

## **Half of Black communications professionals never promoted**

The UK Black Comms Network aims to increase the number and seniority of Black communications professionals and its ***One Step Forward Two Steps Black*** report found that Black employees were more likely to receive written or verbal praise for their efforts in the workplace than a pay rise, bonus or promotion which are the gateway to more senior leadership roles.

The overwhelming consensus amongst participants is that recognition and promotion is something that happens less frequently for Black employees (80 per cent). This is significantly higher than the national average (31 per cent). Further to this, many Black and mixed heritage professionals note a disparity between the way their colleagues' contributions are recognised in comparison to their own. While over two fifths (43 per cent) of Black and mixed heritage professionals state that their colleagues' contributions are recognised through promotions, only 21 per cent say their own contributions are recognised in this way.

The report found that, in the last 12 months, forty five per cent of Black communications professionals had received a pay rise and thirty one per cent had received a bonus.

One in seven (14 per cent) participants had never received any recognition for their contributions in the workplace and it is clear from the research that it is not due to a lack of talent or ability. Respondents shared examples of occasions when their talent and contribution had been overlooked by management. Several respondents had been asked to train a junior colleague who subsequently became their manager. Others noted that when their work had won external awards it had not been referenced or recognised internally by colleagues.

The other challenge to progression cited by many respondents was that, regardless of their experience, they did not have many opportunities to be client facing or have access to senior leaders. Equally, when it came to promotion, a lack of feedback made it unclear why they had been unsuccessful and how they could secure a promotion.

The lack of recognition and promotion has caused many to question how far they can progress within the industry, with just 8 per cent believing that it is highly likely that they will become the most senior communications professional in their organisation. However, it has inspired others to establish or consider establishing their own consultancies in order to take control of their career progression.

### **Kamiqua Pearce, CEO, The UK Black Comms Network said:**

"Hiring Black' is becoming a common phrase as agency leaders and hiring managers seek to redress the lack of 'ethnic diversity' in their teams. However the focus on numbers doesn't address the issues and structures that means current talent from African and Caribbean heritage is often overlooked.

“There is little benefit in creating a more diverse talent pipeline if the talent is then bottlenecked. This leads to a brain drain, and is one of the reasons that the face of senior leadership teams have remained largely unchanged. We want to work with the wider industry and existing initiatives to ensure that more Black talent is retained and able to thrive.”

### ***One Step Forward Two Steps Black report: Key figures***

*In their current role*

- 73 per cent of communication professionals of Black heritage have received written or verbal praise
- 72 per cent of communication professionals of Black heritage have not received a bonus
- 75 per cent of communication professionals of Black heritage have not received a pay rise
- 79 per cent of communication professionals of Black heritage have not received a promotion

The UK Black Comms Network membership is now live. Black PR and comms professionals who are interested in joining this new space should visit [blackcommsnetwork.co.uk/uk-bcn-membership](https://blackcommsnetwork.co.uk/uk-bcn-membership) and use code DAYONE50 for 50% of their first month of membership.

***Ends***

### **Note to Editors**

For media queries or more information about the event contact:

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### **Methodology**

Opinium survey 208 communication professionals of Black and Mixed heritage between 2 July 2020 and 20 July 2020.

Opinium in-depth interviews with 4 communication professionals of Black and Mixed heritage between 16 July 2020 and 30 July 2020.

Opinium survey 2,001 nationally representative UK adults between 6 November 2020 and 10 November 2020.

### **About The UK Black Comms Network**

The UK Black Comms Network aims to increase the seniority of Black PR and communications professionals of African or Caribbean heritage in the UK. Membership is now open. 50% off promotion applies to the first 50 sign ups.

<https://blackcommsnetwork.co.uk/>

### **About Opinium**

Opinium is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on the pulse of what people think, feel and do. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

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