/12	Started weekly impact pulses to manager; contributed in two all-hands meetings; published one internal process guide
Relationships	6/12	10/12	Identified and cultivated two sponsors; established monthly coffee chats with VP of Delivery
Skills	9/12	11/12	Led first cross-functional initiative; completed a strategic communication course; started shadowing Director-level meetings
Mindset	8/12	12/12	Shifted all verbal and written communication to outcomes language; proactively identified and solved a process problem without prompting

After 90 days, Jordan had a second promotion conversation — this time with a concrete evidence portfolio, a sponsor in the room, and a clear narrative about next-level readiness. The promotion was approved three weeks later. The work hadn't changed much. The **positioning** had changed entirely.

Key Lesson: Jordan's biggest jump was in Visibility (+5 points) and Relationships (+4 points) — the two dimensions most professionals neglect while focusing exclusively on performance. Strong performance is necessary but not sufficient. Visibility and relationships are the multipliers.

The 7 Promotion Readiness Mistakes That Cost People the Title

Understanding common failure patterns is just as important as understanding what to do right. These are the seven most consistent mistakes that professionals make when pursuing a promotion — drawn from patterns across hundreds of career coaching conversations. If you recognize yourself in any of these, that recognition is the first step to correction.

- **Waiting to Be Noticed**

Assuming that strong performance will automatically surface and result in a promotion offer. It rarely does. You must be visible, vocal, and proactive about your ambitions.

- **Talking About Effort, Not Impact**

"I worked really hard on this" is never a promotion argument. "This initiative reduced customer churn by 12%" is. Reframe every accomplishment in the language of business outcomes.

- **Having the Conversation Too Early — With No Evidence**

Asking for a promotion before you've built your evidence bank, cultivated sponsors, and demonstrated next-level skills puts you in a weak negotiating position and can actually set your timeline back.

- **Neglecting Sponsorship**

Mentors give advice. Sponsors create opportunities. Many professionals over-invest in mentoring relationships while under-investing in sponsorship — the relationships that actually move promotions forward.

- **Staying in the Individual Contributor Mindset**

Continuing to define success through personal task completion rather than team and organizational outcomes. Senior roles are judged by leverage — what you enable others to do, not just what you do yourself.

- **Accepting Vague Feedback Without Clarity**

"Keep doing what you're doing" is not a development plan. Push for specific, measurable, time-bound criteria. Ask: "What would need to be true for a promotion to be approved in the next 6 months?"

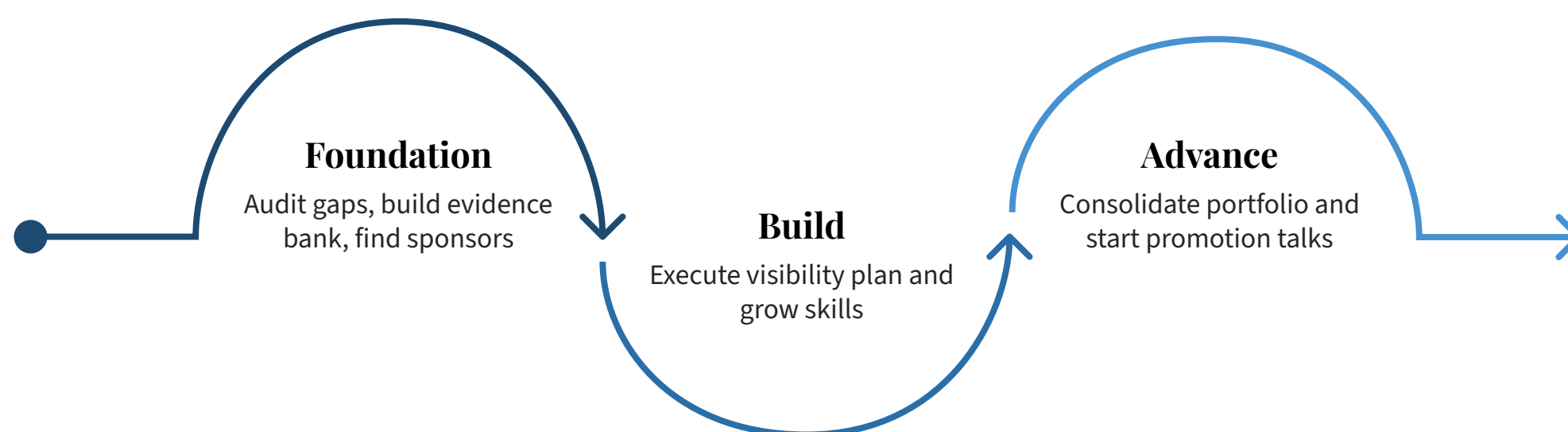
- **Treating Promotion as a Once-a-Year Conversation**

Promotion readiness is built across every quarter, not assembled in the week before review season. The professionals who advance consistently are the ones who treat promotion as an always-on strategic priority.

Your 90-Day Promotion Readiness Sprint

The Scorecard told you where you are. This sprint tells you what to do next. The 90-day window is intentional — it's long enough to make meaningful progress on two or three dimensions, but short enough to maintain urgency and momentum. Your sprint plan should focus on your **two lowest-scoring dimensions** from the Scorecard. Trying to improve all five simultaneously dilutes your effort and slows your overall progress.

Structure your 90 days into three 30-day phases: **Foundation** (audit, plan, identify quick wins), **Build** (execute consistently, build habits and relationships), and **Advance** (consolidate evidence, initiate the promotion conversation, seek targeted feedback). Use the worksheet below to create your personalized sprint plan.



Each phase builds on the last — Foundation sets the groundwork, Build creates momentum, and Advance turns preparation into action. The promotion conversation at Day 90 should feel like a natural conclusion to a well-documented 90-day arc, not a sudden request.

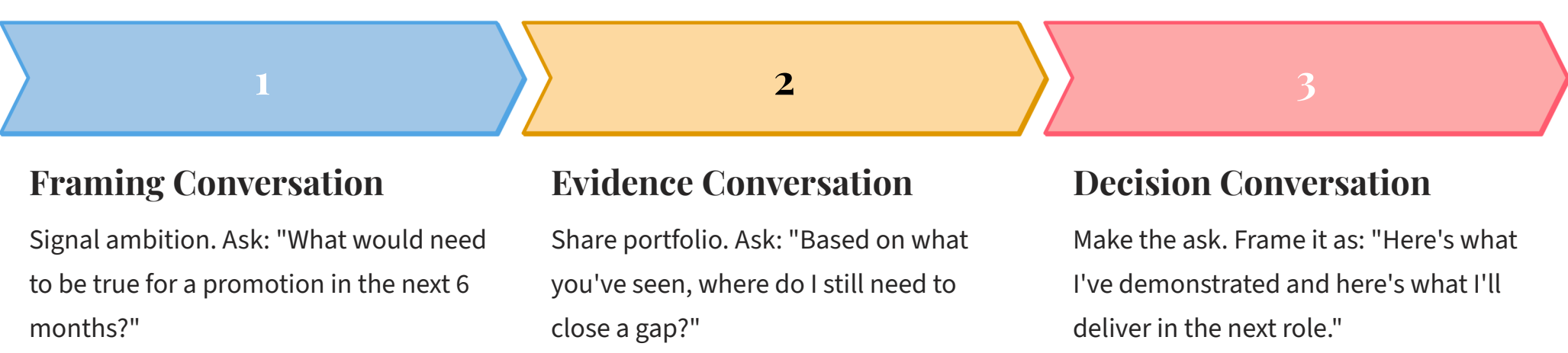
Sprint Plan Worksheet

Phase	Focus Dimension(s)	Key Actions (Your Entries)	Success Milestone
Foundation (Days 1–30)	Dimension 1: _____ Dimension 2: _____	[List 3 specific actions]	[What does success look like by Day 30?]
Build (Days 31–60)	Same dimensions + Visibility	[List 3 specific actions]	[What does success look like by Day 60?]
Advance (Days 61–90)	All five, plus conversation prep	[List 3 specific actions]	[Promotion conversation scheduled and ready]

How to Have the Promotion Conversation With Confidence

The promotion conversation is where your preparation either pays off or falls flat. Most professionals dread this conversation because they enter it with a vague request and no structured evidence. The professionals who succeed treat it as a **strategic presentation** — not an emotional ask. They walk in with a clear narrative, specific evidence, and a forward-looking frame that positions the promotion as good for the organization, not just good for them.

There are three moments that matter in the promotion conversation cycle. The **Framing Conversation** (6–12 weeks before you want the promotion): Use this to signal your ambition, ask for clarity on the criteria, and start the formal record of your intent. The **Evidence Conversation** (4 weeks before): Share your proof point portfolio, invite calibration, and close any final gaps. The **Decision Conversation** (the formal request): Make your case with structured evidence, a clear ask, and a forward-looking narrative about what you'll deliver in the new role.



The Promotion Conversation Framework — Script Template

1	Open With Intent "I'd like to have a conversation about my readiness for [next role/level]. I've been intentionally preparing for this and I'd like to share what I've been building toward and get your input."
2	Present Your Evidence "Over the past [timeframe], I've driven [3 specific outcomes with numbers]. I've also taken on [expanded scope/cross-functional work], which demonstrated [next-level capability]."
3	Show You're Already There "I've been deliberately operating at the next level in [specific areas]. Here are two or three examples where I've been functioning at [target role] responsibilities already."
4	Make the Forward Case "In the next role, I'm committed to delivering [specific goals]. I see [organizational opportunity] as a place I can create significant value and I want to take that on formally."
5	Invite Dialogue "Based on everything you've seen, do you see me as ready for this step? And if there are gaps you're still seeing, I want to understand them specifically so I can close them."

Quarterly Promotion Readiness Check-In

Promotion readiness is not a one-time assessment — it's a continuous development practice. The professionals who advance consistently are those who treat their career as a strategic project, not a set-and-forget background process. This quarterly check-in is designed to be completed every 90 days: it takes approximately 20–30 minutes and gives you an updated read on your current standing across all five dimensions.

Use this check-in to track your trajectory over time, catch emerging gaps early, and recalibrate your actions for the next 90-day sprint. The questions are designed to be slightly uncomfortable — that discomfort is a signal pointing to where your growth is.



Performance Check

What is the single most impactful thing I delivered this quarter? Can I describe its business outcome in one sentence? Has my scope of responsibility grown since last quarter?



Visibility Check

Which senior stakeholders have seen my best work this quarter? Have I created at least one artifact (document, presentation, process) that represents my capability at the next level?



Relationships Check

Who is in my active sponsor network today? Have I had a meaningful career conversation with at least one senior leader this quarter? Have I invested in any new lateral relationships?



Skills Check

What new capability have I developed or deepened this quarter? Have I demonstrated at least one next-level skill in a visible, attributable context? What skill do I most need to develop in the next 90 days?



Mindset Check

How many times this quarter did I proactively identify and solve a problem without being asked? Have my communication patterns shifted toward outcomes and organizational impact? Do I feel and act like someone at the next level?

 **Quarterly Ritual Recommendation:** Block 30 minutes at the end of every quarter — the same day, every quarter. Treat it as a non-negotiable calendar commitment. Use this check-in as your input. Update your Scorecard. Revise your Sprint Plan. Then close the laptop and go do the work. Consistency compounds.

The Promotion Readiness Quick Reference Card

This page is designed for regular, fast reference. Print it, save it to your phone, or pin it somewhere visible. It distills the full toolkit into a single-page format you can use before a meeting, after a review, or whenever you need a quick reality check on where you are and what to focus on next.



Performance Signal

Can I describe my biggest contribution this month as a business outcome in one sentence?



Visibility Signal

Did at least one senior stakeholder see evidence of my best work this week?



Relationships Signal

Am I actively maintaining at least one sponsor relationship with a senior stakeholder?



Skills Signal

Have I demonstrated a next-level skill in a visible context in the past 30 days?



Mindset Signal

In my last important communication, did I lead with outcomes, strategy, and impact?

The 5 Questions to Ask Your Manager Every Quarter

- Gap Clarity**

"What specific evidence would you need to see to be confident in recommending my promotion?"
- Progress Calibration**

"Based on the past quarter, how am I tracking against the criteria for the next level?"
- Stakeholder Perception**

"How am I perceived by stakeholders outside our immediate team? Are there any gaps in perception I should address?"
- Sponsorship**

"Who would you suggest I build a stronger relationship with to support my advancement?"
- Timeline**

"If I close the gaps we've discussed, what's a realistic timeline for the promotion decision?"

7 Things to Remember When You Close This Guide

You've now worked through the full Promotion Readiness Audit Tool. Here are the seven most important things to carry forward. These aren't abstract principles — they are the specific, actionable realities that separate professionals who advance on their own timeline from those who wait indefinitely for someone else to notice them.

01 • Performance Is Necessary, Not Sufficient

Delivering excellent work at your current level is the cost of entry, not the ticket to advancement. You must demonstrate capability *at the next level* before the promotion arrives.

02 • Visibility Is a Skill, Not a Personality Trait

Strategic communication of your impact is learnable and practicable. Start with the weekly impact pulse. Build from there. Consistency creates the reputation you need.

03 • Sponsorship Wins Over Mentorship

Cultivate sponsors — people who will advocate for you in rooms you're not in. Mentors guide your growth; sponsors activate your opportunities. You need both, but sponsorship is the differentiator.

04 • Your Scorecard Is a Compass, Not a Grade

The Promotion Readiness Scorecard tells you where to focus your energy, not whether you're worthy of advancement. Every gap is a solvable, actionable development area.

05 • 90 Days Is Enough to Change the Story

Jordan's case proved it. Two or three focused dimensions, executed consistently over 90 days, can shift your entire perception and position. Don't underestimate what focused effort can accomplish in a quarter.

06 • The Conversation Is a Strategic Presentation

Enter the promotion conversation with evidence, a narrative, and a forward-looking case — not just an emotional request or a tenure argument. Structure wins confidence.

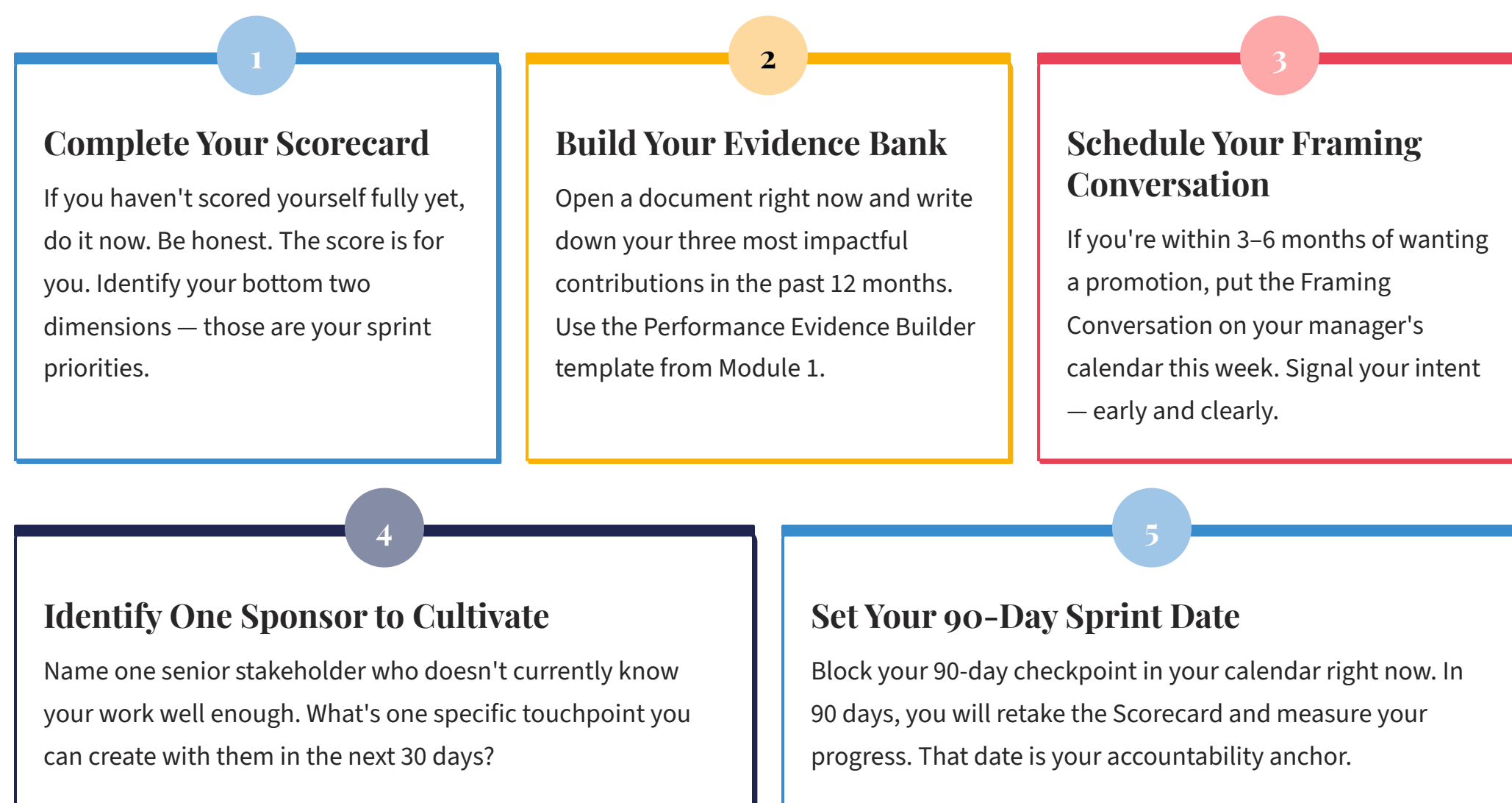
07 • Readiness Is an Always-On Practice

Do the quarterly check-in. Update the sprint plan. Build the habits. The professionals who advance consistently are those who treat their career development as a strategic, continuous priority — not a once-a-year event.

Your Promotion Readiness: What to Do This Week

The most important thing you can do right now is take one concrete action within the next 48 hours. Not a plan to plan. Not "I'll get to this next month." One specific, targeted step that moves the needle on your highest-gap dimension. Momentum starts with a single decision followed by a single action.

Use the guide below to identify your immediate next step based on where you scored lowest on the Scorecard. Then schedule it. Block the time. Do it. Come back in 90 days and take the audit again. The version of you that retakes this audit in 90 days should look back at this moment as the turning point.



Final thought: You already have more than you think. This audit is not about discovering that you're unprepared — it's about revealing exactly how prepared you already are, and showing you precisely what to do next. The promotion you're working toward is achievable. The path is clear. Now go close the gaps.