

# THE LEADING ISSUE WITH KAREN BLACKETT



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## KAREN BLACKETT, OBE

### CEO, MEDIACOM



A pioneering business leader and transformational advocate for diversity. A proven and experienced business leader, Karen Blackett has a record of accomplishment in creating vibrant cultures, energising teams, and consistently delivering business growth.

Karen is known for her transformative work with large, multi-disciplined and diverse teams delivering consistent commercial success. She began her media career in 1993 at CIA MediaNetwork and was quickly head-hunted by The Media Business Group, where she received many promotions, starting in the Board of Directors in 1999 and moving to Chairwoman of MediaCom UK & Ireland in 2016.

While at MediaCom, she created and launched an Apprenticeship Scheme for 18-24-year olds, one of her proudest achievements. Under Karen's leadership as CEO, MediaCom was voted Agency of the Year by industry magazine Campaign for an unprecedented two years in a row, 2013 and 2014.

She was appointed Chancellor of the University of Portsmouth in 2017.

In 2018, Karen took on the newly created role of UK Country Manager for WPP. In 2019, she was appointed a Non-executive Director of the UK Cabinet Office and, in 2020, she also became CEO of GroupM UK.

She featured among the Top 100 Great Black Britons in 2020 and, in 2021, was chosen to feature in the book *The Female Lead Volume II: We Rise by Lifting Others*.

Karen mentors people across her industry and further afield, including clients, internal staff, other businesspeople and students. She takes pride in helping them and learns a great deal from the process herself.

Karen drives inclusion as a key contributor to business success in all the organisations she works with. In her 5 years as CEO of MediaCom, ethnic diversity transformed from 11% to 19%. Women in senior management roles increased to 44%. In September 2021, Karen became one of the founding trustees of a new national charity, Black Equity Organisation (BEO), focused exclusively on dismantling systemic racism across a spectrum of issues affecting Black communities in the UK.

Karen was appointed NED for Diageo in June 2022 and in October 2022 she was appointed WPP UK President.

Karen's awards and recognition are extensive, including an OBE for services to Media and Communications in 2014. Since 2008, she has featured five times in the power list, Britain's 100 Most Influential Black People, coming in at number 1 in 2015, the first businesswoman to do so. In 2017 she was voted Leader Most Admired by Campaign magazine.