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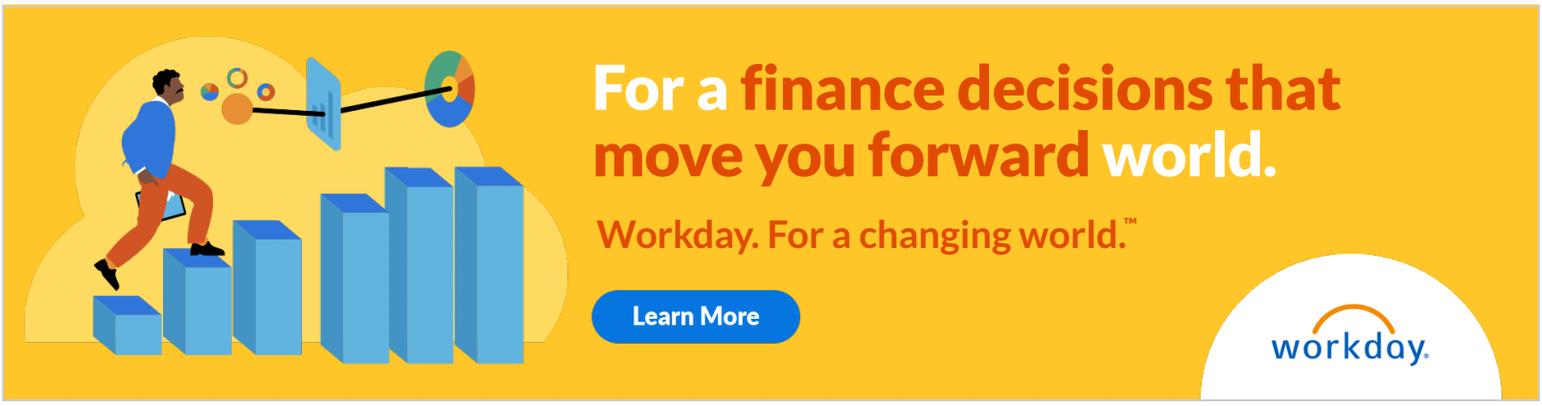

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Five Things Black U.K. Professionals Can Do To Increase Their Leadership Potential

Remi Adebonojo Forbes Councils Member
Forbes Coaches Council
COUNCIL POST | Membership (Fee-Based)

Oct 7, 2022, 07:15am EDT

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According to a 2021 survey conducted across the U.K. public and private sectors by the Colour of Power, only 71 out of the 1,163 most powerful people in the U.K. were from ethnic minorities, with 35, 18 and 18 being Asian, Black and from other ethnic minority groups, respectively. These numbers show a low representation of ethnic minorities, including Black professionals, in U.K. leadership roles.

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There is substantial material available on what companies can do to increase the representation of Black and other ethnic minority groups at senior leadership levels. However, much less has been written about what Black and ethnic minority professionals in the U.K. can do to improve their chances of attaining leadership roles. As a result, this article reflects on things from the perspective of a Black professional.

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Why Black Professionals?

This article does not intend to exclude other minorities; on the contrary, much of the advice will apply equally to professionals from other minority groups. However, the article acknowledges the differing generational, cultural, educational and income-based circumstances Black U.K. professionals have faced and how those have contributed to their low leadership representation levels.

Factors Limiting Black Professionals From Leadership Roles In The U.K.

According to a 2020 survey by the Grey Area, the critical factor cited by ethnic minority professionals in the U.K. for lack of representation in lead roles was "unconscious bias"—stereotypes formed outside one's conscious awareness of groups of people. Whether it manifests as an assumption about a particular background, an emotional disposition or a presumption of skill level, it can limit career progression. Examples include subconsciously assuming that a Black man might be a more aggressive competitor or applying name bias, wherein an "English-sounding" name is subconsciously preferred to an "African-sounding" one.

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Other reasons cited by ethnic minorities include a lack of

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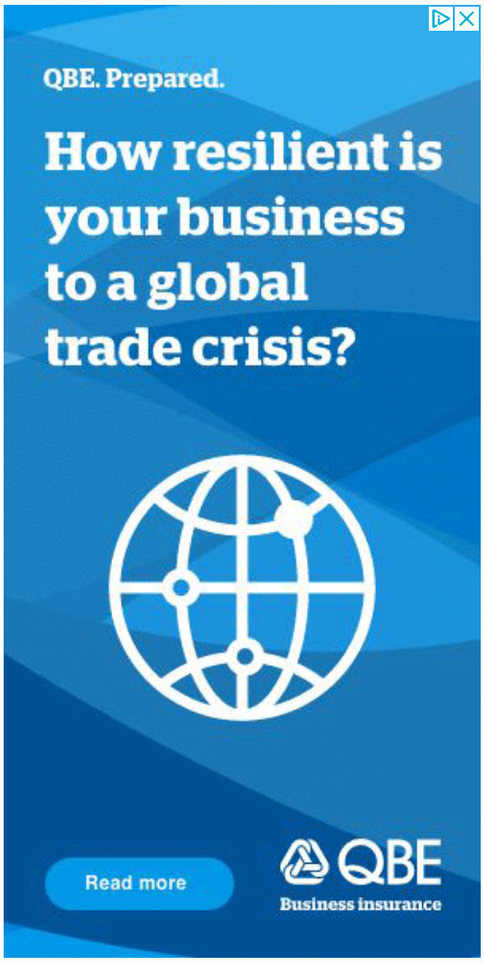

development opportunities within companies, a lack of visible role models or mentors and non-inclusive organizational cultures.

Their white colleagues also saw unconscious bias as a significant limiting factor for ethnic minorities, according to research from the Grey Area. These colleagues also added a lack of confidence and self-esteem as other limiting factors.

Despite these limiting factors, how is it that some Black professionals in the U.K. have been able to break the barriers? Perhaps they are outliers, but what makes them different? What can you do to become one of them? Here are some simple tips to help you along that journey.

1. Embody a growth mindset. Your mindset significantly impacts what you can achieve. There are two types of mindsets: fixed and growth. Those with fixed mindsets believe intelligence, personalities and talents are stable traits that cannot change or grow. This mindset can lead to the belief that things will be a certain way, no matter what. A classic example is when a Black professional believes that no matter how hard they try, they will always be overlooked based on the color of their skin.

On the other hand, a growth mindset enables you to *not* define yourself by traits, intelligence, personalities or talents; instead, you see yourself as constantly evolving and growing and being keen to develop your abilities. The growth mindset also allows you to see failure as part of the journey, not the destination. A growth mindset will enable you to be more resilient and creative when faced with challenges and see your skin color not as a limiting factor in your growth but as a simple part of who you are.

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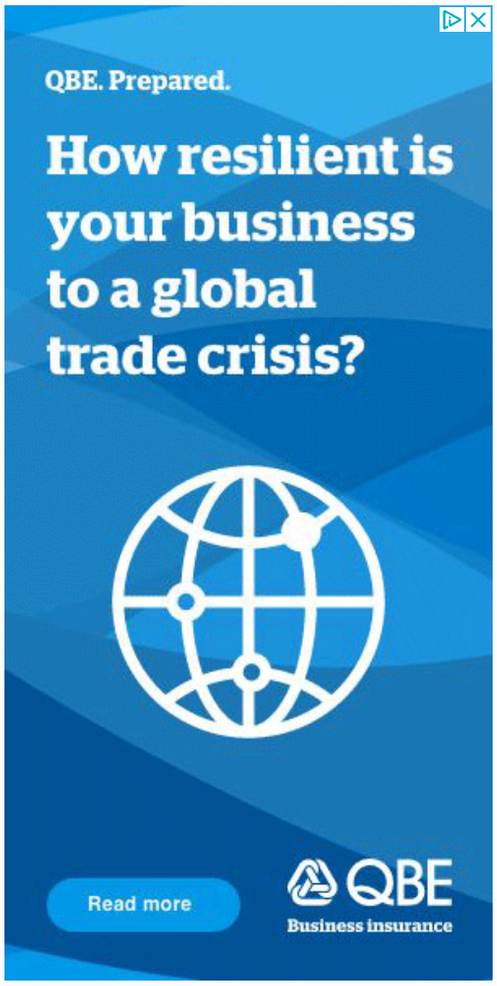

2. Be intentional with your success. Many of us play it safe with our careers; we think because we are Black, we shouldn't rock the boat; we may be "just happy they let us in, so why make noise?" Remember this, though: Your organization knew you were Black when they hired you, so a helpful reframing would be to consider that maybe the company brought you in because of your unique lens.

Getting to a leadership level involves being noticed, heard and distinct (in a good way). So don't be shy about sharing that good idea, taking on that risky project (as long as you know you can handle it) or putting yourself out there. Go for the big wins, don't whisper your ideas, take ownership and if you feel you can't shine in the organization you are in, maybe it is time to move to a place where you can.

3. Socialize for success. Be clear on your purpose and long-term goals and how to achieve them. Surround yourself with people who share your vision, no matter their color or creed. Get a feeling for what they do and learn from them. Your mind will subconsciously start to absorb some of their habits and nuances, making it easier for you to get to where you want to reach.

4. Be self-aware. Understand your strengths and weaknesses. Play to your strengths, analyze your weaknesses and ascertain whether each weakness is essential to your growth; if so, master how to plug it. Work with mentors and coaches who will help you on your journey. Ensure that one or two of your mentors share similar traits to you, enabling you to identify with each other's journeys.

5. Be strategic with your career. We often prioritize our tactical well-being over long-term growth; for instance, taking on more lucrative freelance contract roles over initially lower-paying permanent positions. Understand that if leadership is your end goal, then sacrifice might be involved, which might entail learning your craft, proving loyalty to an organization through longevity or moving from a bigger organization to a smaller one to achieve your goals. That said, don't feel wrong about being "mercenary" with your career choices; always look out for yourself first, career-wise.

There are many more tips; these are just a few things you can do as a Black professional in the U.K. to increase your leadership potential. The most important thing to remember is that it involves having the right mindset; being intentional, self-aware and strategic; and engaging the right people.

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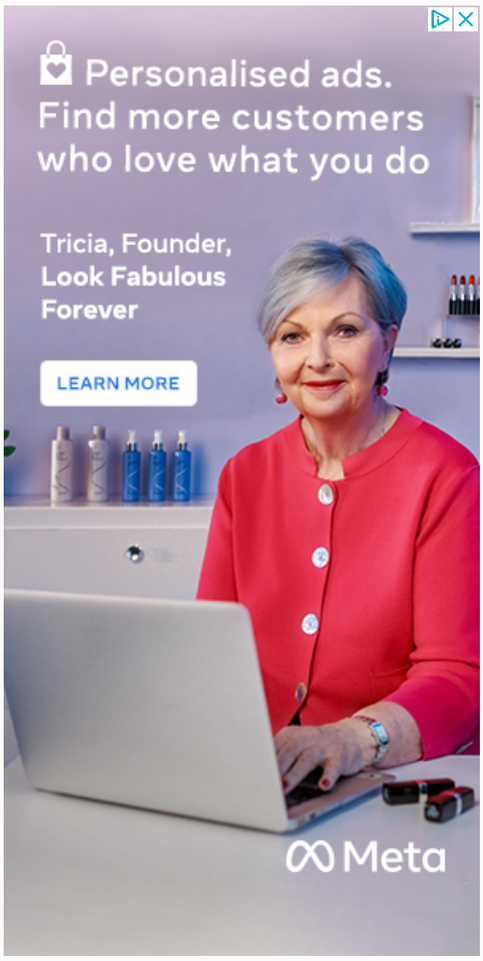

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Greening Aviation: Reducing Emissions Along The Aircraft Value Chain

Jean-Louis Rassineux Brand Contributor
Deloitte BRANDVOICE | Paid Program

Jul 15, 2022, 09:40am EDT

The global air transport industry has been ahead of the decarbonization curve for several years, committing to halve its CO_2 emissions by 2050 (against a 2005 benchmark). This ambition is in line with the Paris Agreement objectives, with the industry even seeking to reach total carbon-neutrality for intra-European flights by the same year.

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But to achieve these goals, a holistic approach must be adopted by the industry. This means an approach that encompasses the entirety of the aviation value chain and ecosystem, reaching beyond aircraft operations and production alone.

Technology is key

Structural evolutions on aircraft and propulsion technology are key to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions within the aviation industry. There are a few important technology developments that are helping move the GHG agenda forward:

- **Fleet renewal**. New aircrafts leveraging advanced technologies, such as lighter alloys, optimized designs, and higher efficiency engines are delivering sizeable fuel savings of 15% to 20%. Optimized designs also contribute to the emissions reduction. For example, winglet retrofits—devices that reduce drag on wings—alone led to 80-million tons of CO_2 reduction since 2000 globally.

- **Use of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs).** These fuels, which are either bio-sourced or obtained by combining green hydrogen with captured CO_2 (power to liquid), are a promising option as they are compatible with current engines. Depending on how SAFs are processed, this could mean a 50% to 98% reduction in CO_2 emissions. Right now, 45 airlines globally are exploring SAF options. However, use of SAFs is still limited, with costs historically two to four times that of jet fuel—although recent steep increases in oil and gas prices are significantly reducing the gap.

- **Powering aircrafts with hydrogen.** Hydrogen-powered aircrafts are expected to arrive in the next decade—which means aircraft with no CO_2 emissions at all. Some major aircraft manufacturers are developing not only traditional aircraft that are hydrogen powered but also models with alternate flying wing designs that can improve overall performance.

Operational changes are also necessary

Airlines' operations and maintenance optimization can also have a significant impact on CO_2 emissions. Some of these changes include:

- **Better flight-planning and "eco-piloting,"** including reducing cancelled flights that disrupt planning and being stricter about sticking to optimized flightpaths and landing configurations. Improved traffic management systems will help enable these transformations.

- **In-flight weight reduction**. Airlines are continuously looking for ways to make the interior design of an aircraft (e.g., seats, equipment, galleys) lighter, deploying policies to reduce on-board paper (e.g., digitization of flight documentation and magazines), and adjusting water usage to better align with flight occupation rates and durations.

- **Ground operations.** Using greener vehicles on the ground—such as electric or hydrogen powered—helps reduce emissions. Also, single-engine taxiing—where only half of the installed number of engines are used to taxi on the runway—offers the opportunity to reduce fuel consumption and emissions.

- **Improved maintenance, repair, and operations (MRO).** MRO can play a sizeable role in decarbonization. Planning enabled by AI and big data can improve overhaul operations and therefore ensure a better balance between maintenance costs, aircraft ground-time and fuel consumption. Furthermore, some maintenance operations, such as engine or plane washing or using special coating treatments to reduce air resistance, can also improve fuel consumption.

The value chains matter

Aircraft value chains—including both production and maintenance—emit smaller amounts of CO_2 but still must be factored into efforts to decarbonize the industry.

Currently aircraft manufacturers and MRO players are already strongly engaged in reducing Scope 1 and 2 emissions—those emissions generated directly through manufacturing and operations—accounting for about 10% to 15% of the total CO_2 emissions. They are also working on engine testing carbon efficiency (including SAF integration), extended manufacturing process electrification, power auto-production (deploying proprietary solar panels in industrial facilities), buildings and process energy efficiency.

However, the most impact comes from optimizing the end-to-end construction of the whole aircraft, starting at the design phase, and looking at the whole lifecycle, including the maintenance process. Integrating sustainable parts and components as well as repairing them whenever possible, rather than replacing them with new parts, is also crucial. Finally, fully digital management of operations and supply chains will help enable this transformation.

Collaborating for success

Achieving substantial results will require well-coordinated collaboration that involves not only aircraft manufacturers, airlines, MRO players, and airports but also power and gas utilities, public authorities, and even ground mobility operators. Only by engaging the entirety of the ecosystem can decarbonization goals be met within the industry.

To learn more about decarbonization in aviation, please visit the Deloitte Aerospace & Defense pages on Deloitte.com.

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