



BLACK COUNSEL FORUM

BCF24 REPORT

UK & Europe's largest
summit of **top Black**
legal professionals

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Sharon Thomas
 Founder & Managing
 Director Black Counsel Forum

Reflecting on this year's Black Counsel Forum, I feel immense pride and gratitude for what we achieved together. BCF24 exceeded all expectations, cementing our place as the premier gathering for Black legal professionals in the UK. This year, over 400 solicitors, barristers, and Inhouse-counsel came together to connect, learn, and elevate each other within our profession.

At the heart of BCF24 was our mission: to empower Black lawyers with a platform for meaningful networking, mentorship, and career growth. Our attendees had the opportunity to engage with more than 60 distinguished speakers, including associates and partners from top law firms, general counsel, barristers and judges. We were honoured to welcome Hervé Ekué as our keynote speaker, whose inspiring words on resilience and leadership set the perfect tone for our event.

We are immensely grateful to all our sponsors and partners who made BCF24 possible. Special thanks go to our headline sponsor, **Slaughter and May**, whose support helped make BCF24 an impactful experience for all. Their commitment to championing diversity in our profession speaks volumes, and we are excited to continue working together.

BCF24 was uniquely designed to let each participant curate their own experience. One of the event's standout moments was the Associates Workshop. Here, over 200 Black senior and junior associates, trainees, and partners from various firms across the UK and Europe came together to tackle the everyday challenges faced by associates across various firms. This collaborative session fostered skill-building and encouraged new, meaningful relationships.

Our gala dinner was an unforgettable celebration of Black excellence in law. The evening's highlight was awarding a Lifetime Achievement Award to Jacqueline McKenzie, one of the UK's top immigration lawyers. Her commitment to justice and her remarkable contributions to the field inspire us all, and we were privileged to honour her in front of our community.

As you read through this report, I hope you feel inspired by all we have accomplished together. BCF is more than a professional network; it's a space where we elevate, support, and champion each other. Thank you for being a part of this journey, and I am excited about the road ahead as we continue to grow and redefine the future of Black legal talent.

Thank you once again for joining us on this journey. BCF24 has set a new standard, and I look forward to an even brighter future together.



Sharon Thomas
 Founder, Black Counsel Forum

BCF24 SPONSORS



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SLAUGHTER AND MAY/

Gold Sponsors



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Awards Sponsor

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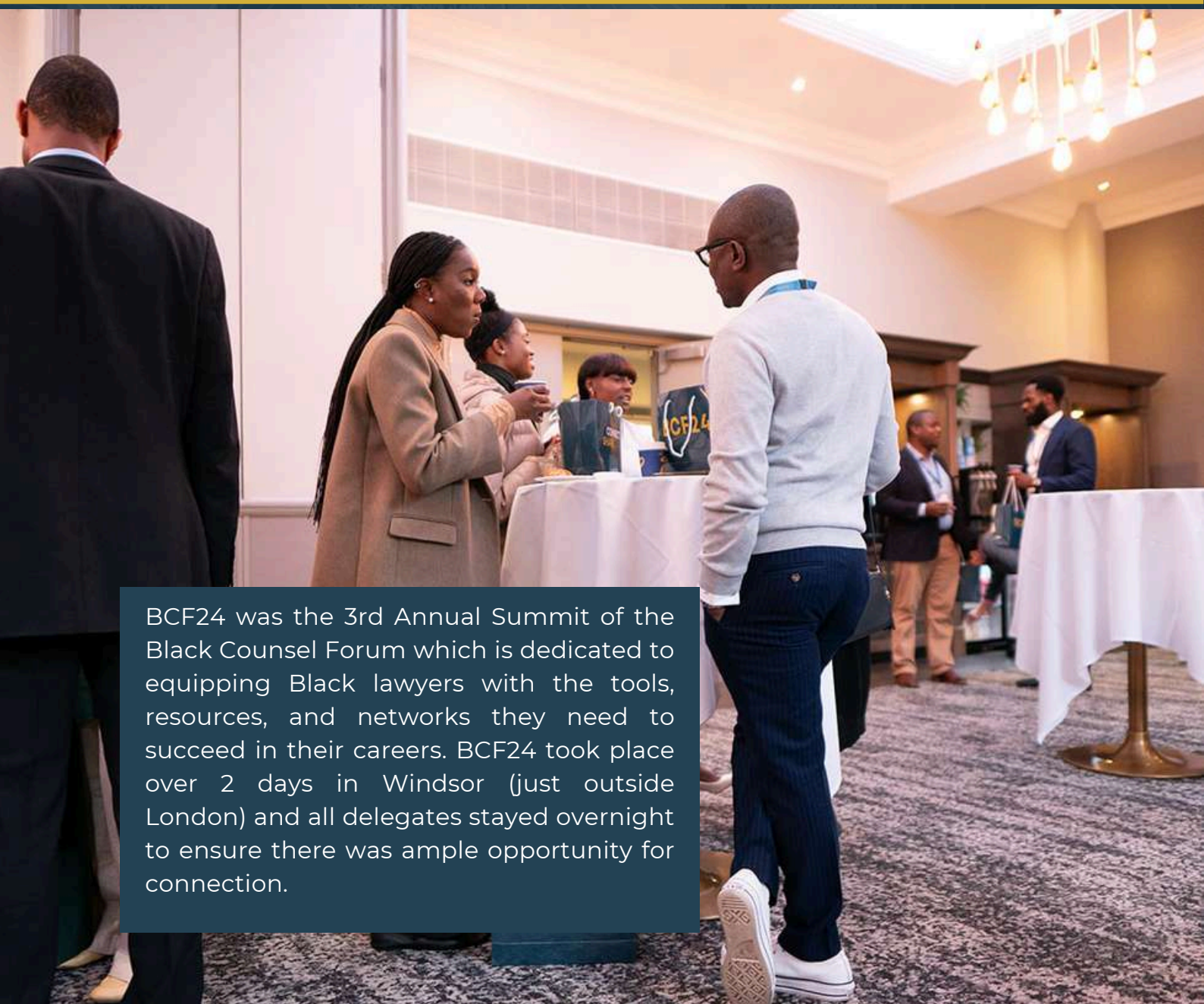
HewardMills
Your Global DPC

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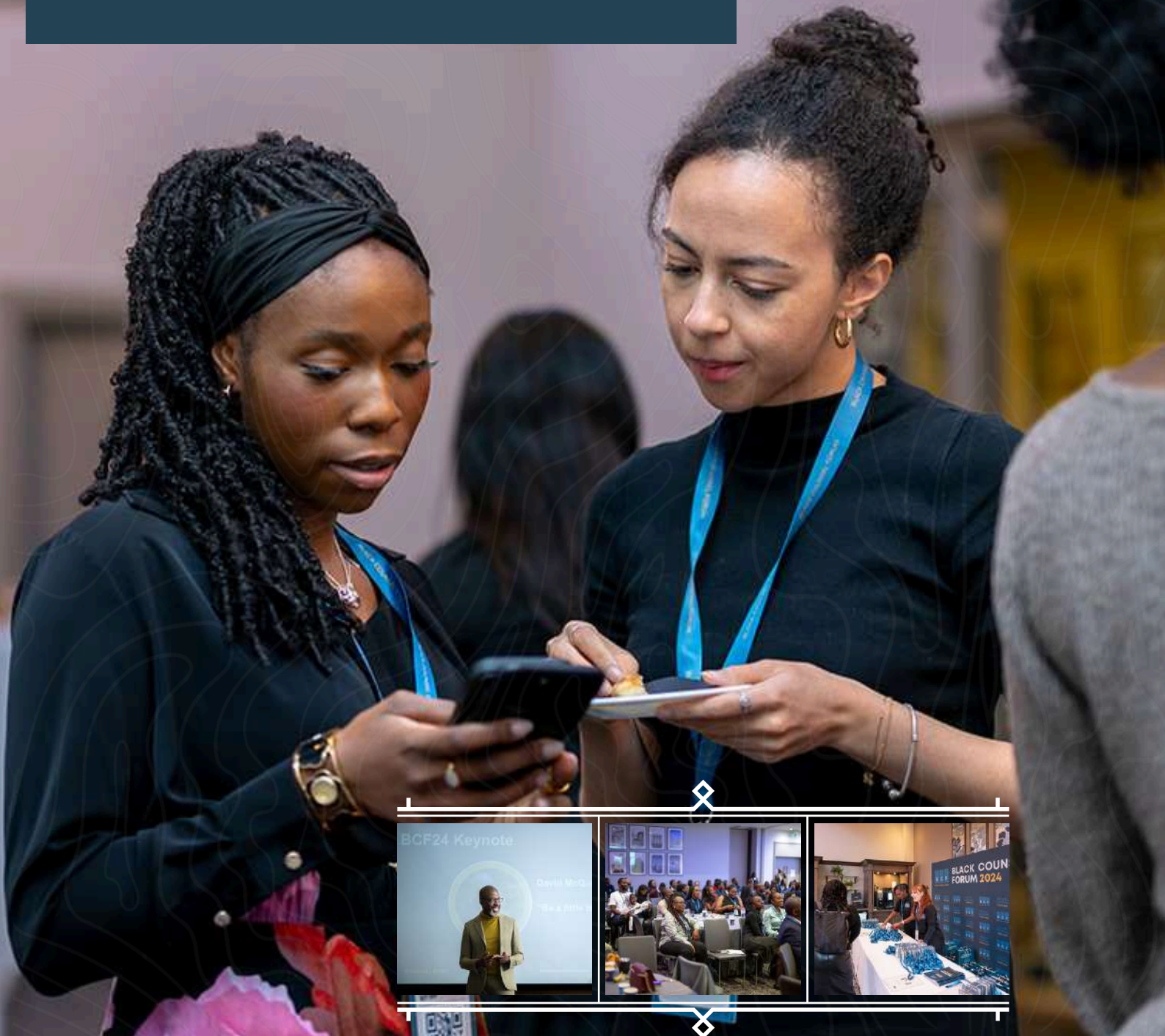
What you have created is truly special. It was evident that the ability to attend is just life changing for so many people.

Head of DEI, Legal, major bank

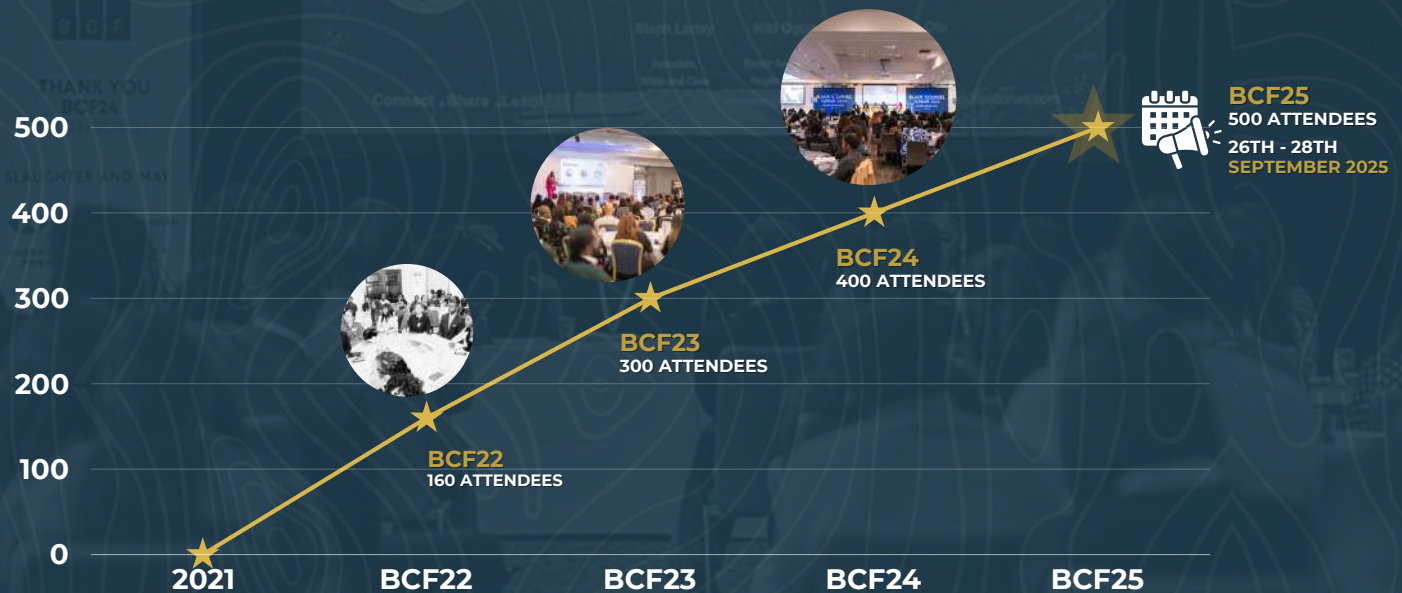


BCF24 was the 3rd Annual Summit of the Black Counsel Forum which is dedicated to equipping Black lawyers with the tools, resources, and networks they need to succeed in their careers. BCF24 took place over 2 days in Windsor (just outside London) and all delegates stayed overnight to ensure there was ample opportunity for connection.

Throughout BCF24, we saw the power of community in action. Delegates connected with peers, mentors, and leaders in our profession, building relationships that will last far beyond the conference. Our networking receptions and gala dinner provided a warm, welcoming space for real, impactful conversations, further strengthening our shared sense of purpose.



BCF: A JOURNEY OF GROWTH, IMPACT AND TRANSFORMATION



BCF25 will be the 4th annual Black Counsel Forum and each year we have witnessed substantial growth.

BCF24 attracted over 400 highly talented Black lawyers from over 150 top law firms and law departments. It stands as the only transformational gathering of its magnitude in the UK specifically tailored for Black lawyers.

BCF has grown rapidly over the past 4 years due to the transformational impact of the high quality content and learning. The connections we're building go beyond professional, they're personal, grounded in a shared commitment to support one another and drive change together.

We're all in this, and as we grow, so does our power to make a real difference.

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BCF24 IN NUMBERS

400⁺

BCF24 Event Attendees
(Total no. of BCF24 attendees)



96,000

BCF24 Interaction Rate
(Number of all actions users took on the BCF24 event app)



2,000

Subscriber database of the UK's most talented Black lawyers



95,000

LinkedIn Post audience
(Total no. of impressions over the last year)



3,000

Fast growing community of LinkedIn followers



20⁺

Sponsors
(Number of BCF24 Sponsors)



BCF Event App



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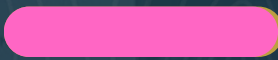
BCF24 AUDIENCE IN NUMBERS



99%
of attendees were
satisfied or very
satisfied with BCF24

150+

TOP FIRMS, CORPORATES
AND CHAMBERS
REPRESENTED



98%

Would like to
attend BCF
again in the
98% future



98%

said their
objectives for
attending BCF
were met

Attendees by Sector



65%

Private Practice
Junior/Mid-Level
Associates and Partners
(15% were Partners)



22%

In-house Counsel
Junior and Senior
Counsel, General
Counsel



5%

Barristers
Juniors, Kings
Counsel and Judges



8%

Other Roles
DEI, Legal Ops,
Compliance

Age Group



4%

18-24



42%

25-34



33%

35-44



21%

over 45

Key Practice Areas



Litigation and Dispute Resolution



Employment



Corporate



Banking & Finance



Commercial



Insurance

BCF24

A Selection of our Standout BCF24 Speakers

DE VERE BEAUMONT ESTATE, WINDSOR



DAVID MCQUEEN
SPEAKER & EXECUTIVE
COACH



HERVÉ EKUÉ
GLOBAL MANAGING PARTNER
A&O SHEARMAN



LORNA NSOATABE,
PARTNER
SLAUGHTER AND MAY



KOLARELE SONAIKE,
BARRISTER,



WERTEN BELLAMY,
PRESIDENT,
STAKEHOLDER INC



MARIA ROCHA BARROS
CHIEF LEGAL & PUBLIC
AFFAIRS OFFICER
BOOKING.COM



BEN NWAEKE
CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER
SOHO HOUSE



AKIMA PAUL-LAMBERT
LITIGATION PARTNER
HOGAN LOVELLS



PAULETTE MASTIN
PARTNER
REED SMITH LLP



TEVIN TOBUN
CEO & FOUNDER
ROUDT



MARTIN FORDE KC
BARRISTER
1 CROWN OFFICE ROW



TREVOR JAMES
PARTNER
MORRISON FOERSTER



LLOYD STEPHENSON
GLOBAL DIRECTOR OF
INCLUSION, DIVERSITY &
RECRUITMENT
BCLP



MARY-GRACE OLUDOYI
TRAINEE SOLICITOR
CLIFFORD CHANCE

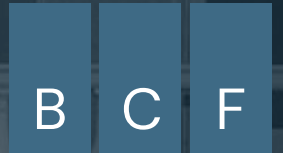


SHARON BLACKMAN
MANAGING DIRECTOR
CITI

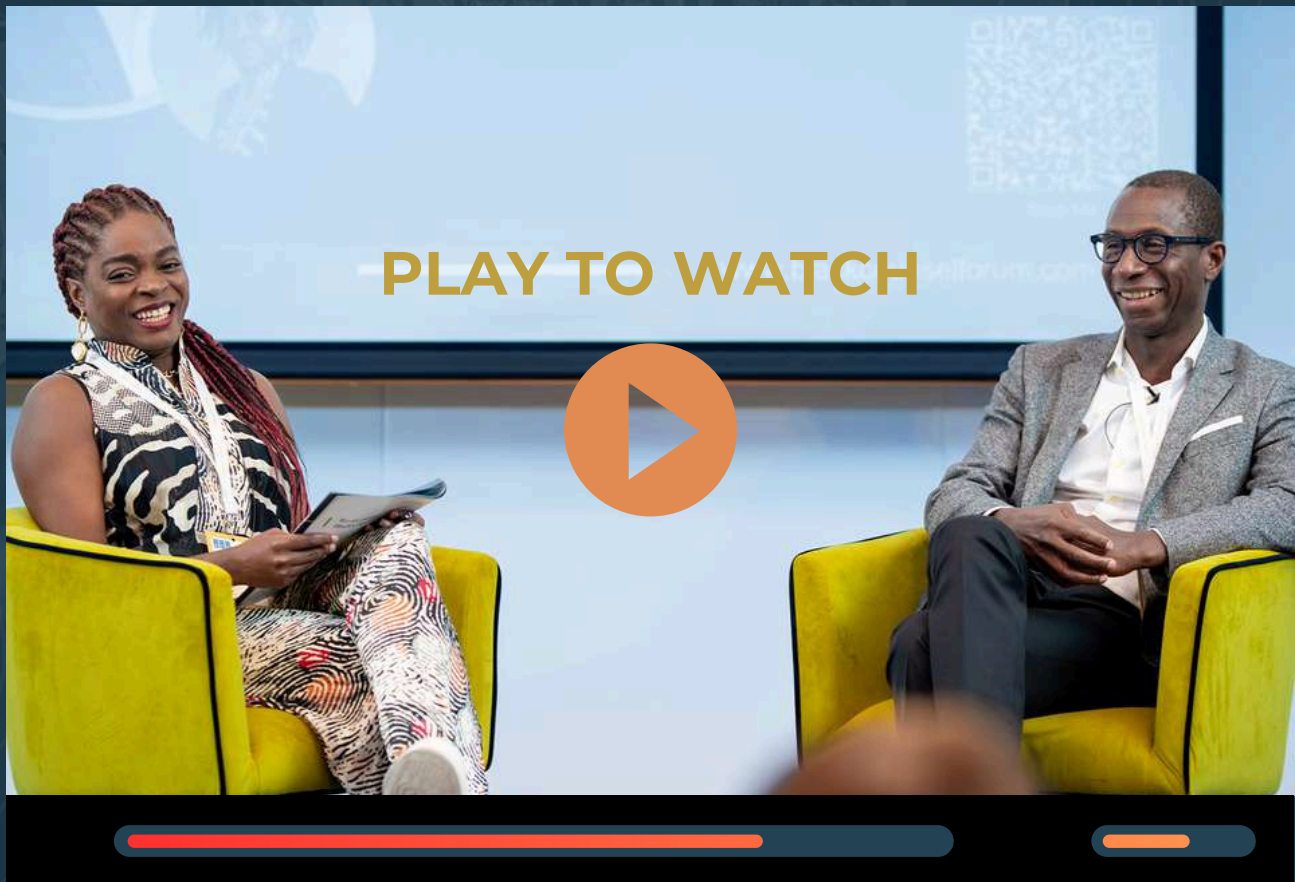


MARGOT DAY
GROUP GENERAL COUNSEL
ARUP

BCF24 HIGHLIGHTS VIDEO & GALLERY



BLACK COUNSEL FORUM

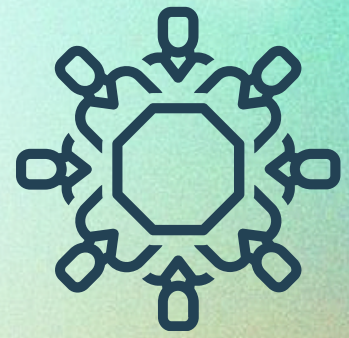


YOU CAN VIEW THE FULL EVENT GALLERY [HERE](#)



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Impactful Sessions



HEALING CAREER WOUNDS

Strategies for Bouncing Back When Things Go Wrong



THE GEN Z EFFECT: ENTITLEMENT OR PROGRESS?

Views from across all generations



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Networking & More



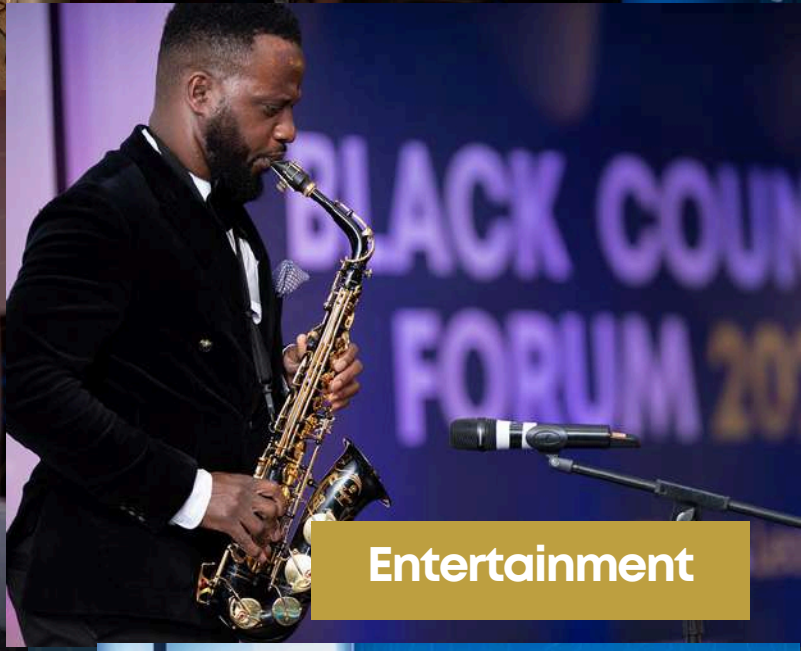
Workshops



Meet-Ups



Cocktail Reception



Entertainment



Gala Dinner



Awards

BLACK COUNSEL FORUM 2024

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MEET THE BCF ADVISORY BOARD

Behind the transformative mission of the Black Counsel Forum (BCF) is the vibrant pulse of our exceptional team. Allow us to introduce you to the catalysts behind our community who bring our vision to life.



➤ **Paulette Mastin**
Partner
Reed Smith



➤ **Sharon Blackman OBE,**
Managing Director &
General Counsel,
Citi



➤ **Lewitt Nurse,**
Senior Legal Counsel,
Consultant



➤ **Lorna Smith,**
Senior Legal Counsel
Consultant



➤ **Werten Bellamy,**
President
Stakeholders, Inc

At BCF, our mission and passion is crystal clear: to empower Black lawyers by fostering a vibrant community of top Black legal talent committed to mutual enhancement and support in safe and inclusive spaces where all black lawyers can connect, learn, and share invaluable experience.

We super-charge Black lawyers to take charge of their career journeys and ensure they have the support, network, role models, and opportunities to thrive.

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It was an energising experience full of insights, honesty and vulnerability - very excited to apply the lessons learned to my career journey and cultivate the meaningful connections that I made. The Black Counsel Forum is more than just a conference for Black lawyers... if you are a Black lawyer I strongly encourage you to attend. See you next year!

Associate, City Law Firm

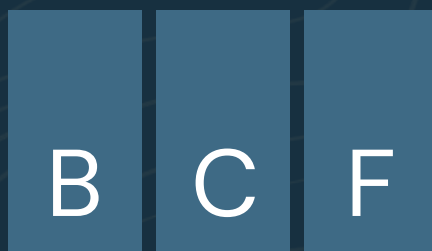


**BE PART OF BCF25: REACH OUT FOR
DELEGATE AND SPONSORSHIP DETAILS**

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