

The Opportunity Access Audit.

Meritocracy: The Opportunity We Think We Share.

A self-assessment for leaders ready to examine where opportunity actually flows on their teams.

OPPORTUNITY ACCESS AUDIT

Rate each statement honestly. This is not about blame — it is about noticing patterns you may have accepted as normal.

Q1 When I assign a high-profile project, I consider who hasn't had this exposure yet.

Familiarity feels like competence under pressure. Noticing the pull is the first step.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

Q2 I can name people on my team whose potential I have not yet fully tested.

Undiscovered capability is a design gap, not a people gap.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

Q3 Stretch assignments on my team rotate — the same people are not always chosen.

Repeated selection of the same few builds their confidence while quietly limiting everyone else's.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

Q4 I actively sponsor people who are not already visible to senior leadership.

Sponsorship is the mechanism that turns proximity into opportunity.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

Q5 When assessing readiness for advancement, I ask what shaped that readiness.

Readiness reflects access. Someone who looks less ready may simply have had fewer doors opened.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

Q6 My team has open development conversations — people don't have to wait to be chosen.

When growth is invitation-only, only those already visible enough to be noticed get it.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

Q7 I have recently introduced someone from my team to a leader they had no prior relationship with.

Relationships with power are not equally distributed. Leaders who redistribute access change outcomes.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

ACTIONS TO TAKE NOW

Map your last six stretch assignments.

Write down who received them. Is it the same cluster of names? That is your starting point — not a judgment, a data point.

Pause before your next assignment conversation.

Before defaulting to the trusted name, ask: who hasn't had this kind of opportunity yet? The pause itself is the practice.

Make one introduction this month.

Identify someone on your team not known to someone influential. Create the connection deliberately.

Separate readiness from familiarity.

In your next promotion discussion, ask what shaped each candidate's readiness — not just whether it's there.

Open a development conversation with someone who hasn't asked.

The people least likely to advocate for themselves often need a sponsor most. Don't wait to be asked.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Who hasn't had this opportunity yet?

Whose potential have we not fully seen?

Where might familiarity be guiding our decisions more than intention?

Meritocracy is not something organizations inherit. It is something they build — decision by decision, opportunity by opportunity.

HOW TO READ YOUR ANSWERS

Mostly 'Often': Your team has broad access. Watch for blind spots in sponsorship and senior visibility.

Mostly 'Sometimes': Patterns are forming. Identify which questions scored lowest and start there.

Mostly 'Rarely/Never': Opportunity is concentrating. The gap between potential and access is likely wide.