

A watercolor illustration of numerous hands of various skin tones reaching towards the center, creating a sense of unity and collective effort. The colors are warm, including shades of red, orange, yellow, and purple.

Deloitte.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Stories of purpose and lasting impact

Multiple teams, one dream

The Black Economic Alliance Foundation, in partnership with Spelman and Morehouse Colleges, has built a successful entrepreneurship program. How could new governance and decision-making strategies help scale it?

THEY WERE SETTING A **STRONG FOUNDATION** TO **MITIGATE STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES.**

THE SITUATION

The Black Economic Alliance (BEA) Foundation works tirelessly to build economic prosperity for the Black community, with a focus on work, wages, and wealth. The nonprofit has harnessed the collective expertise and influence of Black business leaders and conducted comprehensive research to inform its policy agenda. The BEA Foundation also partnered with Spelman College and Morehouse College, two of the top historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the United States, to establish the Center for Black Entrepreneurship (CBE).

The CBE is part of an expansive plan to cultivate a new generation of Black-owned businesses and address structural challenges Black entrepreneurs have traditionally faced in launching and sustaining a business—including lack of access to education, mentorship, capital, and networking. The BEA Foundation, Spelman, and Morehouse teams built a curriculum and ecosystem to support students at HBCUs and beyond. They were also entrepreneurial, following the path of many a successful startup.

They engaged with trusted business and philanthropic collaborators to build a world-class program rooted in the founding organizations' understanding of the intersection of race and entrepreneurship. They secured funding and hired top talent. And they made tremendous progress in relatively short time. Then—also like a successful startup—the teams began to consider whether it was time for the CBE to operate differently.

The BEA Foundation, Spelman, and Morehouse envisioned the CBE as an economic development engine that could connect talent, technology, and capital and, ultimately, transform communities. For the next phase of the CBE's evolution, the BEA Foundation saw an opportunity to support the teams' additional ambitions for scale and lay a stronger foundation, by way of a refreshed governance and strategic plan, that positions stakeholders to drive the greatest impact.



THE SOLVE

In 2022, Deloitte announced a [\\$1.5 billion social impact investment](#) to foster a more equitable society. This commitment included a pledge to supplement capabilities that could enhance the BEA Foundation's efforts to deliver on its mission. When the BEA Foundation set out to explore the CBE's strategy and governance scalability needs, Deloitte professionals were ready—and eager—to support the BEA Foundation in building upon the teams' initial success.

The CBE had flourished through collaboration, but typically, when multiple organizations come together, each has its own way of governing and making decisions. In this case, the BEA Foundation had a small staff and infrastructure, while Spelman and Morehouse were understandably more complex. Growing the CBE would involve more people from all three organizations, which underscored a need to codify working relationships and provide clarity on decisions. The Deloitte team advised on leading practices for a consortium-style arrangement with well-defined roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

To inform a future-state vision, Deloitte professionals talked with key CBE stakeholders

and BEA Foundation board members to understand their priorities and ask key questions like: Who did they want the program to serve, and what could that look like? How could they extend CBE services to even more students? After studying the broader landscape to guide strategic positioning in the market, they also asked such pertinent questions as: How was the CBE unique from similar programs and institutions? And how might it differentiate further?

Deloitte's work was rooted in conversations with stakeholders and supporting analysis, and weekly meetings with the BEA Foundation CEO helped drive the project agenda. The project culminated with a workshop, facilitated by Deloitte and attended by the BEA Foundation CEO and founders, both university presidents, and the newly installed executive director of the CBE. This gathering was pivotal for advancing the consortium arrangement and illuminated how to prioritize strategies in alignment with the BEA Foundation's goals for the CBE, leverage stakeholders' unique abilities, and close gaps to bring students closer to realizing their entrepreneurship dreams.

IMPLEMENTING A SHIFT **FROM STARTING UP TO SCALING UP.**

THE IMPACT

The CBE was designed to harness the multiplier effect of education, exposure, mentorship, access to capital, and opportunity so the resulting outcomes extend far beyond the initial investment. A refreshed governance that codifies the working relationship between the BEA Foundation, Spelman College, and Morehouse College teams—based on their respective talents and capabilities—would also yield exponential returns, such as making decisions more rapidly, growing teams more organically, and scaling the CBE more strategically.

The BEA Foundation came out of the strategy work with a clear definition of the CBE's accomplishments and impacts. Deloitte provided a synthesized view that formed the foundation of a cohesive strategy and narrative the BEA Foundation plans to use as it builds upon the CBE's success. This will be a key component in securing necessary funding and resources for ongoing support of the entrepreneurship program, as well as for the BEA Foundation overall.

Finally, after providing a forum for stakeholders to articulate their highest priorities for the CBE, Deloitte will leverage the breadth of its organization to support the BEA Foundation's efforts to grow the program's impact. That is already underway:

- Deloitte's Center for Board Effectiveness has shared insights the BEA Foundation can consider as it builds out its own governance structure.
- Deloitte Tax professionals provided advice to inform the BEA Foundation's decisions about tax structures for the various legal entities within the CBE.
- Deloitte data scientists conducted a data feasibility study designed to support the CBE policy agenda.



WHILE TEAMWORK MAY MAKE THE DREAM
WORK, GOOD GOVERNANCE SUSTAINS IT.

LET'S CONNECT.

Do these challenges sound familiar?



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