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Obsidi platform launched to help Black tech professionals with career opportunities

The platform works with tech companies in search of talent like Microsoft, TD, RBC, LinkedIn, HPE and more.



Written by **Jonathan Greig**,
Staff Writer

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Kicking off Black History month, a new networking platform was launched this week to help black tech workers make connections and grow their careers.

SPECIAL REPORT



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Obsidi was created by members of the black professionals in Tech Network (BPTN), which calls itself the largest black community of tech and business professionals in North America.

Lekan Olawoye, founder and CEO of BPTN, told *ZDNet* the Obsidi platform will serve as a conduit to opportunities for black professionals. The site allows users to upload resumes, build professional relationships, network and leverage career development resources.

The platform also works with tech companies in search of talent like Microsoft, TD, RBC, LinkedIn, HPE and more. Companies can post jobs and contact prospective candidates.

Olawoye said during an event on Monday that research has shown there are two million black professionals in North America eager to grow their careers in tech. Yet, more than 400,000 remain without work despite shortages of tech talent.

"For years, there has been a hunger within the black community for a formula to crack the tech career code," Olawoye said. "We're about to disrupt the black tech space so that more black talent can build community and get opportunities to take their career to the next level. Obsidi is the next big thing; we're unapologetically black, and we're proud to drop this gem during Black History Month."

Olawoye explained that Obsidi is a multi-sided marketplace focused on reducing the "network gap" in tech. Black tech professionals will network, go to events and interact with others through the platform's interface. Users can be invited to join the platform or may join themselves directly through the site.

You can send direct messages to other users, post content and network with tech and business experts. Olawoye called Obsidi, a SaaS product and noted that their enterprise

customers are coming to the site to look for black tech talent. There is an annual subscription fee for corporations looking to use the platform, but it is free for users.

The Obsidi platform.

Obsidi

"Our focus at BPTN has always been to provide our members with value and to help them grow their networks and careers. We plan on keeping it that way. For partners, the platform will have different plans for them to pick from, based on their interests and needs. Obsidi is focused on one thing: solving the network gap in tech. Data shows that the average white American with 100 friends has one black friend. We know that we do business and hire people from our networks, so where does that leave talented black professionals?" Olawoye said.

"Diversity is no longer a 'nice to have,' but it is a business imperative. Companies who do not see it as such will miss the opportunity to hire great talent, access new markets, onboard new customers, grow their sales funnel, and build products that have 'stickiness' in the marketplace. In the world of ESG and the war for talent, this is no longer a side of the desk focus. Ultimately, companies who do not see diversity as a business need will not be around in the long term."

Olawoye added that companies like Microsoft and LinkedIn are working with Obsidi because they are helping them "solve a critical business problem." They hope to scale the platform to make room for more companies to get involved.

Finide Dittimi, head of product strategy at BPTN, said Obsidi has pages like "My Tribe" for community discussions and "Tea Spot" for job posts.

"Over the past few years, black professionals have requested three things from our community. They want to connect with other professionals, share experiences and feel like they belong in tech," said Diavin Miller, head of customer experience at BPTN.

"They want to deepen their learning in the tech space, and they want to grow their careers. Obsidi is that community-first platform built by and for black professionals. Wait until you see what we'll do for learning and career growth."

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