



**The
Backbone
Audit**

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**WORKPLACE &
CAREER FOR
BLACK WOMEN**

An audit designed to help Black women assess their workplace and career positioning.

TISHAYLA J. WILLIAMS
The TW Collective



Dear Black Woman,

We are often the backbone of the spaces we move through, in our workplaces, our neighborhoods, our churches, and our communities. Many of us have learned that success requires working twice as hard just to be seen as equally capable, while our hair, our outfits, our bodies, our tone of voice, and even our personal lives are judged in ways that extend far beyond our job descriptions.

Yet effort alone does not guarantee fairness, safety, or advancement. Too often, workplaces benefit from our contributions without creating structures that fully support our growth or recognition.

This audit offers a moment of pause and clarity, inviting you to assess not only how you are performing, but how your workplace responds to your presence, your labor, and your potential. If we have so often been the backbone for others, let this framework serve as a backbone for you.

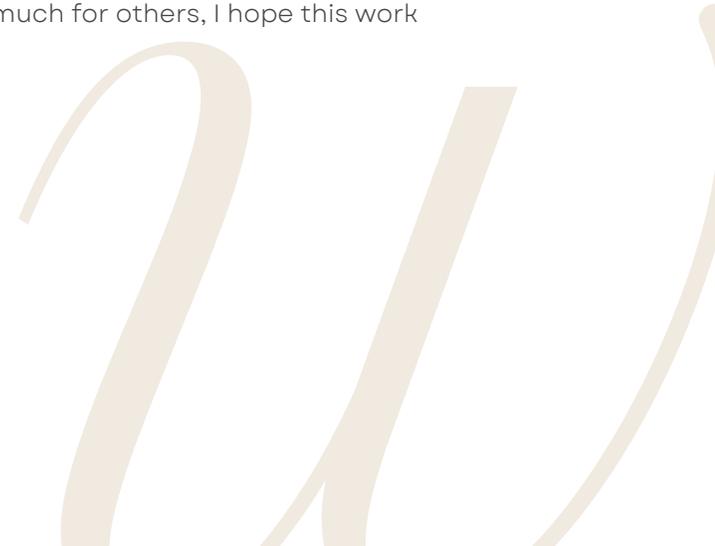
I hope this audit supports workplace safety, strengthens confidence, and advances conversations around pay equity and fair treatment. Black women remain among the most educated in the workforce, yet too often the least celebrated.

Through the Backbone Brief, the Backbone Theory, and now this audit, my hope is to give something back to you. If you have carried so much for others, I hope this work allows your back and shoulders a moment of rest.

In solidarity,



Author, Backbone Theory Framework



Your Identity & Vision

CURRENT ROLE:

INDUSTRY:

1. What is your current role or position?

Describe your title or how you typically introduce your work.

2. What type of work do you mainly do?

(e.g., operations, leadership, technical, creative, or client-facing)

3. What stage of your career are you in right now?

(e.g., early career, growth phase, leadership track, transition)

4. What responsibilities or expectations define your role most?

Think about what people rely on you for day to day.

5. How does your current work structure affect your experience?

(e.g., schedule, flexibility, visibility, workload)

Today, my career looks like...

Workplace Reality

These questions explore how your workplace functions in practice, not just in policy or intention.

1. What does a typical workday actually require from you?

2. What do people rely on you for most at work?

3. When problems arise, what role do you usually play?
(e.g., fixer, mediator, organizer, supporter, decision-maker)

4. What work do you do that is expected but rarely acknowledged?

5. Where does your energy go most during the workday?

Most days, I feel...

Future Direction

This section explores how you see your professional future, whether continuing where you are or considering change.

1. How visible is your work to decision-makers?
Who sees your contributions and connects them to your name?

2. Who advocates for your growth or advancement?
Who speaks for you when opportunities or promotions are discussed?

3. What factors are influencing your next career decision most?
Growth, stability, compensation, wellbeing, purpose, or flexibility.

4. If change feels necessary, what kind of change are you considering?
New role, new organization, new industry, or new direction.

5. What would need to change for you to feel confident staying where you are?

Right now, I am moving toward...

Compensation & Value

This section explores how compensation, recognition, and reward align with your contributions and responsibilities.

1. How fairly do you feel your compensation reflects your responsibilities?
Consider workload, expectations, and impact.

2. Has your compensation grown alongside your contributions?
Think about raises, promotions, or expanded duties.

3. What forms of recognition do you receive most often?
Pay, title, visibility, praise, opportunities, or none

4. What work do you perform that is not reflected in your compensation?

5. How comfortable do you feel advocating for your value?

My work is currently valued as...

Sustainability & Growth

This section explores whether your work environment supports sustainable growth, wellbeing, and long-term opportunity.

1. How does your work affect your energy over time?
Do you feel sustained, stretched, or depleted?

2. When challenges arise, what is expected of you?
Do you solve, absorb, manage, or escalate problems?

3. How safe do you feel expressing concerns or new ideas?
Consider honesty, feedback, and disagreement.

4. Are you developing new skills or mostly maintaining stability?

5. What would need to change for this role to feel sustainable for you?

If I had to summarize my experience here, it would be...

Audit Findings

This section summarizes key observations identified across your responses.

1. What patterns appeared consistently across your responses?

2. Where does your work appear essential but not fully recognized or rewarded?

3. Where do expectations placed on you exceed the support or opportunity provided?

4. Which factors most influence your ability to grow or remain in this role long term?

5. Based on this audit, how would you assess your current professional situation?

Final Finding:

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS BASED ON AUDIT FINDINGS



Role Alignment

If responsibilities extend beyond formal expectations, clarifying role scope and priorities may improve alignment between contribution and recognition. Structured conversations can help define responsibilities, decision authority, and performance expectations.

Clear role boundaries support sustainability and reduce reliance on informal or invisible labor. Defined expectations allow contributions to be evaluated more accurately over time.

Value & Sustainability

Where effort and recognition appear misaligned, documenting responsibilities and measurable outcomes may strengthen future compensation or advancement discussions. Evidence-based conversations help keep evaluations grounded in observable impact.

Long-term sustainability should also be considered. Roles that depend primarily on endurance rather than support may require adjustments in workload, boundaries, or professional direction.



Growth and strategic direction should be considered where advancement pathways remain unclear. Looking for opportunities that increase visibility, develop skills, or provide strategic exposure can support future mobility. Growth may occur through mentorship, expanded projects, or targeted skill building.

When misalignment persists across multiple areas, exploring alternative roles or environments may provide stronger alignment between contribution, opportunity, and long-term goals.

CLOSING STATEMENT

This audit provides a structured assessment of workplace experience, contribution, and professional alignment for Black women at a specific point in time. It is designed to support greater clarity around roles, expectations, visibility, compensation, and long-term sustainability within professional environments. The findings and recommendations are intended to help inform thoughtful decision-making, strengthen professional boundaries, and encourage alignment between individual contribution and organizational opportunity. As roles, workplaces, and priorities evolve, this document may serve as an ongoing reference for reassessing direction, evaluating progress, and supporting sustainable career growth. This audit is provided for informational and educational purposes only and does not constitute legal, employment, or professional advice.



TISHAYLA J. WILLIAMS

The TW Collective



PHONE :

((804)-277-9245



WEBSITE :

thetwcollective.com

**THANK
YOU!**