



BLACK BUSINESS  
EDMONTON

# BUSINESS REPORT



2023

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# ABOUT BLACK BUSINESS EDMONTON

**The mission** of Black Business Edmonton is to empower and uplift the Black business community in Edmonton by providing resources, support, and opportunities for growth and success. This includes creating a platform for Black-owned businesses to thrive, fostering networking opportunities, promoting economic empowerment, and advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the local business landscape. Through its initiatives and programs, Black Business Edmonton aims to build a vibrant and inclusive ecosystem where Black entrepreneurs can flourish and contribute to the economic and social prosperity of Edmonton and its surrounding communities.

**The vision** for Black Business Edmonton (BBE) is to create a thriving and equitable business ecosystem where Black entrepreneurs are celebrated, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential. BBE envisions a future where Black-owned businesses are integral to the economic landscape of Edmonton, contributing to innovation, job creation, and community prosperity. Additionally, BBE seeks to foster a culture of collaboration, diversity, and inclusion, where all members of the community have equal access to opportunities and resources for success. Ultimately, BBE aims to be a catalyst for positive change, driving economic empowerment and social progress for Black individuals and communities in Edmonton and beyond.

# A WORD FROM THE FOUNDER

As the founder of Black Business Edmonton (BBE), I emphasize our organization's commitment to empowering the Black community through unity and action.

Utilizing my IT expertise, BBE was established to connect and promote Black-owned businesses, fostering community growth.

The message underscores a "less talk, more action" approach, aiming to build a thriving ecosystem for Black entrepreneurs.

BBE seeks to boost businesses' visibility and also provide resources and networking opportunities, inviting community members, business owners, and allies to join the cause for a brighter and inclusive future.

**IBUKUN OREFUJA (IBK)**  
CEO





# OUR JOURNEY

It all started with the simple idea of impacting and sharing with our community. Over the first year, we have achieved incredible milestones with the support of our creative and passionate community.



**50+**  
Businesses listed  
on our online  
platform



**250+**  
Entrepreneurs  
attending our in  
person meet-ups.



**2000+**  
Community members  
across social media  
platforms.



**1000+**  
Attendees  
celebrating culture  
at two festivals



**5000+**  
Dollars invested in local  
business growth.



**25+**  
Community sponsors  
and partners.



Unique mental health  
initiatives for business  
owners and entrepreneurs



Certificate of acknowledgement  
from the Member of Parliament

# KEY INITIATIVES

## Online Black Business Directory

The online business listing initiative by Black Business Edmonton serves as a pivotal tool in supporting and promoting Black-owned businesses in the community. It offers increased visibility, accessibility, and networking opportunities for entrepreneurs while providing consumers with an easy way to discover and support local Black-owned businesses. Additionally, the platform serves as a resource hub, offering valuable tools and information for business growth. Overall, the initiative reinforces BBE's commitment to fostering economic empowerment and building a more inclusive business ecosystem in Edmonton.



## SEO Mastery: Amplifying Black Voices in the Digital Realm

Ranking number one in search engine results for "black-owned businesses in Edmonton" is a remarkable feat that underscores BBE's strategic prowess in SEO. This achievement is critical for Black entrepreneurs, for whom visibility in the saturated digital market can be a game-changer. BBE's success in this area illuminates the path for other community-focused platforms seeking to enhance their digital footprint. It exemplifies how targeted SEO strategies can elevate the profile of niche markets, providing them with the visibility necessary to thrive in a competitive environment.

## Marketing and Promotions

In addition to our online directory, we actively promote listed businesses through various marketing channels, including social media, email newsletters, and community outreach initiatives. By highlighting the unique offerings and stories of Black-owned businesses, we aim to raise awareness and increase patronage, ultimately driving economic empowerment within the community.

## Partnerships and Collaborations

We believe in the power of collaboration to create positive change. Throughout the year, we have formed partnerships with local organizations, government agencies, and corporate sponsors to amplify our impact and support the growth of Black-owned businesses. These collaborations enable us to leverage resources, access new opportunities, and advocate for the needs of the Black business community on a broader scale.



## **Mental Health Awareness**

Black Business Edmonton placed significant emphasis on mental health awareness and the well-being of both business owners and young individuals within the community. This focus was evident during BBE's One-Year Anniversary celebration, which featured a key event: the Round Table Panel Conversation. This segment brought together esteemed psychiatrists and mental health professionals from Alberta, offering attendees profound insights into the nexus of business operations and overall well-being.

Ibukun Orefuja, the founder of Black Business Edmonton, received a recognition and certificate of acknowledgement from Honourable Randy Boissonnault; Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages of Canada, recognizing his outstanding contributions to community.

## **Networking Events and Workshops**

We understand the importance of networking and collaboration in driving business growth. That's why we organize regular networking events, workshops, and seminars where Black entrepreneurs can connect with like-minded individuals, share insights, and forge valuable partnerships. These events provide opportunities for business owners to learn from industry experts, gain valuable skills, and expand their professional networks.



# ONE YEAR IN COMMUNITY

## SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Through a range of initiatives and partnerships, BBE continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and families across Edmonton. commitment to serving and uplifting the community we proudly call home

250,000

Social Media impressions

1500

visitors, guests and attendees

1500

social media followers

“Once you have a clear path, then the kind of support you are looking for will come along with you.

IBK Ibukun Orefuja

### PROJECTS

#### Jollof Fest

A celebration promoting work-life balance for Black professionals in Canada

#### Ghana Fest

The event celebrated Ghanaian culture with vibrant displays of music, dance, and fashion.

#### BBE Anniversary Gala

A celebration of the year so far.

### OUTCOME

Attendees enjoyed family-oriented games, a dedicated Kids' Corner, and witnessed an entrepreneur's pitch for a chance to win a \$5000 grant.

Black Business Edmonton contributed to the success by supporting black-owned businesses in Edmonton through a dedicated vendor booth.

Keynote Speakers, Mental Health Panel, Live Music Performance, Networking, Awards, Prices and so much more.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FROM ATTENDEES

There were so many takeaways for me personally and professionally. I give you immense respect and thanks for putting mental health at the forefront and opening the conversation on one of the most important topics which still has a stigma in many cultures. Sasan, myself and RBC look forward to partnering with you and many black entrepreneurs in your network to ensure that Edmonton has a thriving community of black business owners!



# POSTCARDS





"The BBE initiative to create a space for local black businesses is appreciated. Through them I have been able to meet other local professionals and also find community services I wasn't aware of Thank you."

- Nessa Thompson

"Great Organisation, very much needed for our city. A great way to showcase local entrepreneurs and their businesses."

- Jay Obama

"I am a first-hand beneficiary of black business Edmonton's services. The publicity, mentions, direction and even recommendations for awesome events have projected my business tremendously. I have gained many followers on Instagram and have had more people contact me for my products and services as a fashion designer. I am so grateful for this.

Thank you and keep up the good work."

- Aderonke Aderibigbe

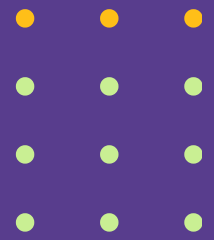
"This page helped advertise my local handmade craft and it increased my visibility."

- Copho Creation

# Testimonials



# FEATURED BUSINESSES



<b>Atadel</b> <b>Deola's Delights</b> Lushcakesnmore	<b>Babaron Outfits</b> <b>Beyond Care Living Inc.</b>	<b>3JSOFT</b> <b>Orbit House Media</b> Afroedmontonian	<b>Veev Clothiers</b> <b>Tfoundhervoice</b> <b>Temi Olukay Studio</b>
<b>Karlene's Jamaican Kitchen</b> Naijasnackhub	<b>Charis Events &amp; Rentals</b> <b>Clavis Studio</b> Itemshare	<b>RitawhyteEmpire</b> <b>Honey Technologies</b> SCALEDai	<b>The Lashpertise</b> <b>Beyond Care Living</b>
<b>M&amp;G Treats and Bakery</b> <b>The Tantalizers Cuisine</b>	<b>Gymbody Athletics</b> <b>LuMi Cosmetics</b> <b>Modern Purair</b>	<b>Miss Purple Media</b> <b>Nature and Paradise Spa</b>	<b>Sweet Mint Events</b> <b>Techphins</b> <b>Cynel Law</b>
<b>DJ Yomexx</b> <b>Cobas Staffing Agency</b>	<b>Annys Hair &amp; Beauty Salon</b> <b>Flourish Dental</b>	<b>Famille Contracting Inc</b> <b>Journeys of Life Counselling</b>	<b>JS Havilah Writings</b> <b>Kaizen Psychological</b>





## Diversity

Revolutionising A community with infinite and and limitless potential

### A melting pot

one theme that shines through is the incredible diversity of entrepreneurs who make up our community. From seasoned business owners to aspiring startups, from artists and artisans to professionals and innovators, BBE is a melting pot of talent, passion, and ambition.



These businesses are committed to promoting holistic well-being, empowering individuals to prioritize self-care, and fostering a culture of health and resilience.



Contributing to Edmonton's culinary diversity, economic vitality, and cultural richness.



These businesses play a crucial role in amplifying voices, sharing stories, and connecting with audiences.



Other businesses provide a diverse array of services.



From eco-friendly fashion brands and organic skincare lines to inclusive beauty products and wellness innovations,

# THE AWARDEES



# SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As we reflect on the accomplishments and impact of Black Business Edmonton (BBE), we extend our deepest gratitude to our partners, sponsors, and the wider community whose unwavering support has been instrumental in our journey of empowerment and advocacy. Your dedication, generosity, and collaboration have helped us achieve significant milestones and create lasting change within the Black business community and beyond.

## Christelle Mokoko

Founder/CEO, Innova Circle

## Rehana Malik-Mbanga

CEO, When African Women Talk

## Randy Boissonnault

Member of Parliament

## Sasan Karbasi

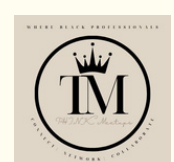
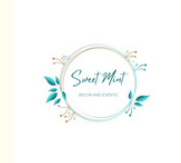
RBC Black Entrepreneurship Program

## Andrew Boitchenko

Parliamentary Secretary of Indigenous Relations

## David Sheperd

MLA for Edmonton City-Centre





# BBE IN MEDIA

## BBE On Global News Edmonton



## BBE at My Radio 580AM



## BBE On Ladies Corner Magazine



# BBE IN THE FUTURE

As we look ahead to the future of Black Business Edmonton (BBE), we are filled with excitement and determination to build upon our successes and expand our impact in the community. With a renewed focus on innovation, inclusivity, and social responsibility, we are committed to advancing our mission of empowering Black entrepreneurs and fostering economic empowerment and social inclusion.

## Online Job Portal

One of our key initiatives for the future is the addition of a job listing platform to our online directory. By connecting job seekers with employment opportunities within the Black business community, we aim to support career advancement, promote economic mobility, and strengthen the workforce pipeline. Through this platform, businesses can post job openings, internship opportunities, and mentorship programs, while job seekers can access resources, network with potential employers, and explore career paths within our community.

## Reaching More Communities

In our commitment to serving the broader community, we recognize the importance of expanding our reach and engaging with diverse communities across Edmonton. Through targeted outreach efforts, community partnerships, and grassroots initiatives, we aim to increase awareness of BBE and reach underserved populations, including newcomers, refugees, Indigenous communities, and individuals facing barriers to economic opportunity.



# BBE IN THE FUTURE

## Mental Health Awareness

Mental health is a critical component of overall well-being, and we are dedicated to promoting mental health awareness and support within the BBE community. In collaboration with mental health professionals and community organizations, we plan to offer workshops, seminars, and resources focused on mental health education, self-care strategies, and access to mental health services.

## Community Events Calendar

A dynamic platform showcasing a diverse array of events hosted by and for the Black community in Edmonton. This calendar serves as a centralized hub where community members can discover, engage with, and participate in a wide range of events, including cultural celebrations, networking gatherings, educational workshops, and more.

## Culture of Collaboration

Collaboration is at the heart of our approach to community building, and we are committed to fostering a culture of collaboration, mutual support, and collective action. Through strategic partnerships, cross-sector collaborations, and community-driven initiatives, we aim to harness the collective strength and expertise of diverse stakeholders to address systemic challenges, drive innovation, and create lasting impact.





# 5000

Black Business Edmonton is committed to expanding our online community by gaining an additional 5000 followers across our social media platforms. To achieve this goal, we will implement targeted social media campaigns, engaging content strategies, influencer partnerships, and community outreach initiatives.

# 10%

We aim to boost sales impact for businesses listed on our platform by an additional 10%. We'll achieve this through enhanced visibility, customer engagement, business support, strategic partnerships, and data-driven optimization.

# 1M

Our aim at Black Business Edmonton is clear: reach 1 million engagements on social media. Join us on this journey as we make a lasting impact together.

# 300%

We aim to triple the number of businesses listed on our platform. This will involve targeted outreach, digital marketing efforts, strategic partnerships, user experience improvements, and community advocacy.



# THANK YOU



As we wrap up this report, we want to express our deepest gratitude to all who have supported Black Business Edmonton. Your dedication, collaboration, and belief in our mission have been invaluable. Together, we've made significant strides in empowering Black entrepreneurs and fostering economic empowerment in our community. Thank you for your continued support and partnership.