



# Robert L. Johnson

- Founder and Chairman of The RLJ Companies, an innovative business network that provides strategic investments in a diverse portfolio of companies
  - Named by *USA Today* as one of the 25 Most Influential Business Leaders of the Past 25 Years
  - Founder and Former Chairman of Black Entertainment Television
  - Number 2 on Black Enterprise's list of "Titans: The 40 Most Powerful African Americans in Business" 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue
  - Frequent CNBC Contributor
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Robert L. Johnson is the Founder and Chairman of The RLJ Companies, an innovative business network that owns or holds interests in businesses operating in hotel real estate, private equity, consumer financial services, asset management, automobile dealerships, sports and entertainment, and video lottery terminal (VLT) gaming.

Prior to forming The RLJ Companies, Mr. Johnson was founder and chairman of Black Entertainment Television (BET), the nation's first and leading television network providing quality entertainment, music, news, sports and public affairs programming for the African American audience.

Johnson continues to attract and manage capital and create value for investors, and in 2012, announced the successful creation of RLJ Entertainment, Inc., one of the largest independent global distributors of digital and video content. RLJ Entertainment, Inc. marks the third time Johnson has successfully taken a company public. In 1991, Johnson took BET public making the network the first African American company to be traded on the New York Stock Exchange. RLJ Lodging Trust, a \$2 billion market cap hotel real estate investment trust (REIT), went public in 2011.

In 2001, Johnson sold BET to Viacom for approximately \$3 billion and remained the Chief Executive Officer through 2006. In July 2007, Johnson was named by *USA Today* as one of "The 25 Most Influential Business Leaders of the Past 25 Years."

In 2014, three of Johnson's holding companies were featured on the Black Enterprise 100s list: RML Automotive, LLC ranked 1st in a category of 60 in the auto dealership rankings; RLJ Equity Partners, LLC and RLJ Credit Management, LLC ranked 12th and 14th respectively on the private equity firms list.

Currently, Mr. Johnson serves on the following boards: RLJ Lodging Trust; RLJ Entertainment, Inc.; KB Home; Lowe's Companies, Inc.; Retirement Clearinghouse; Strayer Education; Elevate Credit, Inc.; The Business Council; and Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture. Mr. Johnson holds a Master's degree in public affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in social studies from the University of Illinois.