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Black in Canada

Spotlighting Black talent at every stage of their careers

MAY 2023

Introduction

Black talent in corporate Canada today

Since the murder of George Floyd and a growing movement toward racial equity in our communities, Canadian employers have committed to combating the systemic barriers that are negatively affecting Black professionals in their workplaces.

Many organizations have expressed a desire to create inclusive and equitable environments for all people to thrive in. Yet despite such public commitments, research indicates that progress has not been accelerated, and that Black professionals continue to navigate racism three years after Floyd's death.¹

Black professionals between the ages of 25 to 54 were more likely to hold a bachelor's degree or higher than Canadians in the same age group who are not

a visible minority but are less likely to be employed than their non-visible minority counterparts.²

They are also more likely to earn less than their white peers, about 80.4 cents on the dollar.³

This inequity continues to the highest levels of the corporate world—there are only six Black CEOs of Fortune 500 companies.⁴

Canadian workplaces still have a lot of work to do to close the opportunity gap for Black talent and reflect the diversity of our population. The purpose of this report is to encourage companies and corporate leaders to stay accountable to the fight against anti-Black racism in the workplace by setting clear metrics, taking intentional actions, and measuring results.

Understanding the journey of Black talent

This document builds on the previous [Black in Canada](#) report and focuses on the experiences of Black Canadians, as professionals and leaders, within corporate Canada.

We hosted a series of focus groups, launched an internal survey*, and conducted industry research. These findings from the trends and sentiments of Black employees have allowed us to gather and share these experiences. This report introduces the reader to three personas and their journey maps that outline Black professionals at different career levels.**

These journey maps highlight moments where organizations can foster meaningful impact for

the success of their Black employees. We call these **moments that matter**.***

Throughout this report, you will be introduced to Adewale, an early-career analyst; Naomi, a mid-career manager; and Alice, an executive leader. Along with the **moments that matter**, you will find actions your organization can take and metrics to consider for fostering a supportive environment for Black talent.

These personas illustrate how Black talent in Canada continues to experience systemic barriers. It is also important to remember that other self-identities (including gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, immigration status, and religion) intersect to shape an individual's experience.

Our commitment

Deloitte Canada is committed to providing Black individuals with opportunities for success and initiatives to actively break down barriers both inside and outside the workplace. As part of our commitment, a Black Action Council (BAC) was formed in 2020 to foster an inclusive, safe, and equitable environment for our Black colleagues. The work of the BAC and employee resource groups (ERGs), notably the Canadian Black Professionals Network and Black Women at Deloitte, is critical for creating inclusive spaces and building better outcomes for our Black team members, clients, communities, and our firm.

Since 2020, we have contributed over \$500,000+ in corporate donations and pro bono projects to support the economic empowerment of Black-owned organizations. To support Black students, the Bloom Scholarship Program continues its second cycle and the Deloitte Canada Black Student Scholarship program awarded 34 students a \$5,000 bursary and four-month work term.

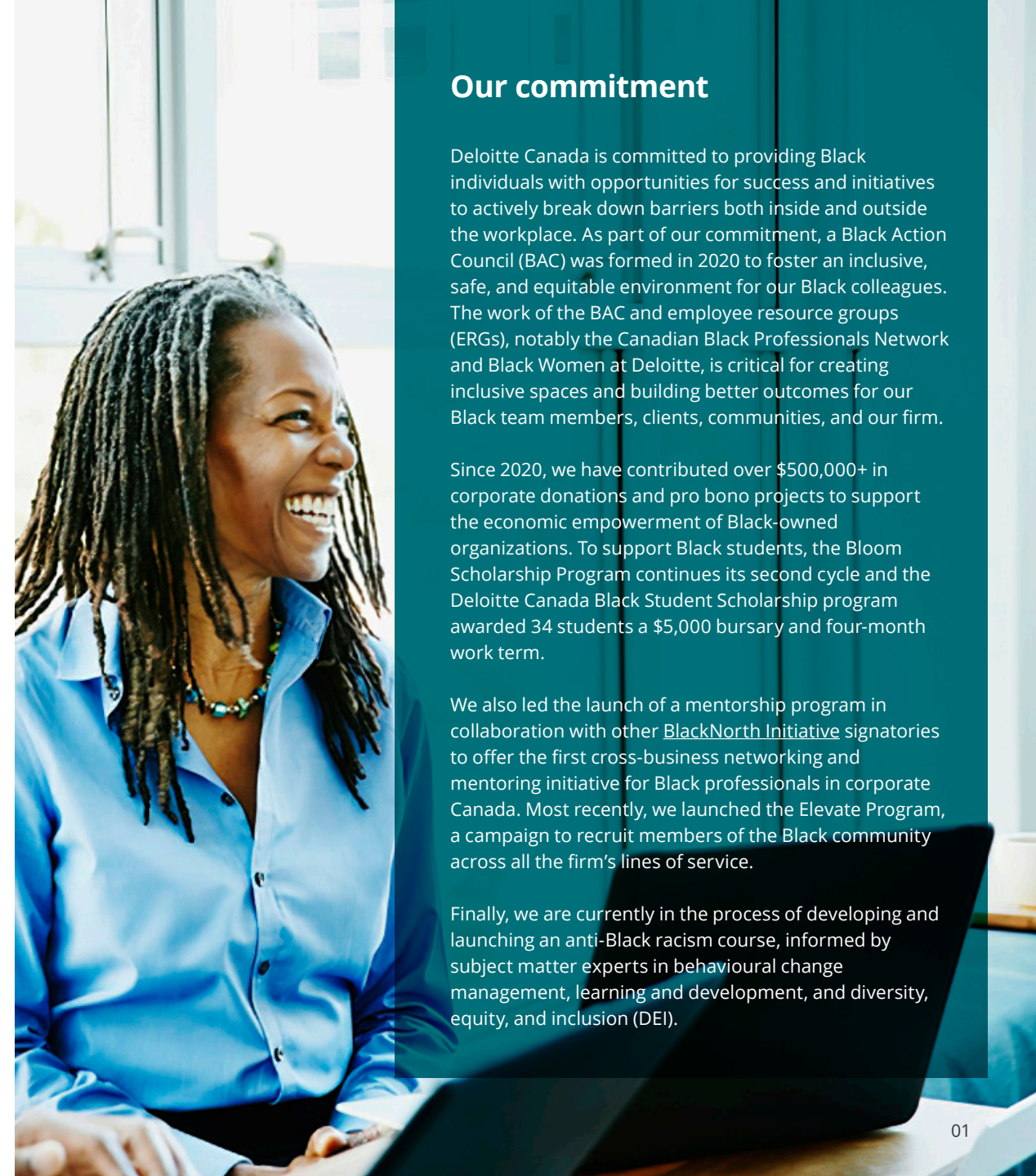
We also led the launch of a mentorship program in collaboration with other [BlackNorth Initiative](#) signatories to offer the first cross-business networking and mentoring initiative for Black professionals in corporate Canada. Most recently, we launched the Elevate Program, a campaign to recruit members of the Black community across all the firm's lines of service.

Finally, we are currently in the process of developing and launching an anti-Black racism course, informed by subject matter experts in behavioural change management, learning and development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

* 104 responses were collected in the BAC Equitable and Inclusive Workplace Survey (2023)

**Personas reflect the compilation of data points from real people that help us to understand human needs and contexts

***The list of **moments that matter** are not meant to be exhaustive



Meet our personas

Introducing three Black professionals and their stories



Adewale Achebe (he/him)
Analyst (Early-career)

Adewale recently completed his business degree and is looking for full-time employment. He intends to pursue a chartered professional accountant certificate after graduation. He is looking for a role with professional development and mentorship opportunities, especially for Black professionals.

Before completing his studies, Adewale worked as a lead analyst in his home country. With several years of relevant work experience under his belt in Canada and overseas, he hopes to progress quickly within an organization that supports his career goals.



Naomi Williams (she/her)
Manager (Mid-career)

Naomi is a manager on the data science team at a healthcare company. With eight years of industry experience, she is looking for new opportunities to pursue leadership roles and develop new skills.

As a Black professional in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, she has difficulty finding mentors and career sponsors who share her identity and experiences. She wants to support her team and look out for junior employees, while also finding someone to advocate for her own career growth and development.



Alice Dupont (she/her)
Senior leader (Executive level)

Alice has reached many of her career goals and is now the senior vice president at a design agency, where she had started as an account manager more than ten years ago.

Although Alice knows she is well-qualified, she still experiences self-doubt that is exacerbated by others' perception that she was only offered an executive role to meet a diversity quota. Alice has a seat at the table, but continues to fight to have her voice heard by other executives in the room. She is keen to develop her own leadership style and leave a legacy for other Black professionals who will follow in her footsteps.

Adewale's story he/him

Analyst (Early-career)



1

Recruitment: Getting the job

Adewale learns about your organization at a networking event. He applies despite noticing a lack of Black representation among the panelists, and not getting as much interest in his resume as similarly qualified peers during the recruitment cycle.⁶

He receives an offer and negotiates his salary, which was initially less than the average starting salary of his non-Black counterparts.

Insight | Black Canadians earn less annually compared to non-racialized Canadians, including both new immigrants and third-generation Canadians.⁵

Moments that matter



- Meeting Black peers and interviewers during the recruitment process
- Discovering that applicants' names and addresses are removed from initial screening to reduce bias
- Learning about the organization's commitment to DEI through their shared values and purpose

2

Onboarding: Connecting to the organization

Adewale begins onboarding and starts learning about the cultural norms of the company.

He struggles to connect with other new hires at first, but is delighted when he receives an email invitation to join a peer group for analysts and the Black professionals employee resource group (ERG). He sees the benefits of his membership, as he navigates working at the organization and tackles systemic racism and unconscious bias at work.⁸

Insight | 78% of Black Canadians find racism concerning at work.⁷

Moments that matter



- Connecting with Black ERGs during onboarding
- Meeting with a peer buddy to build an initial connection to the organization
- Completing an unconscious bias training with peers and leaders

3

Development: Receiving and soliciting feedback

Adewale's first career development conversation happens after completing a major project. He is eager to strengthen his skills and feels that he is heading on the path to success. However, the feedback revolves around being friendlier to fit in better.

Looking for tangible advice about his career options and growth, he registers for an internal Black employee mentorship program.

Insight | Only 12% of Black employees received feedback that they were easy to work with, compared to 41% of white employees.⁹

Moments that matter



- Receiving specific and task-oriented feedback from different managers
- Understanding the standard performance metrics for all employees
- Exchanging cultural norms about receiving and soliciting feedback in a support group

Naomi's story she/her

Manager (Mid-career)



1

Networking: Building a strong peer network

Naomi often notices that she is the only Black woman on her team. She started working with employees from other teams to gain different perspectives.

She hears about new opportunities from other Black colleagues and feels a sense of comradery among peers who are also trying to break into leadership roles.

Insight | Black employees hesitate to share personal information during networking and team bonding, for fear of reinforcing stereotypes that could undermine performance reviews and prevent progress to leadership roles.¹⁰

2

Progression: Finding career sponsors

Naomi reassesses her long-term future at the company due to a lack of Black representation in leadership and the extent to which she feels compelled to 'code switch'. She also notices that her non-Black peers are promoted more frequently.

Through leading a successful project, Naomi finds a career sponsor who advocates for her promotion to a senior manager position and helps her see a potential path to leadership. She decides to stay after seeing the organization overhaul its talent value proposition and implement a formal sponsorship and mentorship program.

Insight | Only 5% of up-and-coming Black employees succeed in winning sponsorships compared to 20% of their white peers.¹¹

3

Mentoring: Building a team

Having benefited from previous mentors, Naomi decides to mentor junior employees when the formal mentorship program is launched at work.

She discovers that mentoring makes her feel more connected to her team and helps her gain confidence in her leadership skills. It also gives her a support network of people to call upon and a space to reflect on her own experiences.

Insight | 74% of minority respondents participate in company mentorship programs.¹²

Moments that matter



- Participating in networking events that cut across different teams in the organization
- Meeting a trusted network of people both inside and outside of the organization

Moments that matter



- Being invited to join a formal sponsorship program and finding a career sponsor who advocates for her promotion and development
- Joining conversations with company executives and gaining exposure to working with decision-makers

Moments that matter



- Joining a formal mentorship program and being paired to mentor a junior Black employee
- Being provided resources, budgets, and supports for her mentees

*Code switching refers to the process of hiding aspects of your cultural and racial identity to fit in with the group or make others comfortable in an effort to receive equal opportunities and treatment.

Alice's story she/her

Senior leader (Executive level)



1

Leadership: Gaining credibility as a leader

Alice's team is receptive to her leadership, but it is an uphill battle to convince others that she was given the role based on merit, not to meet a diversity target. When meeting new clients and team members, Alice highlights her experiences and achievements as a leader.

Through executive coaching, she develops a unique leadership style designed to complement her skillset, personal values, and identity as a Black woman. She also solicits feedback from her team to better understand her strengths and development opportunities as a leader.

Moments that matter

- *Receiving upward feedback from her team on her skillset and leadership qualities*
- *Attending an executive coaching on how to flex her own leadership style*
- *Being recognized by the organization for her capabilities and performance*



2

Visibility: Having an equal seat at the table

Alice is responsible for managing client relationships and growing the business. While she meets other leaders at networking events, she realizes she is not as well-connected as her peers.

She leans on a well-connected mentor to gain a seat at the table and fights to have her voice heard, and learns that she is making significantly less than her peers. She is torn between leaving her cherished team or staying and feeling undervalued.

Moments that matter

- *Shadowing an executive leader to develop new skills and become privy to important conversations with key client accounts*
- *Receiving equitable compensation that is in line with her experience and her peers*
- *Building a personal board of directors* that includes sponsors inside and outside of the organization who will advocate for her*



3

Impact: Leaving a legacy

Alice strives to make an impact and leave a legacy. She hopes her experiences and story can inspire others. She passes on any information she gets to her mentees—coaching the next generation of Black professionals is an important part of her legacy.

She finds that she is disproportionately asked to chair and lead diversity initiatives at the organization, which takes her time away from core responsibilities, like building client relationships and growth platforms. She pushes to strike a balance and advocates for more opportunities to lead the strategic arms of the organization.

Seeking to use her professional skills to make an impact in her local community, Alice looks for board roles in community organizations.

Moments that matter

- *Participating in a reverse mentorship program to identify, hire, and promote new Black talent*
- *Being recognized as an industry and community leader*
- *Being invited to join a program to develop board director skills*



Insight | Black women are more likely to be given lower leadership ratings, even when they perform similarly to non-Black peers.^{13 14}

Insight | Companies in the top quartile for ethnic diversity within their executive teams were 36% more likely to financially outperform those in the fourth quartile.¹⁵

Insight | Black individuals have high rates of job satisfaction and resilience with 85% of Black women and 90% of Black men.¹⁶

* A personal board of directors is similar to a company's board of directors. It is a panel of interested parties who will sponsor, mentor, and support by leveraging their complementary skillsets, backgrounds, and perspectives.

Fostering an inclusive workforce

Below is a framework with key actions to cultivate a more inclusive workplace for Black individuals and empower them for career success. Metrics and activities are also included to measure what gets done. This framework is a starting point—we challenge you and your organization to set goals, collect data, and adopt your own metrics to make fundamental improvements for your Black employees and teammates through purposeful action.

Actions



Recruitment and onboarding

- ✓ Develop formal training and toolkits for recruiters and hiring managers on DEI, workplace discrimination, and anti-Black racism
- ✓ Include individuals of different identities in each step of the recruiting and screening process
- ✓ Use inclusive language in job descriptions, promotional materials, and hiring interviews
- ✓ Adopt a blind application screening process by removing candidates' names and addresses
- ✓ Ensure that information related to ERGs, tools and support are readily available and accessible
- ✓ Assign a peer buddy to create an initial connection to the organization



Development and networking

- ✓ Use consistent frameworks and feedback models during performance reviews. Provide very clear and specific feedback, minimize use of coded language and jargon
- ✓ Train people managers on unconscious bias and anti-Black racism through leadership development programs
- ✓ Leverage 360-degree assessments to collect multiple sources of performance feedback
- ✓ Host events that cut across different teams and business functions to foster community building
- ✓ Access to data on compensation across different levels and business lines is available
- ✓ Build responsibilities related to DEI into a full-time role to ensure that the work does not fall disproportionately on people of color diverting time away from their core work



Mentorship and sponsorship

- ✓ Develop a formal mentorship program where participants can share input about their match
- ✓ Implement a sponsorship program to develop a Black leadership pipeline
- ✓ Conduct periodic employee surveys to better understand perceptions of inclusion, belonging, and fairness and identify opportunities to improve talent experience
- ✓ Provide cultural awareness, unconscious bias, anti-Black racism, and power and privilege trainings for business and people leaders



Leadership and legacy

- ✓ Provide transparency on compensation bands across business lines to enable employees to make equitable talent decisions
- ✓ Enable leaders to build their own personal board of directors
- ✓ Implement a peer mentorship program to provide opportunities for a complementary perspective
- ✓ Invite emerging Black leaders to conversations with C-suite executives
- ✓ Provide flexibility and resources for Black leaders to access executive coaching of their choice
- ✓ Deliver board training and certification opportunities
- ✓ Create an environment for Black leaders to flex their own leadership style

Metrics

- Percent of self-identifying Black applicants
- Percent of self-identifying Black applicants who receive a job offer
- Percent of self-identifying Black employees who are connected to an ERG
- Average budget allocation set aside for ERGs
- Number of full-time roles dedicated to DEI
- Engagement scores/pulse survey results by demographic breakdown

- Percent of Black employees who are promoted each performance cycle*
- Promotion rate and average tenure of Black employees prior to promotion*
- Average performance review score for Black employees*
- Average salary of Black employees compared to their peers, including at different levels
- Average budget for training, certification, and upskilling provided to Black colleagues relative to their peers

- Percent of Black employees in a formal mentorship or sponsorship program
- Number of Black candidates being positioned for leadership roles
- Percent of Black employees who have left the company over a defined period

- Percent of Black employees promoted to leadership positions*
- Percent and number of senior leaders and executives who identify as Black
- Percent of Black employees in the company's leadership development program
- Salary of Black leaders relative to their peers
- Percent of board members who identify as Black
- Percent of executives with organization-sponsored coaches relative to their peers

*Relative to the general demographic of the organization

Building a path forward together

Corporate Canada continues to play a key role in advancing Black economic empowerment and social inclusion. We must remain accountable for undoing racist frameworks and changing organizational cultures in our workplaces.

The **moments that matter** laid out in this journey map are a starting point for organizations across Canada to gain insights into the experiences that can shift the career trajectory of Black talent. The metrics and activities identified provide practical steps to advance. Ultimately, creating sustained, systemic change will require action at all levels of the organization, matched by an adequate resource investments.

As a BlackNorth Pledge signatory, Deloitte Canada is committed to addressing anti-Black racism within our workplace and beyond. We are eager to accelerate meaningful change and call on our peers to continue investing in inclusive, safe, and equitable workplaces for Black professionals by dismantling systemic barriers, sponsoring opportunities, and enabling our people to achieve their full potential.

Join us on this journey.





Meet the team



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Endnotes

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