

Tech CEO Dean Forbes Named Number One on the Powerlist of Most Influential Black Britons

Business leader and philanthropist Dean Forbes has been named number one on the prestigious *Powerlist 2025*, celebrating the most influential Black Britons. Forbes, chief of software company Forterro, is one of a small group of Black CEOs globally to lead companies valued at over €2 billion.

His rise to the top of the *Powerlist* underscores his extraordinary journey from humble beginnings to international business success. In addition to his business achievements, Forbes has also channelled significant resources - more than £1.2 million - directly through his not-for-profit, the Forbes Family Group (FFG), to support causes close to his family, focused on providing opportunities through active capital and small business investments, as well as mentor and career development opportunities for those socially disadvantaged communities and marginalised individuals.

Forbes, who was ranked second on last year's *Powerlist*, replaces former British *Vogue* Editor-In-Chief Edward Enninful as the number one most influential Black Briton. Also included on the list this year are Bernie Mensah and Afua Kyei.

Delighted Forbes, 46, said: *"To be named number one on the Powerlist is an incredible honour. My journey, from growing up in Southeast London to leading global businesses, has shown me the power of resilience, the importance of community, and seizing every opportunity. I hope my story can inspire others from similar backgrounds to believe in their potential and work hard to achieve their dreams."*

A proven business leader, Forbes has a remarkable track record of scaling and transforming ventures. Most notably, he oversaw the €1 billion acquisition of Forterro by Partners Group. As the company's CEO he is working towards fulfilling his vision of growing Forterro to a valuation of €4 billion over the coming years.

Forbes' rise to prominence is all the more impressive given his early life challenges. Raised on a working-class estate in Southeast London, he experienced homelessness twice as a teenager and began his career in a Motorola call centre after being released from Crystal Palace Football Club. His first major breakthrough came at just 29, when he played a key role in the global expansion of US software company Primavera, leading to its sale to Oracle for \$550 million.

His tenure as CEO of KDS, a travel and expense management software company, marked another career highlight. Forbes led KDS to record-breaking success, culminating in its acquisition by American Express in their largest tech deal at the time. He later drove the rapid growth of CoreHR, which was then acquired by Access Group.

Forbes' impact extends beyond the boardroom. As a partner at Corten Capital, he has helped the firm raise a €1 billion fund and acquire four software companies in just two years.

In addition to his business ventures, Forbes is deeply committed to philanthropy. His personal journey inspired him to create the Forbes Family Group (FFG), through which he has supported numerous charitable causes. Recently, FFG organised a high-profile gala for the African Leukaemia Trust (ACLT), raising over £400,000 in one night alone - ten times the amount the charity usually raises annually - to support critical medical research and patient care.

Forbes explained: *“My journey was shaped by those who believed in me and opened doors, and now I’m determined to pay it forward. I want to provide opportunities for young people who, like me, need that extra support to achieve their potential. This mission is deeply personal to me.”*

Forbes’ unique ability to balance his business acumen with his passion for social change has allowed him to thrive in a dual world, whether securing multi-billion euro deals or bringing together top executives and cultural figures for charitable causes.

Dean reflected: *“It’s truly beyond anything I could have imagined that a Black, working class man from Southeast London could rise from where I started to where I am now - growing businesses and driving social change through my family foundation. My mission is clear: to use my experience and resources to create lasting, meaningful impact in underserved communities. This is about far more than business - it’s about opening doors, empowering others, and making a real difference where it’s needed most.”*

Powerlist publisher, Michael Eboda, CEO of Powerful Media said: *“Dean Forbes exemplifies the heights that can be reached through determination, leadership, but what really sets him apart is his commitment to giving back. His accomplishments in business and philanthropy make him a truly deserving number one on this year’s Powerlist.”*

The Powerlist has been recognising and celebrating Black excellence in Britain for over 19 years. It highlights individuals who are making significant contributions across a variety of fields, including business, politics, science, technology, and the arts.

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About Dean Forbes

Dean Forbes is a global business leader, philanthropist, and CEO known for turning around struggling companies and driving them to profitability. He is the CEO of Forterro, a European software company valued at over €2 billion, and a partner at Corten Capital. Forbes is also the founder of the Forbes Family Group, a not-for-profit which focuses on charitable initiatives supporting underserved communities.

About the Powerlist

The Powerlist, launched in 2005, was created to showcase Black role models to inspire young people. Today, it is widely regarded as the leading authority on issues of Black influence in the UK. In partnership with **J.P. Morgan**, the Powerlist honours incredible men and women across a diverse range of industries, including business, science, technology, and the arts.

This year’s Powerlistees will be honoured at the **Powerlist Celebration of Black Excellence Awards** on Friday, October 25, 2024 hosted by businessman and television personality **Tim Campbell, MBE** at The Grosvenor House Hotel in London.