

NEWS RELEASE

Respecting and appreciating the diversity within the black community

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When Matthew Miller was working on the ramp for another airline during college, becoming a flight attendant wasn't part of his career path. But a chance conversation with an American Airlines flight attendant caused him to reroute his career.

"I met a flight attendant while flying, and he told me that I'd be a good flight attendant," Matthew said. "A year later, I applied, and everything aligned pretty quickly.

While being a flight attendant wasn't one of his childhood dreams, today Matthew said he feels the role is a great fit for him and allows him to leverage skills that come naturally.

"I've always been a people person — I've always enjoyed helping and serving people," he said. "To do that and travel and see the world is the perfect combination for me."

The son of a Jamaican father and Guyanese mother, Matthew has a deep appreciation for the traditions that make different cultures so fascinating. He attributes this to the diverse community he grew up with in his home as well as his hometown — New York City. He feels that the exposure to different perspectives strengthens his ability to connect with team members and customers from all backgrounds.

"Growing up in New York, I had friends that were Italian, Puerto Rican and Salvadorian. It's taught me to not take things at face value and to look at things through a different lens," Matthew said.

Now based in Miami, Matthew calls the city a miniature representation of the world — with different cultures

coming together to create one unique city. He said his ability to embrace people from various walks of life is what makes his work rewarding and has allowed him to thrive at American. When Matthew reflects on his journey at American and all the ways — big and small — that he is able to take care of people on their journey, he said he finds meaning in his job as a flight attendant.

“Throughout my five years, I’ve met great people. Being able to help them and make a small imprint on their day has definitely kept me around,” he said. “Five years later, I still enjoy it.”

When he isn’t caring for customers, Matthew enjoys sharing his culture with team members and friends by cooking traditional dishes he grew up eating. When asked about his cooking, Matthew recalled making rundown, a Jamaican stew, for a colleague. “She cleaned her plate,” he said.

Inspired by team member stories like Matthew’s and the airline’s shared goal of making culture a competitive advantage, one of American’s 20 employee business resource groups (EBRGs) set out to better articulate its global reach by changing its name.

At the EBRG’s annual leadership conference last year, the group, formerly known as the African American Diversity Network, unveiled its new name: Black Professional Network (BPN). Founded in 1996, the EBRG felt it was important for its name to embrace the wide array of cultures and identities that exist among people of African descent around the globe and at American Airlines.

“The name change should be celebrated — it’s a great way to highlight diversity and unity across various black cultures,” Matthew said. “American is an inclusive company that encourages team members to show up as they are, and the EBRG’s name change reflects that.”

To that end, American will celebrate Black History Month with a more inclusive focus. Throughout February, American will feature team members from the rich diversity of cultures within the black community.

Matthew Miller