

JOHNSON FINDS FUN PROMOTING CARGO SECURITY SOLUTIONS



André Johnson, Chief Executive Officer, FreightScan

FreightScan CEO André Johnson is used to being the exception. In a global air cargo business dotted with mostly middle-aged white men, André is as much the stand out as he was at investment banks Merrill Lynch and Wells Fargo.

“I come from a banking and finance background, so I’ve always been the (big) black guy, if you will.” But happily for André, there is a big difference in the world of air cargo: the people.

“There are a lot more genuine people in the cargo business. And you can get to a personal level much faster than you could, if ever, in other industries,” says the young executive whose affable demeanor belies a daily routine that calls for next to no sleep.

The self-described kid from the wrong side of the tracks credits an inner city background and schooling at a suburban Minnesota high school 40 miles away for giving him a dual perspective on life. It also taught him valuable lessons on motivation and “putting himself in someone’s shoes before passing judgment.”

A former linebacker whose first plane trip came during his senior year of high school for a football-related visit to a college, André marvels how he came so

far so fast in the exhilarating air cargo industry.

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“We did our first show in November 2007 in Miami with a staff of four. Today, I know all the international heads of air cargo and the senior people at all the airlines. You could never replicate that scenario in other industries.”

It’s been a whirlwind since Johnson founded the privately held company that offers cargo dimensioning and screening products for the freight and logistics industry thanks to the global spotlight on security.

Says Johnson: “I’ve been in the business barely two years yet have relationships with top level officials throughout the world at some of the world’s most impressive companies.”

Johnson, whose dream is to hit it big and trade his leather penny loafers for some sneakers and coach football while he teaches calculus or economics at the high school or college level, has plenty of scanning economics on his mind.

He says he stays up at night thinking about a company that has not yet made a splash in the cargo security business. His main fear? “That the biggest competitor in this business doesn’t know that they want to be in it yet.”

But Johnson aims to leave a big mark. His hope is that people will look back and say, “Wow, what did this business look like before FreightScan?”

Asked to name his hero, Johnson doesn’t miss a beat: Mom. He says he admires her pluck, intellect and resolve – traits she tapped to rear a family of six, put herself through college, get a masters and land a senior management role at a state economic assistance agency.

To hear Johnson tell it, he has inherited the same drive and faith and is just getting started. “I don’t think God gave me this much to do nothing with. I’ve been given tools and I’m going to use them.” **ACW**

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