

DECEMBER 2020

# THE INNOVATIVE NEWS

BY VIRTUALLY NOIRE



BI-MONTHLY NEWS  
AND UPDATES:

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*"Master of my own fate."*

Dear Supporters,

Happy holidays! I am proud to greet you in what is our first e-newsletter since our launch in July 2020. This year has been filled with many surprises and events that most of us have not experienced in our lifetime. Our health and economic well-being has become the main priority and the past 8 months have been both rewarding and challenging for many of us. We have all needed to figure out the most productive ways to conduct our personal lives and navigate business whilst shifting our business ideas. Personally, I was one of many, who was laid off from a job, of what many of us would believe would be secure in the pre-pandemic stage.

Once that moment occurred, I was forced to figure out my next move and it dawned on me that my talents and skills, have the ability to be transferred into a service that I can provide to business owners and legal professionals while simultaneously leading a team was not far from my reach; The bonus was, these services can be provided remotely, then the rest was history. Representation in the Black community was important to me while creating this business and from that, Virtually Noire + Virtual Solutions was born. A virtual boutique law clerk and administrative firm, bridging the gap of executive level support connecting with legal and business professionals.

Virtually Noire is proud to be a contributor to what the world now knows as the “virtual pivot”. Launching and sustaining through the COVID-19 pandemic is no easy feat. However, the results have been rewarding in ways our team could never have imagined. Business owners across the world have been shuffling to learn various ways in creating digital automation and pivoting towards the virtual approach of conducting business operations for the sales of products and services. Resources and education have become available to teach business owners that there is no one-streamed way of providing service-based output to clients and finding the best virtual solution has become a priority.

Virtually Noire has made excellent strides in the first 3 months of business, and with continuous growth on a monthly basis, we are grateful to you, our supporters, in following our journey, as there is surely more to come! Our new e-book called “Let's Talk Virtual” will be available to the world on December 26, 2020, along with our informative podcast, “Hustle & Repeat” and it is our hope that you will continue to show up and show out for Virtually Noire with your support.

Wishing you safety, love and light.



Sasha Rodriguez  
*CEO, Director of Virtually Noire*

# LET'S TALK VIRTUAL: THE E-BOOK

## The Ultimate Pivot Guide in Creating a Virtual Business



Let's be honest, at the beginning of the pandemic, most of the world was unsure of what it would look like in terms of how business would be conducted going forward inclusive of the state of employment. Giving up was not an option and Virtually Noire was subsequently launched in July 2020, post the pandemic announcement.

With employment rates declining and with the economy in a state of uncertainty as to when things may go back to normal, many business owners had an opportunity to pivot in the new wave of the virtual realm.

**Let's Talk Virtual** is a complete step-by-step guide in arriving at a successful approach in progressing towards a virtual business. It is both accessible and flexible to your clients and provides a peace of mind for you as a business owner. Written by Virtually Noire Director, Sasha Rodriguez, the experiences and expertise in resources and project management shine through in this well-crafted e-book.

If you are a new business owner or a brick-and-mortar business pivoting towards a change in the way you conduct your operations into the virtual world, this book is for you!

Making the choice of hiring a virtual assistant, choosing the right cloud software for your client information, digital marketing and so much more can be overwhelming. **Let's Talk Virtual** is an inclusive guide, with considerations to be made from software, operations and hiring the right remote staff, while simultaneously successfully making the virtual pivot.

This e-book goes on sale on **December 26, 2020** and will be available on our website at [virtuallynoire.ca](https://virtuallynoire.ca).

Stay connected and you will be one of the first to receive a notification to make your purchase of our e-book by signing up for our newsletter and announcement emails. Click [here](#) to sign up!

Pivot and go!



**"YOU CAN ONLY BECOME TRULY ACCOMPLISHED AT SOMETHING YOU LOVE" - MAYA ANGELOU**



## HER HIGHLIGHT

### A Young Emerging Talent Nejaiyah Briggs-Rodriguez

When one thinks about an innovator, we tend to believe that age is attached to experience. With the many changes in the world as we know it today, innovation knows no specific age.

13-year old Toronto native Nejaiyah Briggs-Rodriguez, was like many other children during the pandemic, finding ways to stay entertained and motivated. With an artistic background, Nejaiyah has managed to lead a group of like-minded kids pre-pandemic through vision board parties. Creating a brand called "Mom, Dad, I Have a Vision" - vision board parties were sponsored by the East Scarborough Boys & Girls Club.

Nejaiyah enjoys creating pieces that outline a vision of the future. Placing images on a canvas that make sense of your dreams and tangible within reach was important for Nejaiyah, all while leading this platform.

During the pandemic, Nejaiyah has found a way to widen her reach to both adults and children. Her business enables both groups to create digital vision boards and place their visions of the future on a fillable digital canvas. To her, the attainment of her dream was simple, she says: "This is what I want to happen, now let's put it down and make it happen".

Digital vision boards are accessible world-wide, as Nejaiyah has developed a digital fillable e-book. This allows the dreamers of the world to pull all of the moving parts of their visions, through the use of images that represent their dreams, and place it on a digital canvas to reference the ultimate goals of their future. Feeding the creative souls of many, Nejaiyah has successfully followed her dream of leading and creating simultaneously. Young, creative and talented, this young Black queen knows no limits. "I would like to see more young creators that look like me and represent what the change us young people dream of."

On January 1st, 2021 you can support this young creator and entrepreneur, by purchasing your copy "The DVB Guide" a customizable guide to creating your own digital vision board inclusive of free resources and top picks for creatives. Click [here](#) to subscribe to Nejaiyah's email list to stay connected.

Check out Nejaiyah's featured creative poetry piece inspired by the anti-Black racism movement called ["Young Black Queen"](#).



**"CREATIVITY TAKES COURAGE." - HENRY MATISSE**





## HER HIGHLIGHT

### Melanin and the Law Sommer Blackman

When we think about what determination looks like and the ideal supporter and innovator that brings law, advocacy and the virtual realm together, we think of Sommer Blackman. As an inspiration to women who are pushing to obtain a law degree and breaking down the barriers, the world hasn't seen anything yet!

Sommer Blackman is an Associate Attorney at Grant Attorneys at Law PLLC in New York City. She is admitted to practice law in Ontario, Canada and admission is pending in New York. Her practice areas include entertainment, trademark and copyright law.

Her work ranges from reviewing contracts and negotiating more favourable terms for her clients, to obtaining trademark and copyright protection for her clients. Coming from a Trinidadian background, Sommer grew up in Toronto, Canada, deeply immersed in Calypso and Soca music; Additionally, she is a classically trained pianist; she played the alto and tenor saxophones for 7 years; and had a short stint learning the alto pan.

She also enjoys educating the community about their intellectual property rights. Last year Sommer developed a free workshop series called 'Creative Rights', where intellectual property and entertainment lawyers imparted their knowledge on the legal aspects of being a creative; and creatives shared their experiences of working in the industry. BLACKMAN LAW, a remote law firm serving her Canadian IP and entertainment clients, is Sommer's latest venture. She loves the work she does and is determined to increase the awareness and access of intellectual property law as a career path in the Black community.

Without women like Sommer, who are creating an example for the women that look for mentorship and provide a staple of innovation in creating a name for yourself, there would be no grand scheme of vision for the community. We thank Sommer for her contribution to the legal field and there is so much more to come!

To stay connected with Sommer, check out her virtual law firm Blackman Law by visiting [Blackmanlaw.ca](https://Blackmanlaw.ca).



**BELIEVE IN YOURSELF AND THE REST WILL COME - S.R**

# IN THE VIRTUAL NEWS

## Facebook Canada Gives Half A Million In Grants To Canadian Black Entrepreneurs

The Canadian Black Chamber of Commerce (CBCC) and Facebook Canada are collaborating on an initiative to support Black business owners and entrepreneurs. Facebook Canada has contributed \$500,000 in funding to the CBCC's new grant program which supports members of the Black-business community who've been impacted by COVID-19 [read more](#)

## Pandemic Linked to Black-Owned Businesses' Disappearing at a Rate of 41 Percent

Research suggests minority-owned companies are disproportionately impacted by Covid-19. Economics professor Robert Fairlie at the University of California, Santa Cruz, found that the number of active Black businesses in the U.S. decreased by 41 percent from February to April, compared with a 17 percent decrease in active White businesses [read more](#)

## Why Are There So Few Black Entrepreneurs in Canadian Tech?

In 1837, Thornton Blackburn, an escaped slave from the United States, launched Toronto's first taxi company, "The City," and turned it into a thriving enterprise that generated a small fortune for Blackburn and his wife, Lucie. The Blackburns became philanthropists and champions of public education in Toronto [read more](#).

## Light shut right off' for women-led businesses during pandemic

According to the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), less than 30 per cent of Indigenous business owners are accessing loans through traditional lending institutions [read more](#).

## 5 Ways Your Business Can Benefit From a Virtual Office

The term "virtual office" might have sounded strange a few years ago, but today the concept is fairly standard. A company may not have a fixed address but still function as a provider of goods and services. Because of the rise of telecommuting and remote working, there's less need for a business to operate from a traditional brick-and-mortar location [read more](#).



## Making a Virtual Stamp

Click the icons below and check out these amazing brands and the great work they do in bringing important issues in business and the community to the table and discovering solutions through unique creative stances.



## DID YOU KNOW?

In Canada the number of business openings increased by 33.7% from May 2020.

## Virtual Noire's Top 5 Project Management Tools:

[TRELLO](#)

[ASANA](#)

[WORKZONE](#)

[PROOFHUB](#)

[BASECAMP](#)



**Recommendation:** Project management is a tool that is quite often overlooked.

*Virtually Noire* VA's take managing projects and time very seriously and we offer guidance in staying efficient. When considering a tool that keeps you organized think about these two things:

1. Digital or manual? Use your knowledge of what allows you to remember things best. Record your notes or write them down. Move towards what keeps you productive and not the opposite.
2. To-do lists or colour coding? The distinction in quick access or creating visuals for your personal call-to-action is a small but mighty choice. Make the choice to create a system for yourself that you know will speak to your inner entrepreneur.

## Feature Alert:

In September 2020, Virtually Noire was featured in the **EPIC - Leadership list** lead by previous Unity Charity Executive Director, Michael Prosserman utilizing resources available for non-profit consultants and service providers.

Click [here](#) for the full list:

## New service alert:

Legal document and parcel delivery service Noire Express. Learn more by clicking [here](#).



**Noire Express**

**GRIT: A MIX OF HARD WORK, CONSISTENCE & HUSTLE**

# BLACK WOMAN-LED





## Lisa Ogbole started Imani's Place, a transitional home helping women escape abuse

Lisa Ogbole is a survivor of domestic violence now dedicated to helping others escape abuse.

In October 2019, Ogbole opened Imani's Place — a six-bed transitional home in Alliston, Ont., about 104 kilometres northwest of Toronto. It's for victims of violence, human trafficking or any other form of abuse. Imani means faith in Swahili, something Ogbole says these women must have in themselves to begin to heal [read more.](#)

To find out more about Imani's Place, partner or to donate connect with them [here.](#)



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**FEELING ANXIOUS,  
DEPRESSED OR  
OVERWHELMED?**

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**Our Supports include:**

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- PPE Equipment
- Legal Support
- COVID-19 Barrier Counselling
- General Counselling

**The Imani's Place Hotline will support you in finding resources in your area.**

Give us a call toll-free at 1800 507 6860 during the hours of 9am-9pm 7 Days a Week





# BE RESOURCEFUL

Below you will find funding information for Black-led businesses:

[Social Development Partnerships Program](#)

[Access Community Capital Fund](#)

[Canada Grant Watch](#)

[Female Entrepreneur Grants](#)

[Small Business Relief Fund](#)

[Financial Support During Covid-19](#)



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&  
Repeat*



