

# LEVEL

A respite for Black men



# Level is a community for black men.

LEVEL offers the best commentary on race, identity and culture for men of color, as well as tips on how to live your best life.

Men can visit LEVEL for advice on parenting, marriage, sex, relationships, finance, mental health and more.

# The Level Team



**JERMAINE HALL**  
FOUNDER, CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER



**JOHN KENNEDY**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Investor



**Ev Williams**  
Chairman Medium,  
Co-Founder Twitter





## A GROWING AUDIENCE

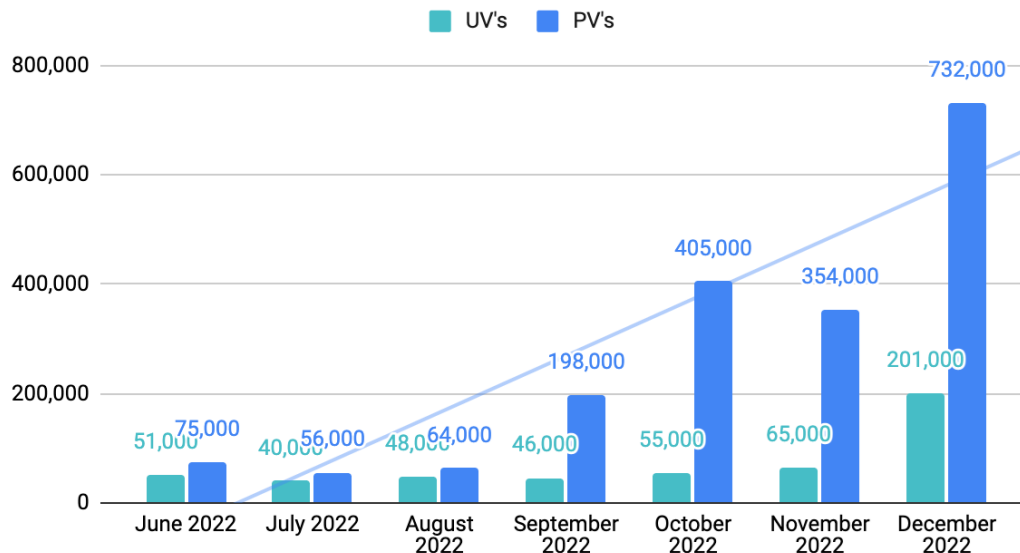
**+876%** in PV's in 6 Months

**+295%** in UV's in 6 Months

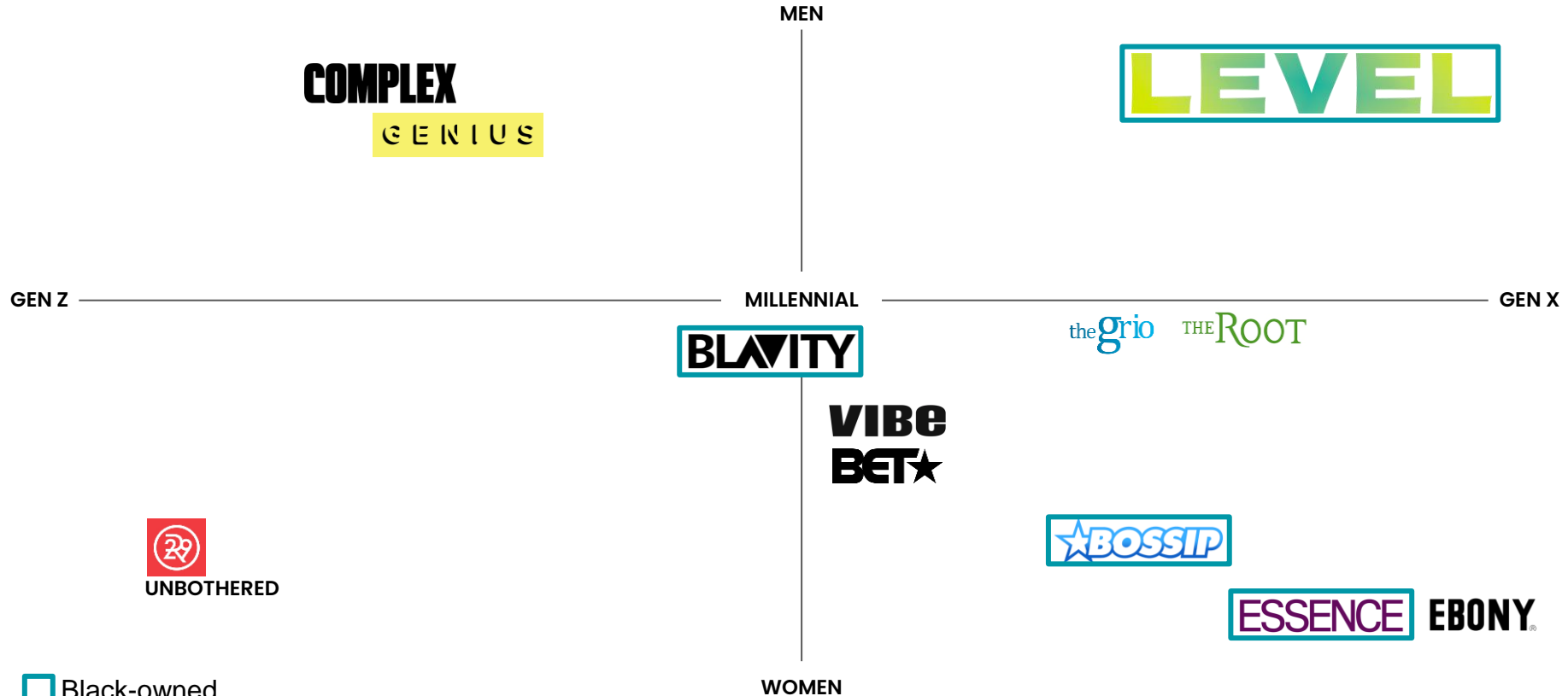
Our audience is consuming 3+ pages per visit.

Levelman.com is on a consistent trajectory to reach 400K uniques by June

### Level Traffic Growth



# LEVEL = BLACK MEN 30+



# CREATING THE BLACK MAN'S BLUEPRINT

LEVEL inspires the Black male GenX community with thought-provoking content related to systemic gaps in health, wealth and access.

Our content is sticky, driving over 7 pageviews per visit and garnering recognition from major publications like Fast Company - who is now syndicating a key column every month to over 7M people.

## Level's Content Pillars:

- Race & Identity.
- Life.
- Culture.

The collage consists of three distinct images. On the left is a desktop screenshot of the LEVEL website, featuring a cartoon illustration of a Black man in a suit gesturing towards a wall of portraits, with text about diversity and a newsletter sign-up. In the center is a desktop screenshot of a Fast Company article titled 'Is my casual attire too loose for corner-office consideration?' with a cartoon illustration of a Black man in a suit. On the right is a smartphone screenshot of a social media post from 'levelmag' titled 'Assimilation is inevitable for Black professionals' with a cartoon illustration of a hand holding a 'CODE SWITCH FOR BEGINNERS' book.

**LEVEL** CULTURE RACE & POLITICS RELATIONSHIPS SELF  
The Only Black Guy in the Office  
Solving My Company's Diversity Problem is No Easy Task  
My colleague was recruiting with good intentions—bless his heart—but he was blind to his biases. Turns out, I had some of my own, too.  
Everyone loves getting a raise. But once you become a manager, you get just as excited about another workstation upgrade budget for additional personnel. Sure, your own pay stubs aren't any happier, but if you're *seriously* the workload can become lighter for everyone. In these times, I need all of the peace of mind I can get. Gimme more *about* reports over more direct deposit any day of the week.  
I was recently bestowed with the power of multiplication at the job, and for a moment I felt like Thanos' benevolent alter ego. I saw an opportunity, a chance to bring balance to an embarrassingly homogeneous workforce. Yet by the end of it, the whole process left me feeling I was as empty as emptying the fridge.  
Perhaps I could've been more clear with *my colleague* Mitch, who'd talked with heading up the talent search. Look out for candidates who are "not like me and him," I instructed. Mitch is a White man, I'm a Black man, and we both identify as heterosexual. Easy enough to read between the lines, one might think. With the exception of *Black Kersh*, our team was, like most of the company, predominantly male. We had an opportunity to do our part to change that with our one new hire. It would behoove us as a marketing team to be more inclusive so our content can reflect the changing time we're in.  
A week after the job post went live, Mitch told me he'd found 10 candidates whose resumes met the minimum qualifications. Things were off to a good start, but when I asked how he went about sifting through the resumes, the first of his blind spots became apparent. He'd eliminated applicants by only considering those who submitted a cover letter—which was specified as optional. And it seemed he'd only selected men.  
Mitch was an innocent of a kind, an *efficiency* innocent, as he would say. I wish there were more like him, innocent. Please.

**FAST COMPANY** FOLLOW LOGIN  
08-02-22 | POV  
**Is my casual attire too loose for corner-office consideration?**  
Maybe it never occurred to my colleagues that I actually own a suit, let alone know how to wear one properly. Which makes me wonder if they've ever similarly doubted my leadership abilities and proficiency with running marketing campaigns.  
GUY IN THE OFFICE 3 MINUTE READ  
Guy in the Office is copublished with  
I soon and I was already on my fifth backhandled the day.  
my Seattle office wearing a navy blue suit from ored to fit me like a glove. The occasion? A I was attending after work. Since it was billed fair, I knew better than to show up in *my usual* uting required my Sunday best—on a Thursday. led through the revolving doors of my confidence quickly dissolved into mild  
raden on the elevator ride up to our company's ot reciting the Black Rob song.

**levelmag** Posts Follow  
CODE SWITCH FOR BEGINNERS  
Assimilation is inevitable for Black professionals  
Liked by levelmag and 339 others  
fastcompany For The Only Black Guy in the Office, the author of a new weekly column from @levelmag in partnership with @levelmag, there are words and phrases in his vocabulary that he doesn't use in the workplace. He says it's less about making people feel comfortable and more about reducing friction if lingo gets lost in translation.  
This week, The Only Black Guy in the Office lists five phrases or words that come to mind when he's

Bi-Weekly Syndication of [Only Black Guy in the Office](#) on FastCompany.com and Fast Company Social handles reaching over 7M people.



## EDITORIAL CALENDAR

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: A GUIDE TO BEING BETTER | JANUARY

THE BLACK HISTORIANS PROJECT | FEBRUARY

THE 30-40-50 PACKAGE | MARCH

40 OVER 40 | APRIL

HOW TO NOT SCREW UP YOUR TAXES | APRIL

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BLACK MEN'S HAIR | MAY

WHAT DAD *REALLY* WANTS: THE OFFICIAL BLACK FATHER'S DAY GIFT GUIDE | JUNE

AN INTERGENERATIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT PRIDE | JUNE

WELCOME TO THE COOKOUT | JULY

THE 50 BOOKS EVERY BLACK MAN MUST READ | AUGUST

LEVEL'S SPECIAL COMEDY SPECIAL | SEPTEMBER

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR 40S | NOVEMBER

THE BEST MAN AWARDS | DECEMBER



# The Media Is Buzzing

**VIBE**

HOME • NEWS • BUSINESS

## Former VIBE Editors Launch "LEVELman" As Solo Website Focusing On Lifestyle For Black Men

The website will pave its own lane separate from the Medium platform, continuing to focus on race, identity and cultural issues concerning Black men.

BY AMBER CORRINE

JUNE 15, 2022 11:11AM



John "JFK" Kennedy, Editor-in-Chief of LEVELman.com Courtesy of LEVELman.com

Jermaine Hall, CEO and founder of the the popular Medium publication LEVEL Magazine, has decided to step it up a level with the launch of the official LEVELman.com website.

The website will pave its own lane separate from the Medium


BLACK MEDIA BRAND

ENTREPRENEUR LIFESTYLE MEN TECHNOLOGY

## JERMAINE HALL BRINGS LATEST WEBSITE TO ANOTHER LEVEL

Cedric 'BIG CED' Thornton June 27, 2022 292

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(Image: Courtesy of Jermaine Hall)

Several weeks ago, LEVEL, previously located on Medium, launched its own website, LEVELman.com. The website speaks to Black men age 30 and older, offering commentary on race, politics, culture, relationships, and self

The man who brought LEVELman.com to life is industry veteran **Jermaine Hall**, who recently connected with **BLACK ENTERPRISE** to talk about the recent move from Medium to stand alone on its own. With stints working with BET, VIBE, The Source, KING, and RIDES magazines, Hall's experience with brands that cater to a Black audience prepared him for LEVEL. Hall talks about how the site started, what led him to pitch the website to Medium, and shares his views on web3.


VARIETY

Media Business in a Bear Market > Subscribe | Log in

HOME > MUSIC > NEWS Jun 13, 2022 5:55AM PT

## Level, Website for Black Men Aged 30+, Goes Solo From Medium.com

By Jem Aswad



Courtesy Level

Level, the publication for Black men launched on Medium three years ago, has migrated to its own website, Levelman.com, with Medium founder/CEO Ev Williams serving as the lead investor.

The initial launch content, according to EIC John Kennedy, includes rapper Jim Jones on being an NFT early adopter and his two-decade career; comedy writer Carlos Greaves compiles the 55 biggest, Blackest dad jokes you've never heard; and the return of the popular Level column "The Only Black Guy in the Office," sharing one man's snarky accounts of being corporate while Black. There is also an essay from author/ culture critic Michael Arceneaux about the problematic legacy of the recently deceased, controversial relationship guru Kevin Samuels.

THE ROOT

HOME LATEST THE ROOT INSTITUTE NEWS CULTURE POLITICS ENTERTAINMENT

## LEVEL Magazine is Giving Black Men the Content They Need

The editor-in-chief of LEVEL Magazine Jermaine Hall discusses why LEVEL Magazine is creating content that is important to Black men.

By Noah A. McGee

6/14/22 10:36AM | Alerts

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Photo: Jermaine Hall

Once a popular publication on Medium that offered content geared towards Black men, LEVEL Magazine now has its own website where Black men can read content on race, identity and culture.

**VIBE**

**BLACK  
ENTERPRISE**

**VARIETY**

**THE ROOT**





LEVEL

The Black Man's  
Blueprint

A photograph of four diverse Black individuals walking along a city street. From left to right: a man in a light beige trench coat over a striped shirt and blue pants; a man in a black jacket, white t-shirt, and green pants with his hands clapping; a man in an orange button-down shirt and tan pants; and a woman in a long, patterned blue and red coat over a white top and blue jeans. The background shows parked cars and residential buildings.

THANK YOU

Contact: [darryl@wintermediateam.com](mailto:darryl@wintermediateam.com)

## APPENDIX



### NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: A GUIDE TO BEING BETTER | JANUARY

This year is gonna be different. Experts, thought leaders, and influential figures chime in on ways to make new year's resolutions count, with actionable guidance around health, wellness, finance, family, and more.

### THE BLACK HISTORIANS PROJECT | FEBRUARY

A yearlong campaign that identifies today's keepers of historical record in various sectors—those who've lived and/or documented various aspects of modern Black history, from authors and pundits to photographers and documentarians. Our own reliable narrators, these are the people who tell it like it is, whether in the worlds of music, film, sports, or sociopolitics.

Beginning in February (Black History Month), we'd highlight one of these honorees each month via a conversation captured on video in which they'd discuss their personal journey, body of work, and important historical moments they've documented, providing context and understanding. Text profiles would accompany each piece.

Could possibly expand this initiative into an in-person experience in which each interview is conducted live before a small audience. Footage would be edited and released to the internet.

Examples of potential Black Historian honorees: Ava DuVernay (racial justice filmmaker), Elliott Wilson (hip-hop journalism), Don Lemon (politics), and Stephen A. Smith (sports).

**Video components:** *Filmed longform interview series published monthly.*

### THE 30-40-50 PACKAGE | MARCH

Level celebrates three influential men who are at pivotal ages in their lives—embarking on their 30s, 40s, or 50s. These figures are celebrated with digital covers and editorial treatments (essays, reported narratives, or interviews). The inaugural class featured Jordan Peele, Jeremy O. Harris, and Jay-Z while the second trio honored LaKeith Stanfield, Desus Nice, and DMX.

**Video component:** *An Instagram Live conversation with one of the cover subjects.*

### 40 OVER 40 | APRIL

An annual ranking of the best and most relevant rappers who are currently above the age of 40, based on their activity and output over the previous year. This full-fledged package includes a list with written analysis; a roundtable discussion amongst music experts, artists, and tastemakers; ancillary essays; and other editorial pieces. [Here's our first edition](#). Future 40 Over 40 packages will incorporate live conversations (Twitter Spaces)..

**Video component:** *Aforementioned roundtable discussion filmed and published as a video podcast; A Day in the Life of a 40-Year Old Rapper. LEVEL films and documents an artist's day-to-day of balancing real-life with a music career.*





### HOW TO NOT SCREW UP YOUR TAXES | APRIL

April is officially tax season, which means many of us will (hopefully) be coming into some extra funds via income tax return. LEVEL provides some guidance on how to make that hard-earned money work for you rather than blow it on a pricey purchase. This service-driven package will include text and video interviews with financial advisors covering everything from ETFs and IRAs to 529s and 401ks. We'd also profile influential figures in the personal finance edutainment space (such as Earn Your Leisure).

**Video component:** A financial advisor answers readers' most pressing questions about investing, budgeting, and planning for retirement.

### THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BLACK MEN'S HAIR | MAY

A second-annual celebration of Black men's hair, spanning everything from beard care to bonnets, influencers to identity politics, going gray to going bald. Here's our first edition.

**Video components:** History of the Philly Beard; A Totally Not Old Person's Guide to Dyeing Your Own Hair

### WHAT DAD REALLY WANTS: THE OFFICIAL BLACK FATHER'S DAY GIFT GUIDE | JUNE

Patriarchs seem to get the short end of the stick every year for Father's Day. But not this time! LEVEL compiles a gift guide curated by lifestyle experts and everyday dads (who also share the best gift they've received).

**Video component:** A celebrity or influential figure offers endorsements for the products that have upgraded their lives to the greatest degree—their own must-haves.

### AN INTERGENERATIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT PRIDE | JUNE

Millennial and Gen X queer Black men share their experiences in a candid roundtable discussion.

**Video component:** Filmed roundtable discussion.

### WELCOME TO THE COOKOUT | JULY

It's officially BBQ season, so we're toasting to the most storied of Black summer traditions with a week-long package that's all about grilling essentials, family reunions, Spades and Dominoes, sports safe for men of a certain age, and, most importantly, once and for all, how to make a potato salad that is actually edible.

**Video component:** A celebrity shares tips on how to grill like a pro.



## THE 50 BOOKS EVERY BLACK MAN MUST READ | AUGUST

A comprehensive reading list for Black men, from biographies and self-help to historical and feminism tomes.

**Video component:** *A notable Black male author runs down his oeuvre, delving into the process of creating his most exalted and/or challenging works.*

## LEVEL'S SPECIAL COMEDY SPECIAL | SEPTEMBER

We're bringing the funny! Prepare for a package packed with spotlights on comedians, satirical pieces, and all things humor.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR 40S | NOVEMBER

50 Black men aged 50 or older share their insights on this transformational decade and how their lives have changed since hitting half of a century.

## THE BEST MAN AWARDS | DECEMBER

For LEVEL's play on Men of the Year honors, we close the year by celebrating Black men who have provided exemplary contributions to the culture or society at large. The package includes year-in-review essays, blurbs, interviews with honored figures both known and unknown, and social media activations. Where applicable, honorees will receive gifting and tokens of appreciation. [Here's our first edition](#)

**Video component:** *Instagram Live conversation with one nominee.*