

Innovation, Connection, Content

An Interview with Corey Anthony,
Senior Vice President and Chief Diversity and Development Officer, AT&T Services, Inc.

EDITORS' NOTE Corey Anthony was appointed to his current position in May 2017. He previously led the Emerging Services and Operations Transformation organization, where he oversaw the company's global transformation to IP voice, security and cloud services. In addition, he led operations, planning and support for Technology Operations' field and center functions. Anthony joined Southwestern Bell in 1995 as a manager in the Special Services



Corey Anthony

Center in Wichita, Kansas. Throughout his career, he has held leadership roles across AT&T in its Wireless, Marketing, Finance, Network Operations, Human Resources, and Global Customer Service organizations. Anthony gives back to his community by serving on the boards of directors for Junior Achievement and Dallas CASA. He is a passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion and co-founded a chapter of AT&T's African American employee resource group, The NETwork, and serves on the board for Asian Pacific Islanders for Professional and Community Advancement, OASIS and the company's millennial group, oxyGEN. Anthony earned his BBA degree with a double major in finance and accounting from Texas A&M.

COMPANY BRIEF AT&T (att.com) is a diversified, global leader in telecommunications, media and entertainment, and technology. It executes in the market under four operating units. WarnerMedia is a leading media and

entertainment company that creates and distributes premium and popular content to global audiences through its consumer brands, including: HBO, HBO Max, Warner Bros., TNT, TBS, truTV, CNN, DC Entertainment, New Line, Cartoon Network, Adult Swim and Turner Classic Movies. AT&T Communications provides more than 100 million U.S. consumers with entertainment and communications experiences across TV, mobile and broadband. Additionally, it serves high-speed, highly secure connectivity and smart solutions to nearly 3 million business customers. AT&T Latin America provides pay-TV services across 10 countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean and wireless services to consumers and businesses in Mexico, where it is the fastest-growing wireless provider. Xandr provides marketers with innovative and relevant advertising solutions for consumers around premium video content and digital advertising through its platform.

Will you provide an overview of your role and key areas of focus?

As AT&T's Chief Diversity and Development Officer, I oversee our talent development programs that aim to create a pipeline for future leaders within the company. From corporate to retail and technicians, my team works to foster development through leadership development programs, talent identification, and all learning under the AT&T University brand. I also leverage AT&T's D&I strategies, programs and

partnerships across the enterprise, including our work as it relates to racial and social justice initiatives. Before that, I spent more than two decades in a number of areas and functions, from wireless and network operations to customer service and finance. I bring those experiences along with my passion for diversity and inclusion (D&I) and my passion for developing others to my current position.

How do you define the AT&T culture?

Central to our culture are a number of corporate core values, and we base all of the work we do – innovation, connection, content – on these eight values. Our culture is meant to inspire our team to do incredible things - we have high standards so we can deliver big results. How we all do our work and what stimulates our thinking and approach – our culture – cannot be disconnected from our success. As the person who owns D&I, I have responsibility for how our values lead up to our company culture. That means providing a space where everyone is respected and valued for who they are and their contributions to the business. I take this seriously and consider it a privilege.

How has AT&T adapted its business to address the challenges caused by the pandemic and how proud are you to see the strength and resilience of AT&T's workforce during this unprecedented time?

At the start of the pandemic, AT&T saw a need to address connectivity issues that were driving the homework gap for the 17 million children who are unable to take part in learning due to lack of Internet connection or devices. In 2020, we committed \$30 million to support

“As a global company, we have to embrace the diversity of the communities we serve. This includes their perspectives, needs, values and more.”

“Our culture is meant to inspire our team to do incredible things - we have high standards so we can deliver big results. How we all do our work and what stimulates our thinking and approach – our culture – cannot be disconnected from our success.”

COVID-19 related issues impacting the communities where we live and work, including a \$10 million Distance Learning and Family Connections Fund, and an additional \$10 million to support at-risk students by providing Wi-Fi hotspots and free AT&T Internet service, working with nonprofits like Connected Nation, to bridge the homework gap.

We also announced the investment of an additional \$10 million to create economic opportunities and foster upward mobility for Black and underserved communities who face social inequities and higher unemployment, all of which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, we’re building FirstNet, the nationwide network that enables first responders and public safety officials to stay connected in times of crisis.

Lastly, I’m especially proud of the ways our employees have stepped up for each other, our customers and the communities we serve, primarily through AT&T Believes, a local volunteer model we developed in our communities across 38 cities, four European countries and one in Asia, to ensure that our support is tailored to the needs of the communities we serve. Allowing those who live and work in each community to help shape how we show up brings even more depth and dimension to our impact.

How critical is it for AT&T to build a diverse and inclusive workforce in order to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the table when making business decisions?

As a global company, we have to embrace the diversity of the communities we serve. This includes their perspectives, needs, values and

more. We must remain progressive and aggressive in building a company that accurately reflects them. “Make a difference” is one of AT&T’s values and we keep it close. Business doesn’t operate in a vacuum, and when we have the right voices in the room where decisions are made, we achieve stronger results.

What do you see as the role that diversity and inclusion plays in driving innovation and growth for AT&T?

At AT&T, diversity and inclusion are both a business and moral imperative. We know that if we all think and act the same, nothing changes. We have no advancement, no inspiration. By actively bringing together diverse views, backgrounds, cultures and talents, we foster an inclusive environment where employees are valued, respected, and empowered to bring their ideas and help drive innovation every day. New ideas consistently arise, and we can try and fail and pivot as many times as needed because we have no fear that failure equals wrong or termination. Instead, it’s a lesson learned. D&I practices and policies have to stand up to this way of thinking, and luckily, that’s exactly what I and my team at AT&T get to do on a daily basis.

How important is it for AT&T to be committed to corporate responsibility and community engagement in order to continue to attract and retain top talent?

A well-functioning society is fundamental to our business. At AT&T, our CSR commitments reflect our stakeholders’ social and environmental values. In fact, younger generations, particularly Millennials, are twice as likely to invest in companies targeting social and environmental

goals. This work is critical to our success – it’s good for communities, it’s good for employees, and it’s good for business.

Community engagement gives potential employees a peek at what AT&T and our employees consider valuable – where are we giving our time and resources, as a collective. In 2019, AT&T employees volunteered 1.5 million hours globally and gave \$31 million to 30,000 nonprofits. You can’t mandate that - that comes from the heart.

On the environment side, we’ve set a goal to be carbon neutral across our global operations by 2035. From device recycling to alternative energy solutions, we are developing the tools and knowledge to make changes in small and large ways.

What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers during this challenging and uncertain time?

First, congratulations to those who are graduating at such a difficult time. I admire the resiliency of those entering the workforce, who see the landscape and nonetheless come into the workplace ready to make a difference. Don’t lose that verve and excitement. Take time for your physical and mental health and create a sustainable lifestyle that allows for both productivity and rest. Continue to be curious about your industry – read and meet new people through networking and setting up get-to-know you phone calls. Lastly, challenge yourself. Now more than ever, remember to break out of your echo chambers and realize differences are not a barrier, but instead a bridge to common ground. ●

“At AT&T, our CSR commitments reflect our stakeholders’ social and environmental values.”