

Winston, Google Present CBEWeek Fireside Chat with Ryan Leslie

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Winston & Strawn, which represents some of the hottest companies in Silicon Valley, proudly partnered with Google to present an inspiring fireside chat with Ryan Leslie on February 23 on Google's campus as part of the inaugural Coalition of Black Excellence Week. #CBEWeek—the brainchild of Uber litigation counsel Angela Johnson—brought together tech diversity groups, corporations, academic institutions, and public interest organizations to celebrate black excellence; build community; recognize trailblazers who are positively impacting the black community; and honor nonprofits that are promoting science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and entrepreneurship in communities of color.

The talk, presented at Google headquarters in Silicon Valley, was live-streamed and available to people worldwide while professionals from Google, Uber, and other technology companies attended live.



Leslie is a Grammy-nominated recording artist, multi-platinum music producer, technology entrepreneur, and Founder and CEO of the hot new start-up SuperPhone. During a far-ranging interview, Leslie discussed his inspirational life story—from starting college at age 16 and becoming homeless while trying to make it in the music industry to producing for some of the world’s biggest music stars, including *Madonna*, *Jay-Z*, *Kanye West*, and *Beyoncé*.

When asked why he pivoted from a successful jet-setting, high-flying career to living a tech-founder life of answering sales, customer support, and prioritization calls, Leslie explained his passion to make a bigger impact on the world: “Success happens at the speed of communication.”

“Music is subjective. So, if you don’t like rap, if you don’t like certain flute music, if you don’t like country, you’re only going to reach a certain demographic. But, when you think about Instagram, there is kind of an objective value compared to a hot song. That really is the differentiator.”

“The idea was the ability to touch more people because I believe the value could be objective. Your entire life will be predicated on how well you communicate your ideas—the right idea, to the right person, with the right resources at the right time.”

The challenge? “How do you shorten that distance so you can accelerate and achieve success in the most efficient and frictionless way possible?” Leslie’s patent-pending solution was brilliantly simple. Smart texting. Leslie’s SuperPhone app, which is gaining traction in and outside the Valley, uses smart segmentation to allow everyone from individual to enterprise users to engage more readily and efficiently with their target audience.

Winston’s participation in #CBEWeek culminated with The Code Black Tech Gala on February 24, which highlighted Bay Area nonprofit tech organizations making a difference in communities of color, and featured Jeff Johnson of Black Entertainment Television as master of ceremonies and DJ LP and Grammy Award-winning Maroon 5 keyboardist PJ Morton.

The event followed the firm’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee and BLN affinity group’s presentation of a [Black History Month celebration](#), broadcast in all U.S. offices, featuring Wil Haygood, author of the critically acclaimed book *Showdown: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court Nomination that Changed America*.

Join Winston in supporting #CBEWeek 2019 or initiatives and activities throughout the year.

2 Min Read

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