American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

Rockamore's history of leadership lands him on list of America's most influential executives

1/19/2018

For Cedric Rockamore, American Airlines has felt like home since his first day on the job. He remembers the way people welcomed him on board and how good it made him feel. Throughout his career, he's tried to hold on to that feeling and spread that same energy to colleagues. As the vice president of Hub Operations at American's largest hub airport — Dallas Fort Worth International (DFW) — Cedric has the opportunity to do just that.

"What I like about my job, and I say this all the time, is the people," he said. "Having worked at three of our hubs, I've been able to get a pulse of what's different or the same at each place. What I've found is that no matter where you go, people just want to be treated as if they matter."

It's Cedric's people-focused leadership style that recently earned him the honor of being included in Black Enterprise magazine's list of the most powerful executives in corporate America. The publication is considered the premier business, investing and wealth-building resource for African-Americans. The list features 300 top African-American executives who hold a senior management position at a publicly traded or privately held corporation, including 16 CEOs and 13 division chief executives. These leading executives work for companies with gross revenues of $1 billion or more and have a direct role in ensuring their corporations are market leaders. Cedric will be recognized with other honorees at a special ceremony in February at J.P. Morgan Chase's New York City headquarters.

"I am truly humbled to receive this honor that recognizes not only my professional accomplishments but the work of our company and its commitment to leadership development," he said.

Cedric joined the airline in 2010 as director of Ramp Services at Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) for US

Airways. After American and US Airways merged, he was promoted to managing director of Washington Reagan (DCA) Hub Operations in early 2014 and later promoted to vice president of PHL Hub Operations in 2015. In May 2017, Cedric was appointed to lead DFW.

But the Little Rock, Arkansas, native's introduction to aviation started long before that as an air traffic controller in the U.S. Navy. He served 10 years at naval air stations in Corpus Christi, Texas; Guam; Lemoore, California; and Beeville, Texas. When he wasn't working, he was in night school, completing a bachelor's degree. He later earned an MBA from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

It was a friend from the Navy who encouraged Cedric to apply for his first airline job. He started as a customer service manager with Northwest Airlines at Memphis International Airport. "I did everything from working on the ramp to working in customer service, within the control tower, and even in administration, which was the budgeting piece," Cedric said. "I really learned the business of a hub operation there." Cedric also worked for Delta Air Lines and Atlantic Southeast Airlines before joining American.

He also enjoyed the energy of the airport and working alongside people who are passionate about aviation. Thirty years later, Cedric still feels the same way.

During his time in PHL, Cedric focused on ensuring that the customer experience and team member experience was top in the industry by spending time on the ground getting to know team members and addressing their concerns. "Much of what I do is about collaboration and solving problems," Cedric said. "You have to get out of the office and spend time with the people. You have to make sure you're communicating well and taking care of your team. Then, that level of caring will trickle down to the customer."

At DFW, his goal is to continue to improve the team member and customer experience. In meetings, he often shares with his team the importance of running a safe, reliable and helpful operation. One of the biggest challenges Cedric says he faces at DFW is its size and making sure he's reaching all parts of the hub. "You want to feel the pulse of the people and the organization," he said. "You want to be able to get out there and hear what's on their mind, so you can become a better resource. Each day, I want to make sure that I'm spending time with our team, especially our front line."

Cedric says each experience along his career journey has prepared him for his role at DFW.

"But I did not get here by myself," he said. "I am extremely grateful for the encouragement of loved ones, colleagues and mentors who have shown me the importance of leading with care and respect for others. I am confident that we will continue to achieve much more together when we put people first."

To view the Black Enterprise list of Most Powerful Executives of Corporate America, visit **BlackEnterprise.com/belist/powerful-executives-corporate-america**.