

Let's celebrate Black and brilliant

This month is an opportunity to showcase people creating inspirational careers, says *Lorraine Copes*, founder of Be Inclusive Hospitality

October marks Black History Month, which aims to promote and celebrate Black contributions to British society. This month is extremely important because it encourages learning often untold Black history, provides context on the present day, while spotlighting some truly brilliant people.

In keeping with this, I am shining a spotlight on four members of the Be Inclusive Hospitality community who are brilliant and Black.

Afees Bello



Afees's career in hospitality began as a kitchen porter at a Hilton hotel. With a keenness to learn he has held roles within several departments including procurement, purchasing, accounting, health and safety, recruitment and maintenance. Ten and half years later, he is the group back of house (BOH) operations manager for the Wolseley Hospitality Group, where he oversees the running of the BOH operations at eight restaurants. He has more than 150 members of staff in his team, including area managers, porters, goods receivers and cleaners.

He is currently completing an MBA in hospitality management, and absolutely loves hospitality for the atmosphere, delivery of service, the pace, the teamwork, the collaboration between departments, and mostly the internal satisfaction from making someone else happy.

Sting Khumalo



Sting has worked within the hospitality sector for over 15 years. In 2003 she began her career as a housekeeping assistant in a small hotel in Grasmere, Lake District. She then went on to work at Hilton Cobham hotel as housekeeping supervisor and progressed through different management roles such as head housekeeper, front office manager and human resources manager.

She has completed a master's degree in human resources management, CIPD



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Level 7, and in 2021 joined the Be Inclusive Hospitality Elevate Mentorship Scheme, which has been instrumental in her career growth, with support and guidance from her mentors. She has since progressed from a HR manager position to cluster HR manger and now director of HR in the Biltmore Mayfair, LXR Hotels & Resorts.

Olivia Bembe



Olivia is an experienced procurement and supply chain specialist having spent 10 years of her career managing procurement and supply chains for several leading hotels, casual dining restaurant groups and most

recently pubs, where she is currently food purchasing manager for JD Wetherspoon. Olivia has a passion for procurement and is detail- and results-oriented with a commitment to accuracy. Olivia also speaks three languages: German, English and French.

Ayo Akinsete



Ayo spent his teens playing for West Ham United football club, and when released moved to study a hospitality and sports management degree course at a university in the US. At the time it was the 'sports' part of the

degree that was most appealing, however a professor encouraged him to pursue a career path in hotels, and he then went on to move to Las Vegas to study for a masters in hotel management.

A trip to the Gansevoort Turks and Caicos, led to him meeting Michael Achenbaum, co-owner and president, of Gansevoort Hotel Group, who told Ayo about his new hotel opening on Park Avenue, New York, where Ayo went on to open the hotel.

From there on Ayo was hooked and has lived in New York, South Carolina, Vegas, Miami and now London. To date he has opened seven hotels – and has his sights set on opening seven more! He currently oversees 1 Hotel Mayfair, Treehouse Hotel London, Treehouse Hotel Manchester and Skt Petri Copenhagen at SH Hotels & Resorts.

Could you become a mentor?

Be Inclusive Hospitality CIC is not-for-profit organisation with a mission to build a thriving community to accelerate race equity within the hospitality sector. One of the ways the mission is delivered is through the Elevate Mentorship Scheme. Since launching in February 2021, 75 mentees have accessed a total of 450 hours of free mentorship.

In support of the 2023 scheme, we need new mentors. We are looking for senior leaders, directors and board members to volunteer for only six hours over a six-month period.

Join the community, and get in touch with us for more details: mentorme@bihospitality.co.uk