

Amelia Anderson named aviation woman of the year

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American Airlines' managing director and assistant treasurer, Amelia Anderson, has been chosen as *Airfinance Journal's* Aviation Woman of the Year based on a public nomination process, which ran through the month of February.

Anderson, whose team is responsible for the execution and administration of American's corporate debt, completing over \$20 billion of financing transactions in the three years following the merger with US Airways in December 2013, won the process by an overwhelming majority of submissions received from the global aviation industry.

She will become the first recipient of *Airfinance Journal's* Aviation Woman of the Year award.

In addition to her work at American, Anderson is known for her work as the co-founder of Advancing Women in Aviation Roundtable (AWAR), a grassroots initiative working with senior executives to build awareness and develop strategies to promote the development and advancement of women leaders. "In many ways I share this award with my AWAR co-founder, Dana Barta of Morgan Stanley," she says.

Anderson also serves as co-chair of American Airlines' women's leadership programme, and she is actively involved in American Airlines' MBA recruiting process.

According to Anderson, one of the best ways to "drive change" for women starts with education and having more girls and young women engaging in "stem subjects" or science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

"When you look at women in CEO positions, they are disproportionately likely to hold degrees in engineering, math or computer science," Anderson tells *Airfinance Journal* in an interview. "So, yes, there is a strong link."

However, according to the Women in Science and Engineering (Wise) campaign's 2016 analysis of UK labour market statistics, women make up just 12.8% of the Stem workforce.

The proportion had increased by only 0.2 percentage points since their analysis in 2012.

Anderson acknowledges the road to becoming a CEO is still a difficult one for women, with only 5% of company chiefs being female at Fortune 500 companies.

She speaks globally through AWAR, trying to raise awareness about the factors impacting women as they transition from entry level to middle management to the boardroom.

"Women tend to have those natural behaviours that lend themselves to team building and people development, but as you move up in an organisation, especially in operational or finance roles, you have to do more than just lead and develop your team, you also have to be able to compete and to go toe-to-toe with your competition," she says, adding: "Business is still a rough and tumble place, and there are times women have to be comfortable taking a tough stand. So, we need to recognise our traditional behavioural styles, and be aware of situations when those behaviours may need to change."

Anderson holds an MBA in corporate finance from Georgia State University in Atlanta, and a BS in finance and economics from the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

She will receive *Airfinance Journal's* Woman of the Year award on 17 May at the 2016 Deals of the Year ceremony in New York at Marriot Marquis.

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