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Where Is The Disruptive Innovation In Tech
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The Invisible Unicorn

Is Disruption Needed to Invest In Starters Who Fit Outside The Box

Written By,

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I hold a multi-billion-dollar vault of highly scalable, ready-to-launch startups and new ventures — in my thoughts, in my cloud, and in my lived experience. These are not vague dreams. They are business models, platforms, products, systems, and market solutions with real revenue potential and immediate paths to execution.

And yet, I have received zero investment.

I have applied to at least 50 venture capital firms, accelerators, and funding opportunities, only to be met with silence, rejection, or the familiar wall that so many Black women founders know too well: not lack of talent, not lack of vision, not lack of preparation — lack of access.

That is the part of innovation no one wants to say out loud.

The investment world does not only fund the best ideas. It funds proximity. It funds networks. It funds who knows you, who introduces you, who validates you, and whether you are already standing inside the rooms where capital circulates.

I know this because I have lived both sides of access.

As a college student, I interned at Arista Records — one of the hardest internships to get at the time. I was qualified, like every other applicant. But the truth is, I got to the top of the list because my cousin was an entertainment attorney who had access.

That experience taught me something I have never forgotten: access can change the trajectory of a qualified person's life.

It was not that I did not deserve the opportunity. I did. But so did many others. The difference was not only what I knew. It was who I knew.

So when people say, "It's not what you know, it's who you know," they are not describing networking. They are describing a gatekeeping system that determines which ideas are allowed to become companies — and which founders are forced to keep building from the margins.

For Black women, that system does not need to be disrupted.

It needs to be eradicated.

My vision did not come from one place. It was shaped in many worlds.

I grew up between my suburban ranch with my mother, father, older brother, and our poodle Rosie; my grandmother's second-floor apartment on West 135th Street; and my grandfather and Nana's East Hampton family compound. I learned early that America is not one experience. It is many realities sitting side by side, separated by access, proximity, perception, and power.

As an adult, I worked in the South Bronx as a special education teacher and administrator. I have seen talent underestimated in children, in families, in communities, and in founders — simply because the rooms with power did not know how to recognize brilliance outside of their own reflection.

That is why I understand markets differently. I understand people differently. I understand gaps differently. I do not need a consultant to explain underserved communities to me. I have lived across them, served in them, built within them, and translated between them my entire life.

I am not lacking vision.

I am not lacking strategy.

I am not lacking execution.

But venture capital still behaves as though vision only counts when it arrives through the right introduction, the right zip code, the right school, the right social circle, or the right room.

That is not innovation. That is gatekeeping dressed up as market logic.

Black women are not underprepared. Black women are overeducated, underfunded, and underestimated.

At the post-bachelor level, Black women are pursuing advanced education at extraordinary rates. Among Black postbaccalaureate students, women account for about 70% of enrollment — the widest female-to-male gap of any racial or ethnic group tracked by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Black women also earn the majority of degrees awarded to Black students at every major postsecondary level: 64.1% of bachelor's degrees, 71.5% of master's degrees, and 65.9% of doctoral, medical, and dental degrees.

That is not marginal participation. That is advanced intellectual leadership.

And the performance data backs it up. ProjectDiane found that startups founded by Black and Latina women fail at a rate of 27% — far below the 40% national average. Read that again. We are not the risk. We are the return that nobody bothered to calculate.

So where is the money?

In 2025, just 0.32% of total U.S. venture funding went to companies with a Black founder or co-founder, according to Crunchbase. Not 3.2%. Not 32%. Zero point three two. That is down more than two-thirds from the 2021 peak of \$5.2 billion — the year the pledges were loud, the statements were long, and the cameras were on.

The commitments came. The commitments left. The gatekeeping stayed.

Here is the number that should stop every investor cold: in the entire history of American venture capital, only about 200 Black women founders have ever raised \$1 million. Two hundred. Ever. There is now a published index naming each one — because the list is short enough to count.

Meanwhile, the median seed round for a Black woman founder is \$125,000. The national median is \$2.5 million. We are asked to build the same companies with 5% of the fuel — and then told the problem is our pipeline.

That is not market efficiency.

That is market failure.

This is not a talent problem. This is not a pipeline problem. This is not a preparation problem.

It is an access problem.

Black women are innovators. Black women create disruptive platforms, scalable companies, and new market categories. Our talents do not begin and end with entertainment, hair, beauty, caregiving, or the service industry — even though we have transformed those industries too.

Black women build apps. Black women understand artificial intelligence. Black women create systems, platforms, products, marketplaces, community solutions, financial tools, education models, and technology-enabled companies.

The next great American unicorn may very well be built by a Black woman.

How do I know?

Because I have been guarding my venture for five years. And in five years, nobody has brought it to fruition. It is bigger than an idea. It is waiting for the right person or firm to see me — to see that I have something valuable to bring to the world. And until that day, I will keep working on being seen and bringing my dream to reality.

I am not waiting to be discovered. What is for me will come to me. And when it is my time, I promise to see the people who are so often overlooked — because I know what it takes to keep going. I know they are not a diversity pick. They are the talent the world will come to know.

I am building. In my community, in my spirit, in my learning, in my ventures. I am designing. I am creating. I am seeing market gaps before investors name them as sectors. I am turning lived experience into data, community insight into strategy, and vision into scalable ventures.

The technology industry claims to chase innovation, but it has not eradicated its own bias in how it recognizes genius, leadership, and investable talent. It claims to fund the future, yet too much capital still moves through old social circles, old assumptions, and old definitions of what a founder is supposed to look like.

Investors love to say they are searching for pattern recognition. But pattern recognition becomes bias when the same patterns keep excluding people who have already proven their ability to build, adapt, lead, and execute.

Black women do not need to be discovered.

Black women need to be funded.

They need access to capital before they are overextended. They need checks written before the proof is so obvious that everyone wants in. They need investors who understand that lived experience is not a liability; it is data. Community proximity is data. Cultural fluency is data. The ability to identify unmet needs before a market report validates them is data.

Some of the most powerful companies of the next generation will not come from founders who merely studied consumer behavior. They will come from founders who understand real people because they have served them, raised them, taught them, advocated for them, bought for them, organized with them, and built alongside them.

That is why this system does not merely need to be disrupted. Disruption is too polite. Disruption suggests the system can remain intact with a few new features, a few new funds, a few new panels, and a few carefully worded commitments.

This must be eradicated.

The gatekeeping.

The warm-introduction economy.

The assumption that genius only comes from certain schools, zip codes, networks, and accents.

The habit of mistaking proximity to wealth for proximity to brilliance.

Black women are not a charity case. Black women are not a diversity initiative. Black women are not a trend.

Black women are intellectual capital. Black women are market intelligence. Black women are consumer power, community power, cultural power, and economic power. And for too long, the investment world has treated that power as invisible.

The question is not whether Black women can build the future.

The question is whether investors are willing to stop overlooking the future while it is standing directly in front of them.

If venture capital is truly looking for the future, it is time to stop overlooking the women who have already been building it.

It is time to invest in Black women.

It is time to invest in Black girl magic — not as a slogan, but as a disruptive innovation methodology, shown in action beyond an adage.