

Black Women Build: Stories of Emergence, Reinvention and Determination



Introduction by Tolu Akindunni

Starting or growing a business as a black woman has always been fraught with numerous obstacles and barriers that can seem insurmountable. Not only are there socio-economic factors but cultural and traditional beliefs play a long way in influencing the future success of their ventures. These create a unique set of challenges that black women entrepreneurs must navigate to achieve success.

We have heard many histories of hard-working, relentless entrepreneurial black women who sacrificed all for their families and pushed forward in spite of daunting bias and obstacles. Many paved the way for a new set of leaders changing the scene of our business world today. Their unwavering determination serves as a guiding light, inspiring others to pursue their dreams despite the daunting challenges they may face.

This book is a compilation of stories, reflecting the power of determination, resilience, and tenacity in a world that seems to constantly say "No". Each narrative showcases the indomitable spirit of black women who refuse to be defined by limitations. It explores their journey of growth, self-acceptance, and personal realization. How they defied stereotypes, and societal expectations (some of which still exist today). When they had doors shut at them or simply had no doors to go through. How in spite of adversities that limit their opportunities, and question their capabilities, credibility, and leadership potential they found a way to forge forward. The influences they had along the way that cheered them on gave birth to resiliency, tenacity, and an unwavering commitment to creating change.

Our hope is that by sharing these stories, the book encourages a shift in perspective, challenges biases, and fosters an environment that supports and empowers black women entrepreneurs. By amplifying their stories and recognizing their accomplishments, we can contribute to the dismantling of barriers and the creation of a more inclusive business ecosystem where everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed and thrive.

Ultimately, it serves as an empowering resource, motivating readers to embrace their own dreams and embark on their own journey of growth, reinvention, and success.

We invite you to read with your hearts wide open. Together, let us acknowledge and honor the impact of black women reshaping the business world today. Let us, with humility, discover the role we can play in helping to foster inclusion as we empower emerging business leaders who are reshaping the business world, disrupting industries, and creating long-lasting impact for generations to come.