GINA EMRICH AMERICAN AIRLINES

Gina Emrich, Senior Manager, Customer Experience and Accessibility for American Airlines, spends her time focusing on the customer experience strategy for passengers who travel with any type of disability.

With more than 30 years' experience working in aviation, Gina reveals what she loves most about the industry.

Gina, how long have you worked in the aviation industry?

I’ve been working in aviation since 1987 when I joined American Airlines.

How did you get into the industry?

My dad is a pilot and I got my private pilot’s license when I was in college. American Airlines was recruiting on my campus and a friend signed me up to interview because he knew how much I loved aviation.

What is it about working in the aviation industry that appeals to you?

Every day is different, everything that happens in the world affects the aviation industry. I love the opportunity to bring people together – connecting them and doing things to make their experience better.

As a woman, how do you find working in such a male-dominated industry?

It can be more difficult in this industry than others to find fellow women leaders who have multiple children and juggle both their family and their career. For those of us who do, the challenge is finding that community and building more support in the workplace for balancing those priorities.

Have you encountered any gender discrimination in your career?

On and off through the years, I’ve seen peers and leaders who don’t always respect women. However, most typically improve their attitude if you are confident and capable.

As a female senior leader, why do you think it’s important for companies to address the gender gap?

The most important thing is to have a balanced set of leaders who bring diverse viewpoints to decision making and company direction. If there are not enough women in senior leadership positions who are managing families, decisions can be one dimensional – focusing only on the operation or financial success and not enough on the wellbeing of employees or the experience of our customers.

What do you believe has been the key to your success?

The benefit of having women in leadership positions is that we bring a very different perspective than men so more balanced decisions can be made. I feel like I’ve been able to have an impact on the company by building tools for our employees and products for our customers that they need and want. I also focus time and energy on my team so that they are developed and fulfilled at work, which improves their quality of life.

What characteristics do you believe women need to survive in the aviation industry?

Flexibility and humility.

In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle to women succeeding in the workplace?

Having children and a family will always impact the availability of higher-level positions, partly because some women will make the choice to spend more time with their families.

What would you say has been your career highlight to date?

My favourite part of my career is the positive impact I’ve had on the people on my team. Developing skills, mentoring, and supporting people in their career, which in turn supports them in their personal life, is very rewarding.

ABOUT GINA EMRICH

Gina Emrich is Senior Manager, Customer Experience and Accessibility for American Airlines. She is responsible for the customer experience strategy for passengers who travel with any type of disability. Collaborate with partner carriers, government affairs, vendors, and the disability community to develop a strategic vision for improving the customer experience for American Airlines passengers. She holds a BS in Information Systems from the University of Texas.

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