

NORDSTROM

Finding the Future of Tech Talent: Nordstrom Sponsors HBCU Battle of the Brains

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We've long believed we are all made better by the diversity that exists within our communities and the workplace. This year, we were grateful for the opportunity to sponsor with HBCU Battle of the Brains for their fifth annual competition. At this event, Historically Black Colleges and Universities send their best and brightest students to compete by developing a solution for the business challenge presented.

Hackathon Coaching

Nordstrom senior product manager, Kevin Washington and engineering manager, Tania Perry coached students as nearly 30 teams worked to complete a 24-hour hackathon.

Kevin mentored the first-place team from Fisk University who were awarded \$50,000 and the team from Morehouse College who finished in third place taking home \$10,000. He shared, "It was amazing to see how the students had dissected the case and broke themselves into working groups to tackle the various required deliverables." Tania coached the second-place winner Huston-Tillotson University, which received of \$20,000 "The novel ideas that the students pulled together over the short time frame was just short of remarkable," she said. "Their energy was contagious as they looked to solve the case study problem that was presented to them."



Meeting of the Minds

Nordstrom also participated in the HBCU Battle of the Brains Meeting of the Minds event, where we were able to listen to and have an open dialog with advisors, deans, and professors from nearly 30 HBCUs around the nation. Our recruiting technology teams walked away with insight that will inform future approaches and strategies. We intend to show up authentically, build relationships and provide opportunities to all students.

Sharing How We Bridge In-Store and Digital Experiences

We also invited students to visit our Domain Northside Nordstrom store where our leaders highlighted how we bridge the in-store and digital experiences. "We hosted and spoke to students at our Austin Nordstrom store and provided them some insight to the various technologies that Nordstrom employs to create the best experience for our customers," said Perry. "I was thrilled to be a representative of Nordstrom to help tell the story of Nordstrom's culture and its ambitions around inclusivity."

Why did Nordstrom participate?

As part of our 2025 Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging goals, we are committed to increasing representation of Black and Latinx populations in people-manager roles by at least 50%. We will leverage our internship program and other initiatives that help us reach qualified candidates early in their careers, with a goal on average of at least 50% of participants in these programs coming from underrepresented populations. We hope that by joining with best-in-class events, like HBCU Battle of the Brains and [Afrotech](#), we can attract a talented and diverse workforce.

"I competed in HBCU Battle of the Brains in 2018 and the experience changed my life. Thanks to the competition, I secured an Associate Product Manager role with The Home Depot and had the

opportunity to return to HBCU Battle of the Brains every year thereafter as a coach," said Kevin Washington. "Representation matters. I hope these young Black students can see what I was able to accomplish because of the way this competition jump started my career. I hope they connect with my story as someone who sat where they are and looks and sounds like them. It's important for them to understand that Nordstrom has people like me in positions that can make a material difference to the organization. It's all about connecting with the students authentically."

Similarly, Taunia Perry shared, "As an HBCU graduate from Norfolk State University, the event was something near and dear to my heart. It provided an opportunity to give back to the institutions that helped mold me and provided me the skills that I needed to launch my career in technology."