



## **Channel 4, Clear Channel and BACKLIGHT new study reveals that Black-owned businesses are disadvantaged compared to white-owned businesses**

A Channel 4, Clear Channel and BACKLIGHT study has revealed that Black entrepreneurs face more obstacles setting up and running their businesses than their white counterparts.

The study showed that Black business owners face more challenges generating funding and feel they have to fight hard to convince investors to believe in their businesses compared to white business owners.

The findings, which featured responses from more than 500 entrepreneurs, revealed that 56% of Black-owned businesses only receive funding once they had already grown a successful business, compared to just 35% of white business owners who were given the same requirement. In addition, 53% of Black-owned businesses agreed they had to fight hard to get others to believe in their business, compared to only 40% of white owners.

The research also showed a huge gulf between how much funding people believe Black businesses receive compared to how much investment actually goes into Black-owned companies. White respondents guessed that 21% of total funding goes towards Black led businesses, while Black participants estimated 15%. But the reality is that Black businesses attract just 0.24% of total venture capital investment\*.

For the study, Channel 4 teamed up with out of home media company Clear Channel UK and the creator of the [Black Pound Report](#), BACKLIGHT, to better understand and mitigate issues faced by Black business owners.

Independent research company, The Good Side, was commissioned to undertake the study by Clear Channel and Channel 4's commercial arm, 4Sales, as diversity and inclusion in the media – and the UK as a whole – is a top priority for both media owners.

In terms of a robust entrepreneurial spirit among Black and Multi-ethnic entrepreneurs, the study found that:

- 46% felt they could always run a successful business vs. 29% of white entrepreneurs.
- 71% expressed they always wanted to be their own boss vs. only 54% of white respondents.
- 62% of Black and Multi-Ethnic entrepreneurs started their businesses under 30.
- 1 in 8 Black and Multi-Ethnic entrepreneurs started their business as teenagers, twice the level of white owners.

The results also revealed that more Black business owners (64%) cite advertising as being very important to grow their companies compared to white owners (40%). Consequently, 47% of Black and Multi-ethnic entrepreneurs said they would find an initiative that helps with advertising appealing vs. 29% of white entrepreneurs.

**Amy Jenkins, Customer & Commercial leader at Channel 4 said:** “Inspired by continuing the legacy of Channel 4's award-winning Black To Front Project, which commits us to improve Black representation on and off screen and the findings from BACKLIGHT's Black Pound Report, we wanted to commission a study to identify how Channel 4 can help create real, tangible change for Black Owned Businesses across the UK. And the research has been enlightening, having identified a clear gap in opportunity and perception. We hope these findings inspire business owners and empowers UK industry to offer better, more targeted support to help Black and Multi-Ethnic entrepreneurs and in turn, help grow the British economy.

“Off the back of this research, we will shortly launch our own initiative to help nurture and support Black Owned businesses and entrepreneurs – so watch this space for more details.”



Clear Channel's [Compass](#) scheme also aims to empower Black owned businesses by offering free outdoor advertising space.

The purpose of Channel 4's Black To Front project is two-fold: firstly, to challenge the business to see its content differently, and secondly, to leave a lasting legacy in terms of increased Black representation both on- and off-screen. Maria St Louis, Channel 4's Equity & Inclusion Lead, helped spearhead the initiative with 4Sales.

**Maria St Louis said:** "Since 2015, my personal mission has been to remove the barriers to entry for Black Owned Businesses, by unlocking access to mainstream advertising platforms, with mainstream publishers like Channel 4. The vision is to level the playing field, achieve Economic Inclusion for Black Owned Businesses and to prove that with the right levels of support, they can successfully and sustainably contribute to the growth of the UK's economy. Having worked at Channel 4 for nearly 20 years, I'm proud that this initiative is fully backed by the business and will evolve in new and empowering ways."

**Caroline Forbes, Head of Sales - Out of Home Agencies at Clear Channel UK, said:** "This comprehensive research study has been invaluable in helping us to better understand the challenges that Black entrepreneurs face and how we can further support them as a media owner. With advertising being identified as one of the vital parts of business success, we will continue to create more visibility for Black-owned businesses on UK's high streets through our Clear Channel Compass initiative in line with our ongoing commitment to be both a Platform for Brands and a Platform for Good."

**Lydia Amoah at BACKLIGHT said:** As a Black CEO of a cultural change agency BACKLIGHT and Founder of The Black Pound Report, it's an honour to partner with Channel 4 and Clear Channel to explore the journey of Black Owned Businesses. As in all businesses, challenges are there. However, the journey of Black entrepreneurs is unique to our White counterparts; our issues are more enduring, and access to business opportunities can be difficult. Yet we are immensely ambitious, resourceful, resilient, innovative, and creative, already helping our economy thrive. Our research demonstrates that we can contribute billions to the UK economy and beyond when given equal opportunities and openings.

**Liz Cheesbrough, Business Director at The Good Side said:** "The Good Side was established to help organisations show up and respond to changes in culture, and this important project exemplifies the change we want to help bring to the world. By championing often overlooked audiences and bringing visionary insights to the fore, we can deliver meaningful impact not only for Black and Multi-Ethnic businesses and consumers but across society as a whole. We're proud to be part of this passionate collaboration between some of the biggest players in our industry and are excited for what the future holds."

**Ends**

[For interviews with Lydia Amoah](#)

Emma Baker – Project Manager  
emmabaker@backlight.uk  
[+44 7775 503758](tel:+447775503758)

**Notes to editors:**

### **Methodology**

- 1) In-depth desk research
- 2) Exploratory interviews with nine entrepreneurs to explore the landscape
- 3) An entrepreneur survey of 242 BME and 275 White entrepreneurs
- 4) A public perception survey of 1545 Nat Rep, with a boost of 550 BME people
- 5) A co-creation expert salon exploring the insight and co-designing actionable impact with eight entrepreneurs and industry experts:



- Akil Benjamin, Strategy Director at Comuzi and Founder of DOES
- Cyril Lutterodt, Co-Founder and Managing Partner of Black Seed Ventures
- Kanya King CBE, Founder of The MOBO Group
- Khalia Ismain, Co-founder of Jamii
- Nathaniel Wade, Co-Founder of Wakuda
- Serlina Boyd, Founder of Cocoa Magazine
- Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones, Founder of The Black Farmer
- Zeze Oriakhi-Sao – Founder of Malée Natural Science

\*Diversity Beyond Gender: The State of the Nation for Diverse Entrepreneurs, By Erika Brodnock Co-founder and Head of Research, Extend Ventures

#### **About Channel 4**

*Channel 4 exists to create change through entertainment. Publicly owned yet commercially funded, Channel 4 generates significant and sustainable cultural, economic and social impact across the UK – at no cost to the taxpayer.*

*The broadcaster's distinctive remit is set by Parliament, and it has a role to represent unheard voices, challenge with purpose and reinvent entertainment. For 40 years, it has been a British success story, engaging generation after generation of young people.*

*Through a unique publisher-broadcaster model, Channel 4 commissions its content from the UK independent production sector. Working with around 300 creative companies every year, Channel 4 makes a major contribution to the local, regional and national economy, creating and supporting thousands of jobs and businesses across the country.*

*In 2020, Channel 4 launched its Future4 strategy to become a digital-first public service media company and to continue to deliver significant impact for UK audiences and investment into the UK creative economy.*

*Across its bases in London, Leeds, Manchester, Bristol and Glasgow, Channel 4 is turbocharging its efforts to find, nurture and develop talent across the UK. Through its training and development initiative 4Skills, Channel 4 is opening up opportunities in broadcasting, with a particular focus on disadvantaged young people, and addressing skills gaps across the Nations and Regions.*

*Channel 4 has the UK's biggest free streaming service, All 4, plus 11 television channels including: Channel 4, E4, E4 Extra, More4, Film4, 4Seven and The Box Plus Network. Through Film4 Productions, Channel 4 also invests in British filmmakers to huge critical acclaim, producing 37 Oscar wins and 84 BAFTA wins in its history.*

<https://www.channel4.com/>

#### **About Clear Channel**

Clear Channel UK is one of the UK's largest Out of Home media and infrastructure companies, operating more than 33,000 advertising sites nationwide and employing 600+ people in 13 locations.

Our mission is To Create the Future of Media, transforming our estate to the benefit of all our stakeholders, through data-driven innovations and infrastructure. Our purpose is to provide both A Platform for Brands & A Platform for Good, delivering on advertisers' media objectives whilst having a positive impact on the world around us.

Find out more on [clearchannel.co.uk](http://clearchannel.co.uk) and follow us @clearchanneluk.

#### **About BACKLIGHT**

A culture change agency that helps companies become more inclusive across all intersectionalities by fostering engaged workplace environments where people feel valued and the work they produce connects with a broader consumer audience.

Established by Lydia Amoah, Founder of the universally acclaimed Black Pound Report, we advise and create bespoke workplace diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives that:



- Increase profitability and performance
- Deliver evolving, positive change through consultancy, training and development
- Help brands create better products, services and campaigns with a broader audience reach
- Drive inclusive recruitment and retention
- Transform the workplace into a happier, more productive environment.

Please find out more on [www.backlight.uk](http://www.backlight.uk) and follow us [@backlight\\_uk](https://twitter.com/backlight_uk)

### **About The Good Side**

*The Good Side is an insight, strategy and creative studio that works with leading and emerging organisations to solve for new markets, new spaces, new audiences and new problems - and make good things happen.*

*Based in London and working worldwide, The Good Side is a trusted advisor to organisations from global tech giants to one-person NGOs, from international brands to social enterprises. Some of our best known work includes powering the decriminalisation of homosexuality across the Commonwealth, driving behaviour change to support men's mental health, and inspiring the public to care about international aid.*

*Through a decade of global social and cultural change work, we have honed our toolkits for insight, strategy and storytelling, built a network of change-makers around the world, and helped all sorts of organisations effect transformations in culture.*

*We believe change is complicated and moves in mysterious ways. The biggest problems of our time are deep rooted and hard to grasp. And there's never a single solution to a wicked problem.*

*Understanding cultural complexity means looking broadly and deeply, and drawing on all kinds of data to surface insight. Real and lasting change comes from integrated strategies, influencing across the system and lighting many fires.*

[www.thisisthegoodside.com](http://www.thisisthegoodside.com)