



*The Unspoken*

# Rules of Leadership Progression

2025 Playbook



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# Introduction

## Why High Performance Isn't Enough for Promotion

You work hard. You deliver results. Your colleagues and managers praise your expertise, reliability, and the impact you create. On paper, you're exactly the kind of professional any organisation should want in leadership.

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And yet, when promotions are discussed, you're told you're  
**"not ready for leadership."**

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You ask for feedback, but what you hear is vague:  
**"keep doing what you're doing,"**

*or*

**"you need more exposure."**

Nothing that tells you what's really missing or how to bridge the gap.

If this sounds familiar, you're not alone.



## The Invisible Barrier

Many ambitious professionals - introverts, international professionals, women in male-dominated industries, and quiet technical leaders experience the same struggle. They see others, often louder or more traditionally "leader-like" figures, move ahead while they remain stuck.

It can feel personal. You might even question whether something is wrong with you. But here's the truth: you are not the problem.

The system is unclear. The rules are unspoken. And the Quiet Climb Signals™ that decision-makers recognise are rarely explained.

## Why This Playbook Exists

I created this playbook to reveal those hidden rules. Not theory, not generic advice you've already heard, but the practical Quiet Climb Signals™ that make your leadership visible, credible, and promotable.

I know what it feels like to be overlooked. As a quiet, international professional building a career in a male-dominated industry, I didn't see many leaders who looked like me or led the way I did. I had to decode the system myself.

What I share here is what I wish I had known earlier - the unspoken rules of leadership progression that no one tells you, and that can change the trajectory of your career.

In the pages ahead, you'll learn:

**Why delivering results isn't enough.**

1



2



3

**How to start applying them without changing who you are.**

Because you don't need to pretend to be someone else to climb. You need clarity on the signals that already exist, and a way to use them authentically.

# The Leadership Gap

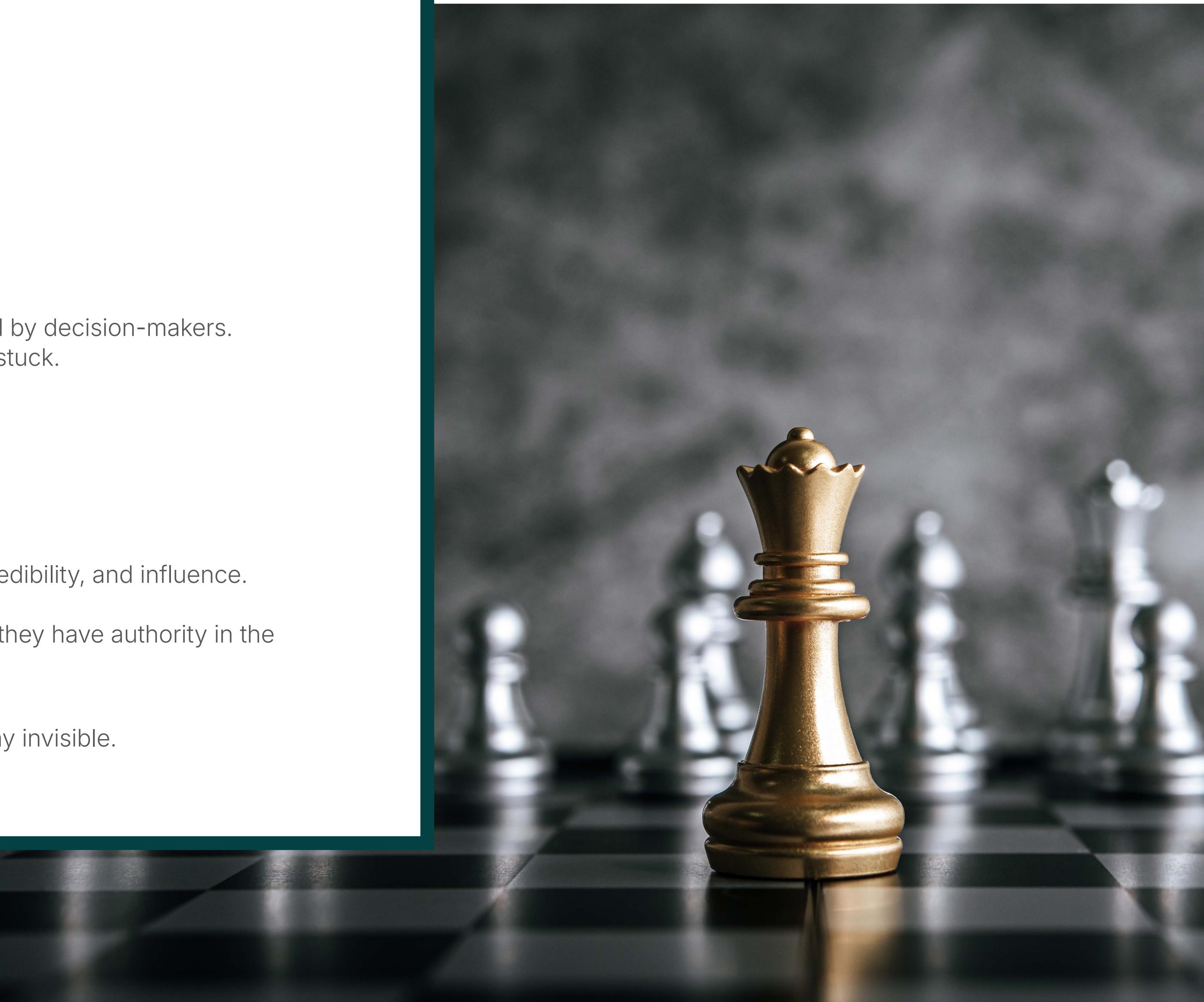
Delivering strong results is essential, but it isn't the whole story.

Leaders are promoted not just for what they achieve, but for how they are perceived by decision-makers. The gap between results and recognition is where many talented professionals get stuck.

## Why Results ≠ Promotion

- ✓ Results are necessary but not sufficient.
- ✓ At senior levels, everyone delivers results. What separates leaders is visibility, credibility, and influence.
- ✓ Decision-makers use an invisible checklist: Do I see this person as credible? Do they have authority in the room? Can they influence across functions?

Without understanding this checklist - the Quiet Climb Signals™, high performers stay invisible.



# The 3 Quiet Climb Signals™ of Leadership Progression



## 1. Credibility in Action

Credibility is not just about competence. It's about the signals that decision-makers notice.

- ✓ Framing your work in strategic terms, not just technical.
- ✓ Linking results to organisational priorities.
- ✓ Demonstrating authority in senior forums.



## 2. Communication & Presence

Leadership is not only about what you deliver, it's about how you communicate your value.

- ✓ Storytelling that makes complex ideas simple and memorable.
- ✓ Presence that makes others listen, even when you're not the loudest voice.
- ✓ Authentic delivery that builds trust.



## 3. Visibility & Sponsorship

Hard work speaks, but not always loudly enough.

- ✓ Sponsors (not just mentors) are essential for progression.
- ✓ Visibility means being seen by the people who make decisions.
- ✓ Authentic relationships are what turn performance into promotion.



### Ask yourself

Am I signalling my leadership potential, or only my technical skills?



### Ask yourself

Do people remember my message after I leave the room?



### Ask yourself

Who is in the room when I'm not there, and are they speaking my name?

# The Quiet Leader's Advantage

If you are quiet, introverted, international, or different from the "traditional" leader, it may feel like a disadvantage. But it isn't.



## Depth before volume

Quiet leaders often listen carefully, analyse deeply, and speak with impact when it matters.



## Cross-cultural awareness

International professionals adapt and connect across boundaries.



## Authenticity

Women and underrepresented voices often bring honesty, empathy, and resilience that teams trust.

The key is not to change who you are, but to make sure your strengths are visible through the Quiet Climb Signals™.



# Your First Steps

Here are practical actions you can take in the next 30 days

## REFRAME YOUR UPDATES

- Stop reporting only tasks and outputs.
- Start linking your work to strategy, business outcomes, or customer impact.

## IDENTIFY A SPONSOR

- Write down who in your organisation has influence.
- Ask: who knows my work? Who could advocate for me when I'm not in the room?

## PRACTICE STORYTELLING

- Take one project you're proud of.
- Write down not just what you did but why it mattered.

## Reflection Questions

- ✓ Where am I visible, and where am I invisible?
- ✓ Which Quiet Climb Signals™ am I already sending?
- ✓ Who are the people in the room I need to reach?

# Closing

You don't need to change your personality. You don't need to become louder or more extroverted.

You need to understand the Quiet Climb Signals™, credibility, communication, and sponsorship, and apply them authentically.

This is the difference between being a high performer who is overlooked and a high performer who is recognised as ready for leadership.

## Next Step

If you found this playbook helpful, you'll get even more from putting it into practice with guidance and accountability.

That's why I created The Quiet Climb programs, designed to help ambitious professionals like you progress to senior leadership without pretending to be someone else.

 Book a Free Discovery Call

 Explore the Accelerator, Cohort Lab, or Communication Coaching

